

# RTV 3593 Multimedia Sports Reporting

## Spring Semester 2018

**Instructor: Dr. John W. Wright**  
3200A Weimer Hall  
[jwright@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:jwright@jou.ufl.edu)  
352-392-1975  
**Graduate Teaching Assistant:**  
**Bret Ball – ball.s@ufl.edu**

**Tuesday – Periods 8-9**  
**3:00-4:55 PM**  
**Section 0139**  
**Weimer 3024**  
**Office Hours: T-10th**  
**Thu- 1:30-3:00pm**

### **Overview and Objectives:**

RTV 4930 is designed to offer instruction, analysis and training in sports information gathering and research, writing, interviewing and reporting in a digital era. Special emphasis is placed on improving sports writing skills and reporting judgment, research and analysis of sports events and issues, basic sports production, radio reporting assignments and generation of sports content for the Internet. In addition, students receive practical experience in the Innovation News Center and ESPN Gainesville 98.1 (WRUF-AM 850) in the College of Journalism and Communications.

Objectives and goals of the course include:

- (1) to develop skills to effectively research, gather and analyze sports information;
- (2) to develop skills to write high quality stories and features related to sports for on air radio broadcast and posting on the Internet, and to gain ability to effectively record and edit audio obtained via phone or in-person;
- (3) to enhance understanding of the ethics and values of sports journalism;
- (4) to develop ability to understand relative newsworthiness of sports stories;
- (5) to develop ability to write and report “sound and visual stories and features,” with the expectation the work produced can and will be used for WRUF-ESPN 98.1 AM 850, including air and the Internet;
- (6) to develop skills for interviewing athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners;
- (7) to develop understanding of the variety of sports sources used as a reporter;
- (8) to enhance skill in voicing work, live and recorded, on-the-air;
- (9) to enhance understanding of UF, local, high school, national and international sports;
- (10) to learn about websites and other sources for sports research, as well for production of content for the WRUF-ESPN WRUF 98.1 website.

**Course Eligibility:** Students must have received a grade of “C” or better in RTV 2100, MMC 2100 or JOU 3109c.

**Course Fee:** \$20.00

**Required Equipment:** Gathering sound (interviews, media days, teleconferences, etc.) is vital, and students will use many different means to collect sound. Before you will be able to check out digital audio recorders for projects, you must receive operational training both with and without

a stick mic, as well as other means of audio collection. The newsroom has recorders for you to use for your projects and the Dept. of Telecommunication has recorders you may check out (See guidelines for checking out equipment).

**Attendance Policy:** Attendance in this class is required and is critically important. Excused absences include only approved UF attendance exceptions. In all instances of excused absences, the instructor and student will work out a plan for completing any missed assignments.

Attendance otherwise is expected unless the student is ill or has an emergency. In case of illness, including a fever (or any contagious illness), the instructor should be notified in advance whenever possible, and a physician's note may or may not be required. Multiple unexcused absences will result in a severe grade penalty. If you miss quizzes due to an unexcused absence you will not be able to make up the work.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with UF policies which can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Do not open notebook computers aside from coordinated class activities, and please turn off cell phones prior to class. The instructor may or may not call students out for using laptops and cell phones in class (for any purpose) but there will be a severe negative impact on the class participation grade. Sports reporting is a deadline-based profession, so you are expected to arrive on time for each class.

**Academic Integrity:** UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code."

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." The Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. For more information visit the Honor Code web page at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

**Students with Disabilities:** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. The instructor will cooperate fully.

**Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on a minimum of 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the above website.

**Course Grading:** Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points as articulated in the link that follows.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **Course Grading Components**

Weekly Sports Knowledge Quizzes/Participation	
And Citizenship	10%
Project One	5%
Project Two	10%
Project Three	15%
Project Four	20%
Group Exercises and In-Class Writing	7%
*Multimedia Property Work	33%

### **Class Participation and Citizenship Evaluations – Total 10 points**

**Preferred (10pts)** – Arrives on time, comments are relevant and reflect understanding and good preparation, clear enthusiasm and positive posture, active participation in group projects. Never on phone or laptop during class.

**Acceptable (7-9pts)** – Arrives on time, comments are relevant and reflect understanding but maybe not consistently, inconsistent enthusiasm and posture toward class, enthusiastic, typically active in participation on group projects. Never on phone or laptop during class.

**Needs Improvement (4-6 pts)** – Almost always on time, unexcused absence, comments are minimal, demonstrates barely adequate preparation and little enthusiasm, demeanor is sluggish, not very active in group projects, observed on laptop or phone during class.

**Unacceptable (1-3 pts)** – Arrives several times after class starts, misses multiple classes, makes very few or no comments, lack of enthusiasm and engagement, disengaged, observed on laptop or phone, mostly quiet during group projects.

**OOP (Out of the Picture – 0 points)** – Misses multiple classes, disruptive or rude in class, drawing classmates into distracting behaviors including talking during discussions or lectures, showing texts and web pages irrelevant to class, no interest in group activities. (Note: In my many years at UF, I have never had a student be rude or disrespectful but there must be a bottom of the scale.)

### **No Extra Credit at End of Semester**

There will be no opportunity for extra credit to boost grades other than assignments that may be offered to the entire class.

Because there are strict deadlines in sports media, any project turned in late will be penalized at least 50% each day with no exceptions. Projects will be emailed or otherwise sent to the instructors, but a hard copy of written story must be handed in at the beginning of class time. Be prepared to play the audio or video version of your project in class.

<b>Grading Scale:</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>(93-100%)</b>
	<b>A-</b>	<b>(90-92.99%)</b>
	<b>B+</b>	<b>(87-89.99%)</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>(83-86.99%)</b>
	<b>B-</b>	<b>(80-82.99%)</b>
	<b>C+</b>	<b>(77-79.99%)</b>
	<b>C</b>	<b>(73-76.99%)</b>
	<b>C-</b>	<b>(70-72.99%)</b>
	<b>D+</b>	<b>(67-69.99%)</b>
	<b>D</b>	<b>(63-66.99%)</b>
	<b>D-</b>	<b>(60-62.99%)</b>
	<b>E</b>	<b>(under 60%)</b>

### **Sports Knowledge Quizzes:**

Eleven times during the semester, at the beginning of class, the instructor will administer a current information sports knowledge quiz containing information about UF, State of Florida, national or international sports. There also may be one grammar quiz. The quizzes will be announced and the instructor will inform the students of the general topic and sources prior to the quiz. The announcements/information will be provided in the previous class, on Canvas, or on the course WordPress site. Working in sports requires a well-rounded understanding of sports and the quizzes serve as a motivation to learn as much as possible about the field in which students will be working.

We also will have in class group projects and competitions about various sports topics. Active and enthusiastic participation is an important component of your Quiz/Participation grade.

### **Station Work:**

Students are required to receive professional training and work experience for a minimum of six hours each week in the Innovation News Center and ESPN Gainesville 98.1 WRUF studios. This is a critical component of the course and the evaluation of the quality of work during this experience will comprise 33% of the final grade. Training may include research, writing sports updates and web stories, control board operations and covering and reporting on events such as press conferences and sports competitions. You should visit the ESPN 98.1 WRUF website now to become familiar with the style and type of stories covered. <http://www.wruf.com>

Shifts may include evening or weekend hours, and can change, and you may be asked to work during times outside your regular shifts. The weekend and evening shifts should be seen as recognition of your good work. This typically means you have been asked to cover an event because you have done excellent work at the station. This will provide you with additional valuable experience. Steve Russell, Sports Director for the multimedia properties, will assign the shifts and provide the primary oversight and evaluations of your work. It is imperative that you arrive on time for shifts and never leave early. If you complete your assigned tasks and do not have another, proactively engage in other sports work to complete your shift.

Introductory training sessions will be held during the second and third weeks of the semester at ESPN Gainesville WRUF 98.1. Attendance is required even for students who have worked previously at one of the College's multimedia properties. Hopefully, the sessions can be held on

the first or second Tuesday, starting near the end of the class. Attendance at a training session is required. Please send me prior notice if you have a sudden emergency or become contagiously ill or otherwise too sick to attend either session.

**Important:** *In lieu of a final exam, you will be working at the station through the end of finals week. Please mark this down on your calendars.*

You must cover your entire shift each time and be on time. If you cannot work, you are responsible for getting someone to cover the shift for you and informing the sports director. This rule is very strictly enforced and the penalty enforced on your station work grade for failure to show up or for being late is severe. Steve Russell is a highly experienced, dedicated and effective mentor, and overall, most students find this aspect of the course to be both enjoyable and invaluable.

