

RTV 3303 Electronic News Writing and Reporting One Fall 2017



Instructor: Matthew Cretul, M.A.M.C.
Section: 4487
Room: 2056 Weimer Hall
Periods: 4 & 5 on Tuesdays (10:40 AM – 12:35 PM)
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RTV 3303 is designed to offer instruction and training in news gathering, writing, interviewing, and reporting to increase student knowledge base on the subject matter. Special emphasis is placed on improving writing skills, basic news production thought practical multimedia reporting assignments. Students receive additional practical experience in the WUFT newsroom where they will have the opportunity to apply the skills learned in the classroom portion of the course.

Course Objectives and Goals

- (1) Student will learn how to write news stories acceptable for on-air station, website, and social media use under real-world deadline pressure.
- (2) Student will learn the ability to record audio via phone or in-person, and edit audio.
- (3) Student will begin to learn the ability to write “sound stories”.
- (4) Student will develop an understanding of the variety of sources used in news sources.
- (5) Student will have an opportunity, and an expectation, that work produced in the class and the newsroom can and will be used on the air (and web) throughout the semester.
- (6) Student will be given the opportunity to voice your live or recorded work on the air.
- (7) Student will develop a better understanding of local, national and international news and current events.
- (8) Student will begin to develop their “nose for news”.

Course Eligibility: Student must be in the College of Journalism and Communication---Student must have received a “C” grade in RTV 2100 and RTV 3001, and passed the News Placement Exam. If you haven’t met this requirement, please come forward ASAP.

Required Equipment: For your projects, you will be able to check out digital audio recorders. You will also be issued an SD card, this is yours to keep. The newsroom has recorders for you to use during your shifts (See guidelines for checking out equipment).

Recommended Equipment:

- A cell phone that can record audio, access and use social media, and take photos. Voice Recorder Lite is an option for Apple Users. Samsung and other android platform users can use their built-in sound recorder.

Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Students will be given specific times when evaluations are open later in the semester. Summary results of these and previous assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Class demeanor expected: You are also expected to treat your instructor and classmates with respect at all times. Be on time for class---- weekly story pitches are usually presented at start of class and are allotted a certain amount of time. If you miss them, or are late, you will be penalized. Class discussions are a vital portion of the course. They are where students can begin to openly analyze what they are learning in the course. Students are expected to participate in class discussions, silence all cell phones BEFORE class starts or be prepared to surrender cell phone to instructor if it disturbs the class.

Late Work: As the news industry is built around time management and down to the second timing, late work will not generally be accepted without penalty unless prior arrangements have been made, and a doctor's note or another letter (preferably from the university or a university-sponsored group) accompanies the work. While the news industry is strict on time, I understand sometimes life happens. If you for any reason feel your work will be late, PLEASE approach me before the due date to work out an acceptable alternative timeline. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, any work presented without prior alternative plans will not be accepted.

The University of Florida Honor Code was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: *"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."*

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester."

Assignments

(Individual Rubrics available on Canvas)

Project One: Wrap with two sound bites, 1:30 in length

Project Two (Facebook Live video): Event Story 1:30-2:00 in length

Project Three (Feature story): Wrap with four sound bites, 3:00-4:30 in length

Project Four (In-depth wrap): Wrap with minimum of four sound bites, 3:30-4:30 in length

You will need to pitch a story idea at least one week before your project is due. You can email your pitches ahead of time. To the earliest timestamp goes the story.

Website: Your goal should be to have your work seen by as many people as possible to improve your brand and to begin to establish yourself as a professional and experienced reporter. This means getting your stories air, and for the stories to be published on the WUFT website, and having a means to present this work to potential employers. The goal is for you to create your own personal website where you can showcase your work this semester. As a suggested starting point, you should begin setting up your website by week FIVE. You must be prepared to create a personal website to showcase your work. The most user friendly options to create your own website are Weebly, WIX, and Webs. A finished website will include any stories you did for the WUFT site, radio stories done for WUFT-FM, a professional Twitter, a LinkedIn account, a Google + account, a bio which is a summary of your resume on the home page, your resume, and photos of you working. You can go beyond the minimum requirement, but it should be something that will benefit you as you continue your career in media.

Weekly Critiques/Quizzes: Each week you will either be quizzed individually on weekly local, state, national, and international news stories, or you will be asked, as part of a small group, to critique what different news outlets choose to feature as their “headline story”. Both exercises are designed to assess your current events knowledge at multiple levels; additionally the group exercise is designed to familiarize you with working as part of a group in a news/timed setting. In both cases the stories will be chosen by the instructor. You will have 10 minutes to complete the quiz and 10 minutes to work as a group before offering your 2-minute critique. Grading will consist of either correct/incorrect answers on the quizzes, or which group makes a strongest case and provides sound support for their argument. That group will be awarded the highest score for the week with the following groups receiving scores in order of strength of argument.

Weekly Newsroom Recaps: Select weeks, we will discuss what you worked on during your time in the WUFT newsroom. This will familiarize everyone with the local news flow, stories, and contacts. Additionally, it helps identify areas that not everyone may have worked in, or stories not everyone may be aware of. **YOU MUST BE PRESENT DURING THE PARTICIPATION TO RECEIVE CREDIT FOR THIS.** However, should you have a university or medically excused absence; you will not have points deducted.

