

Audience Engagement, JOU4930

Spring 2019, University of Florida

Instructor: Joy Mayer

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Video or phone office hours: By appointment

Dates and times of class: We will meet in person the weekend of Feb. 8-10, at the following times (with breaks, of course). Attendance at all three sessions is mandatory. See below for specific attendance policies. Classes will be held at these times in a journalism school classroom to be announced.

Friday: 2 pm to 8 pm

Saturday: 11 am to 5 pm

Sunday: 1 pm to 5 pm

Required reading and equipment:

There is no required textbook. Readings will come in the form of links to online material. You will be required to have a device to read/write/browse with and a charger with you during our weekend class. No special software is needed.

About the course:

The relationship between journalists and their audiences is changing, and journalists need to have a respect for and understanding of the people the journalism is designed to reach and serve. In this course, we will look at how a collaborative culture is changing journalism, and how journalists can take part. We'll discuss key questions like:

- Who are your messages and your journalism designed to reach — on a brand level or a story level — and how can you reach them?
- How can you be strategic enough to know if what you're doing is successful? How do we know if the journalism is "working"? What is it we hope to accomplish, and how are we measuring success?
- How do you build relationships with your audience and earn their trust?
- How can you reflect diverse perspectives and effectively invite the participation of your whole community?

Specific examples of what we'll cover:

- Inviting the audience to interact with us and with our products, offline and online
- Using social platforms to strategically reach existing and new audiences, taking advantage of a truly social life cycle to tell iterative and evolving stories.
- Telling good stories across multiple platforms, taking advantage of what each does well
- Using digital tools and offline tools to listen to what our target audiences are saying, then using that data to better serve them
- Defining and measuring the success of journalism

About the instructor:

I've been teaching and specializing in audience engagement in journalism since 2009. I developed a curriculum and a newsroom team around engagement at the Missouri School of Journalism. I was a practicing journalist for almost 20 years, first as a designer and editor and then as a director of

engagement. I'm now a full-time engagement strategist and consultant based in Sarasota, Fla. I run the [Trusting News](#) project, which helps journalists actively demonstrate their credibility and earn audience trust. I'm also an adjunct faculty member at The Poynter Institute and a fellow with the Reynolds Journalism Institute. More on my background is at [linkedin.com/in/mayerjoy](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mayerjoy).

Learning objectives:

- To be able to articulate why and how the audience has an increasingly large role to play in journalistic processes and products.
- To be able to craft journalism that is strategically designed to reach specific audiences in specific ways.
- To think critically, creatively and independently about what role journalists and users will fill as information needs change along with the media landscape.
- To think critically, creatively and independently about the notion of “audience” and what it means for specific brands, projects or stories.
- To be able to define what success means for different types of journalism with regards to its audience.

Grading scale:

- A 100-93%
- A- 92-90%
- B+ 89-87%
- B 86-83%
- B- 82-80%
- C+ 79-77%
- C 76-73%
- C- 72-70%
- D+ 69-67%
- D 66-63%
- D- 62-60%

Deductions:

Failure to meet deadlines for assignments will result in a deduction of one letter grade for every 24-hour period that it is late.

Assignments:

- **25 percent of your grade:** Your pre-course assignment is due before class, at 9 a.m. Feb. 1. The latest this assignment will be accepted is 9 a.m. Feb. 5. By Jan. 18, you will be emailed details about that assignment.
- **25 percent of your grade:** You will have in-class work during our weekend together, both individually and in groups.
- **10 percent of your grade:** You will get a grade for your attendance and participation in classroom discussions and work during our weekend together.
- **40 percent of your grade:** You will have a final assignment due two weeks after our weekend class, at 9 am on Feb. 25. You will get that assignment in class.

Class participation and attendance:

Attendance at all three days of class is mandatory. Up to one hour missed (0-60 minutes), including arriving late or leaving early, is excused. After that, each missed hour results in 5 points deducted from

your final course grade. Absences due to illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, etc., will be handled [in accordance with UF policies](#).

We'll move quickly in class, and there won't be time to zone out. Stay engaged. Keep multitasking to a minimum. Join the conversation. Participate fully in group and class work. Plan to earn the 10 percent of your grade that is based on participation, not have it handed to you automatically.

Classroom needs:

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to instructor.

Honor code:

Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources or fabricating material, as well as other forms of cheating. Violations will result in a failing grade, and you will be dismissed from the journalism program and reported to the Honor Court. See the Department of Journalism website for specific outline of honor code violations.