There is a professional dress code for the multimedia properties. Students must be prepared at all times to be sent out to press conferences or other events. When you go, you represent the properties, the College and the University of Florida. The requirements include collared shirts. Neutral colors are required for sports journalism students, meaning no orange or blue or UF attire. In addition, athletic wear, hats, sleeveless shirts and flip-flops are not permitted. The dress code will be distributed in class.

### **Class Projects: Details to Come**

**Project One:** A feature story on any athlete or coach. This is a radio story. **Due: Thursday Feb. 8 by 9:00 am**

**Project Two:** A game recap of any UF or professional sports game. **Due: Thursday Feb. 22 by 9:00 am**

**Project Three:** For Project Three, you will pitch your topic to me. This will be a serious sports story, but can involve almost any widely-recognized sport. You may take any angle. This is a very important assignment (20%) of your final grade, and should build on the critiques and experience from the previous assignments and course discussions and activities. **Due: Thursday March 29 at 9:00 am**

**Final Project:** Write a season advance on any professional sports team including photos/video, text and wrap. The story will focus on expectations for the upcoming season. **Due: April 17 at class time**

All projects will be expected to be of high quality work. Be sure to work ahead to secure a subject and sources for your stories, and work ahead. You should, for example, begin researching and working on Project Four as you complete Project Three.

Make certain all stories are completely clear of fact errors, typos and any possible spelling or grammatical errors. After suggestions for revisions by the instructor or multimedia properties

staff members, students will be expected to produce work of sufficiently high quality to post to the ESPN Gainesville 95.3 website.

On class sessions after projects are due, students will present the project the class and report on their work and receive feedback from the instructors and classmates.

Please email a link to the audio/video your story by the deadline, and send a verbatim hard copy of the written portion of the story even if you have to type it out separately.

**Optional:** You should be in the process of creating your own personal website to showcase your work. Most of you probably are. If you are not, most students prefer the user-friendly option WordPress. If you do not already have a WordPress account (or your own site), you can create one by going to <http://wordpress.com/>. Step-by-step instructions on how to create your site are provided. You can use a host other than WordPress.

A finished site includes any stories you can link to that you did for the ESPN Gainesville 98.1 site, a professional Twitter account to scroll on the site, a LinkedIn account connected to the site, and any photos you took that were not included in a story for the WRUF site. We can talk about this in class.

**COURSE SCHEDULE: \*NOTE: The topic schedule subject will change based on guest availabilities and other factors. There will be no change in project due dates.**

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| Week One (Jan 9):    | Intro to class and review of syllabus; introductions, the basics of sports journalism; relationship to other sports communication fields.   |
| Week Two (Jan 16):   | History and growth of sports journalism; methods of information gathering and research in sports; sports writing exercises; <b>Discussion of Project One.</b><br>Multimedia property professional training. |
| Week Three (Jan 23): | Emphasis on sports writing for the Web; various forms and approaches to sports reporting; effective use of sound bites and quotes; sports writing exercises.<br>ESPN 98.1 shifts start this week.           |
| Week Four (Jan 30):  | News judgment and sports; ethics and values of high quality sports journalism; types of sports stories.<br>Sports writing exercises. <b>Discussion of Project Two.</b>                                      |
| Week Five (Feb 6):   | Guest speaker. Reports on projects. <b>(Project 1 due Thursday Feb. 8 at 9:00 am)</b><br><b>Discussion of Project Two</b>   |
| Week Six (Feb 13):   | Interviewing techniques for athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners; researching sources of information on sports figures.  |

- Week Seven (Feb 20): Handling press conferences/teleconferences; social media and sports journalism (**Project 2 due Thursday Feb. 22 at 9:00 am**)
- Week Eight (Feb 27): **Project Two: Presentations and Analysis**  
**Discuss Project Three**
- Week Nine (March 6): **Spring Break**
- Week Ten (March 13): **Project Two: More Presentations and Analysis**  
Ethics case studies and exercises; using media guides
- Week Eleven (March 20): Guest Speakers: Sports talk programming vs. sports reporting and the live broadcast  
**Bring to class a sports project completed at ESPN 98.1.**
- Week Twelve (March 27): ESPN assessment; working a sports journalism beat; the various sports networks. Guest speaker. (**Project 3 due Thursday March 29 at 9:00 am**)
- Week Thirteen (April 3): **Project Three: Presentations and Analysis**
- Week Fourteen (April 10): Sports journalist guest lecture, in class or Skype
- Week Fifteen (April 17): **Final Project Four Due at Beginning of Class April 17: Presentations and Analysis**

**Newsroom shifts run through exam week in lieu of final exam.**