Final Exam: The final will be administered during block 11A (7:30-9:30 am on Mon, Dec 11). It will consist of two essays written during the exam, the first will be on the role of news in today’s society. The second will be on a topic chosen from recent newsworthy events. More info to be given during the semester.

Newsroom Work: Training sessions will be held during the SECOND week of the semester at WUFT-FM in the INC. The sessions will be held at 6pm unless otherwise stated. **Attendance is mandatory!** You are required to work six hours per week during the semester at the station, which is where your newsroom grade is derived. **Newsroom shifts must be covered---Go to Forrest, Ryan, or Ethan with questions---if you can't work, you will need to get someone to work for you.** In the event of a holiday, when you would otherwise be scheduled to work, you must make up your shift work. This is also true if you are sick and can show documentation of your illness. In both cases your shift work will be made up either with you presenting an original story idea to one of the news directors at the station, or you will be notified of a story to cover on a day when you would not otherwise be scheduled to work. These additional shifts may be at night or on the weekends.

Grading

Information on current University of Florida grading policies can be found at:
<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

Grading Components

Grading Scale

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|----------------|-----|-----------|-------------------|
| Website | 5% | A | (93-100) |
| Newsroom Recap | 5% | A- | (90-92) |
| Final Exam | 10% | B+ | (87-89) |
| Weekly Quizzes | 10% | B | (83-86) |
| Project One | 10% | B- | (80-82) |
| Project Two | 10% | C+ | (77-79) |
| Project Three | 15% | C | (73-76) |
| Project Four | 15% | C- | (70-72) |
| Newsroom Work | 20% | D+ | (67-69) |
| | | D | (63-66) |
| | | D- | (60-62) |
| | | E | (below 61) |

Class Modules: The course is broken up into three modules, each designed to highlight a different and important skill or set of skills vital to being a sound news reporter.

- Module I:** *What is News?* (Weeks 1-5)
Module II: *Types of News Coverage* (Weeks 6-10)
Module III: *You the Reporter* (Weeks 11-15)

COURSE SCHEDULE

Module I: What is News?

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|---------|------|---|
| Week #1 | 8/22 | Weekly Topic: What is News? For the newsroom: Sign up for training, intro to INC staff Additional Activities: Class intro & info, syllabus recap |
| Week #2 | 8/29 | Weekly Topic: Story Flow For the newsroom: Training begins |
| Week #3 | 9/5 | Weekly Topic: Courts & the Legal System For the newsroom: Shifts start Projects: Assign project one |
| Week #4 | 9/19 | Weekly Topic: Local Angles Projects: Project one pitches due |
| Week #5 | 9/26 | Projects: Project one due, assign project two Additional Activity: Project one recap |

Module II: Types of Coverage

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| Week #6 | 10/3 | Weekly Topic: Dealing with Death & Those with Disabilities Additional Activity: Provide websites, Newsroom Recap |
| Week #7 | 10/10 | Weekly Topic: Covering Meetings Projects: Project 2 story pitches due on class Facebook site |
| Week #8 | 10/17 | Weekly Topic: Crime Stories Additional Activity: Newsroom Recap |
| Week #9 | 10/24 | Weekly Topic: Emergency, Weather, & Fire Stories Projects: Project two due, Assign project three |
| Week #10 | 10/31 | Weekly Topic: Elections & Politics Projects: Project three story pitches due |

Module III: You the Reporter

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| Week #11 | 11/7 | Weekly Topic: Brand Management Additional Activity: Check on websites, Newsroom Recap |
| Week #12 | 11/14 | Weekly Topic: Ethics & Opinions Projects: Project three due, assign project four |
| Week #13 | 11/21 | Weekly Topic: Taking Photos Projects: Project four story pitches due |
| Week #14 | 11/28 | Weekly Topic: Project four updates Additional Activity: Newsroom Recap |
| Week #15 | 12/05 | Projects: Project Four Due |

Instructor reserves right to amend and change lecture and class plan as needed to accommodate guest speakers, events, etc.

UNIVERSITY PROVIDED STUDENT RESOURCES

If you feel at any time as though the semester is getting too rough or beyond your control and you need to access any of the university-provided counseling services, please don't hesitate to contact the instructor if you are unsure how to proceed. You can find additional info below:

U Matter, We Care:

If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

Phone: 352-392-1575

Website: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

University Police Department:

Phone: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Website: <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)

Student Health Care Center

Phone 392-1161

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support

Phone: 352-392-4357 (select option 2)

E-mail: Learningsupport@ufl.edu.

Website: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.

Career Resource Center (Located in Reitz Union)

Phone: 392-1601 Website: <http://www.crc.ufl.edu/>

Library Support

Website: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.

Teaching Center (located in Broward Hall)

Phone: 392-2010 or 392-6420 Website: <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio (Located in Tigert Hall)

Phone: 846-1138 Website: <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Student Complaints

Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf

On-Line: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaintprocess>