

JOU 4313C: SPORTS REPORTING
Spring 2019
WEIM 2050 4:05-7:05 p.m. T

Instructor: Dr. Roxane Coche
Email: rcoche@ufl.edu
Office: 3040C Weimer Hall

Phone / Text / Social Media:
 (619) 324-9251
   roxanecoche

 **Course description**

Welcome to JOU 4313C! This course is designed to develop writing, reporting, and professional skills specific to sports media. You will learn about writing strategies for stories in many forms: From straight news to features to opinion columns to investigative work. Most assignments will be multimedia in nature as you will be expected to produce stories that include not only copy, but also photos, videos and/or audio segments. If a class session requires us to leave the classroom, conduct will be governed by the rules of the classroom and the rules of the venue in which the class is meeting.

 **Goals**

This class is about reporting and writing about sports. Journalism today is more than words on paper. The overall objective for this class is for you to learn how to function as a sports journalist in 2019 and beyond. As such, by the end of the semester, you will have:

- 1) Enhanced your story idea generating, news gathering, interviewing, reporting and writing skills;
- 2) Acquired or improved visual (photography, graphics & video) and audio producing abilities;
- 3) Become (more) knowledgeable about a variety of sports;
- 4) Learned about the transcendent value of sports in society.

 **Readings**

There is no required textbook for this class, but required readings will be posted on Canvas.

An AP stylebook would be helpful, and I also recommend the following textbook: Gisondi, J. (2017). Field Guide to Covering Sports Second Edition. Washington: CQ Press. / ISBN-13: 978-1506315683 / ISBN-10: 1506315682.



Some rules

Here are a few rules to follow for this to be a successful course:

1. Be professional

Respect your classmates, their work and their views. Listen to your classmates' opinions before voicing your own. All in all be polite, professional and respectful when expressing yourself.

Please also respect your classmates' and my time. Class will start and end on time. If you must walk in late or leave class early for some important commitment, please email or see me before the day that you will be doing so.

2. Be prepared

As the old adage goes, "by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail," so come fully prepared for each session. Do the required reading and complete the assignments to the best of your abilities. This preparation will help you retain the materials and make class discussions richer.

3. Be engaged

My role is akin to that of a coach. You are the players, the main actors of this course. Get involved!

Deadlines

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm, especially in the media industry. You are responsible for turning in all projects on the date and time they are due. If you cannot make it to class that day, you are still responsible for uploading your project where appropriate. Exceptions may be made for extraordinary circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

Assignments

When applying for a job, employers may discard your application for not following basic instructions. To get you ready for these expectations, you will have to follow every single instruction on any given assignment. Failure to do so will earn you a grade of zero. Detailed instructions for all assignments are available on Canvas.

Honor Code

All students are expected to follow the University of Florida Honor Code. The full text of the Honor Code can be found on the [Dean of Students Office's website](#). Any violation of the academic integrity expected will result in a minimum academic sanction of a grade of zero on the appropriate assignment, and the student being reported to the journalism department. Note that plagiarism specifically is unforgivable in journalism. It essentially ends a journalist's career.



Grading

You will be given extensive feedback throughout the semester on stories you produce. You can earn up to 1,500 points in this course:

A: 1,350–1,500	C: 1,100–1,149
A-: 1,335–1,349	C-: 1,050–1,099
B+: 1,300–1,334	D+: 1,000–1,049
B: 1,250–1,299	D: 950–999
B-: 1,200–1,249	D-: 900–949
C+: 1,150–1,199	E: 0-899

Note: Errors of fact (including misspellings of proper names) will lower your grade by 20 points each time they appear in a story. Easily avoidable mistakes (missing words, typos, basic spelling errors) will cost 5 points each.

Refer to the appropriate instructions documents on Canvas for more details.

Your course grade is based on your involvement and participation in the course, various assignments and a semester-long team project. Short descriptions for each are below. Detailed descriptions are on Canvas.

Involvement and participation	150 points
Assignments	1,000 points
Project (using Print, Web and Video)	350 points

Involvement and Participation

My role is to efficiently guide the class throughout the semester, but it is your responsibility, as a class, to bring all projects to fruition. This course will be successful only if all of you participate. Thus, part of your overall grade will be determined by your active involvement in class, group activities and discussions. This includes online activities. The first task is for you to email me a picture of a soccer ball as soon as you finish reading this syllabus. Note that all ungraded exercises and activities are taken into consideration for your participation grade.

Assignments

Assignments include a thematic feature paper to be written in pairs, a video profile of an interesting person in the sports world, live tweeting of sporting events, opinion columns, and short weekly radio updates about a specific beat (unique to each of you). All assignments will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Depth and accuracy of reporting;
- Strength of your lede, nut graph and overall story structure;
- Grammar and AP Style;
- Brevity of your writing (don't use four words when you can use only one);
- Clarity of your writing;
- Strength of your multimedia components;
- Timeliness;
- Thoroughness of your analysis.

Project

You will team up for a semester-long multimedia journalism project. The project will require professionalism, research, critical thinking, creativity, and multimedia skills, including video, graphics, photos, and text. More details will be given in class and on Canvas.



Tentative schedule

- 01/08 Introduction & Sports media industry. Explanation and samples of assignments. Making up live tweeting schedule. Reminders: Leads, Story structure & Interviewing.
- 01/15 Opinion columns. Visuals: Video shooting & intro to video editing.
- 01/22 Video editing tutorials. Formal pitch for thematic features due. No class.
- 01/29 Radio updates feedback. Team project.
- 02/05 First column feedback. Creating portfolios. Team project.
- 02/12 Thematic feature. Team project.
- 02/19 Video profile editing (draft).
- 02/26 Second opinion columns (midterm).
- 03/05 NO CLASS: Spring break
- 03/12 Video profile editing (final).
- 03/19 Online portfolio feedback. Team project.
- 03/26 Thematic feature feedback. Team project.
- 04/02 Individual appointments – no class.
- 04/09 Thematic feature. Team project. Online portfolio.
- 04/16 Thematic feature. Team project. Online portfolio.
- 04/23 Final class. Team project due.