

JOU 4313
Sports Reporting and Writing
Tuesdays, 4-7 p.m.
Weimer 1070

Adj. Prof. Eric Adelson
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No Office Hours; Please Call or Text

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on sports reporting *and* writing. We will drill down on interview technique as well as writing technique. There will be a special emphasis on writing quickly and vibrantly. That requires good reporting, which in turn requires good listening and observation. I want you all to be better storytellers – whether in a newspaper, on TV, on a podcast, or on social media.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To learn to watch and describe every athlete and every game in a unique way.

FEEDBACK

Be prepared for occasional in-class critique of your work. I know this can be uncomfortable at times, but we are all trying to improve (including me) and it's better to get constructive (and polite!) criticism in class than in the real world. Every lesson you learn this semester is hopefully one you won't have to learn later – when it counts.

A NOTE ON TECH USE

Laptops are allowed during class, but phones are not. I will do my best to allow phone breaks so you can check. (I also realize that it's hard to pay full attention for 2-3 hours.) Attendance and engagement matter to me, and I've found that students who pay the most attention tend to end up with the best grades. **Class participation will be worth 150 points toward your final grade (10 points per week).**

SPELLING

I have heard too many stories of internship/job applicants who were good enough to hire but got DQd because of a spelling error. I am very competitive about my students doing well in the job world and I don't want some Northwestern Wildcat or Georgia Bulldog to get a job because one of my Gators made a spelling error on a cover letter.

Accordingly, spelling and grammar will be a part of this grading rubric:

10 percent: quality of lede
40 percent: quality of reporting/information

20 percent: quality of writing/storytelling/structure
20 percent: quality of mechanics/grammar/spelling, etc...

A NOTE ON BEING LATE/ABSENT

Life happens. People get sick, cars break down, kids don't have day care, the boss at your day job is being a jerk. In only two semesters teaching, my students have had all of these reasons for absence, and I understand. All I ask is for you to let me know *before* class that you will be late or absent. I will be lenient as long as you let me know and you make the effort to catch up later. You can always text me: 718-791-6483.

Every *unexcused* absence will result in a 10-point deduction from the student's final score.

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>

A NOTE ON COURSE CONTENT

In the interest of honest and frank discussions, my lectures and comments of guest speakers are strictly off-the-record. This means that they may not be published in any format, either in a print publication or on a web site, personal blog or social media.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

(Short version: Don't plagiarize, don't make things up, and if you rewrite Wikipedia passages I'll post a bad photo of you on a College GameDay sign.)

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-conducthonor-code/> or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

ASSIGNMENTS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

You may submit your work via email, but I prefer Canvas. No late assignments will be accepted.

There will be a minimum of 10 written homework assignments.

1. A 500-word game story on the National Championship Game **(due Jan. 13)**

2. A 10-minute Q&A with an athlete **(due Jan. 21)**
3. A profile (500 words minimum) of an athlete **(due Jan. 28)**
4. A 500-word game story on a UF or HS sporting event **(due Feb. 2)**
5. A 10-minute Q&A with a UF professor **(due Feb. 11)**
6. A profile (1000 words minimum) of a UF professor **(due Feb. 25)**

SPRING BREAK

7. A 500-word critique of a SportsCenter episode (due **March 17**)
8. A 500-word game story on a March Madness first round game **(due Mar. 20)**
9. Project TBA
11. A column (500 words minimum) on a sports topic of your choice **(due Apr 14)**
12. A feature story (1000 words minimum) on a TBD sports topic **(due Apr 21)**

GRADES (based on homework assignments and class participation)

93-100: A

90-92: A-

87-89: B+

83-87: B

80-82: B-

Etc...

Below 60: F

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Tuesday, Jan. 7

Class introductions, overview of the course and syllabus

Assignment: Write a 500-word game story (off television) on the National Title game Jan. 13.

Due by class (4 pm) the next day. (100 points)

WEEK 2: Tuesday, Jan. 14

--Due at start of class: 500-word National Championship game story
--Guest speaker: UF swimming coach Anthony Nesty
--In-class: Q&A with Coach Nesty and discussion of interview technique
Assignment: Q&A with any athlete, HS or college (50 points)

WEEK 3: Tuesday, Jan. 21

--Due at start of class: Q&A with a UF athlete
--Guest speaker: Former ESPN The Magazine editor Chris Raymond
--In-class: Review of interviews
Assignment: 500-word story on any athlete (100 points)

WEEK 4: Tuesday, Jan. 28

--Due at start of class: 500-word story on any athlete
--Guest speaker: TBA
--In-class: Review of stories
Assignment: Write a 500-word game story on a UF or HS (or other local) sporting event. (100 points)

WEEK 5: Tuesday, Feb. 4

--Due at start of class: 500-word game story
--Guest speaker: Tess Quinlan, manager of digital content, NBC Sports
--In-class: Discussion of Super Bowl
Assignment: Q&A with a UF professor – not journalism, not sports (50 points)

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WEEK 6: Tuesday, Feb. 11

--Due at start of class: Q&A with a UF professor
--Guest speaker: TBA
--In-class: TBA
Assignment: Write a 1000-word profile on a UF professor (150 points)

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WEEK 7: Tuesday, Feb. 18

--Due at start of class: 1000-word profile on a UF professor
--Guest speaker: Matt Baker, investigative reporter for the Tampa Bay Times
--In-class: TBA
Assignment: Write a 500-word critique of a SportsCenter episode (200 points)

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WEEK 8: Tuesday, Feb. 25

--Due at start of class: 500-word critique of a SportsCenter episode
--Guest speaker: Jamie Seh, football play by play broadcaster
--In-class: Discussion of prioritizing stories

SPRING BREAK: Tuesday, Mar. 3

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WEEK 9: Tuesday, March 10

--Due at start of class: No Assignment Due

--Guest speaker: TBA

--In-class: TBA

Assignment: Write a 500-word game story (off television) on a March Madness first round game (100 points)

WEEK 10: Tuesday, March 17

--Due at start of class: 500-word game story on a March Madness game

--Guest speaker: TBA

--In-class: TBA

Assignment: 1000-word feature story *due April 21*** (200 points)**

(NOTE: I may sub this assignment for a class project)

WEEK 11: Tuesday, March 24

--Due at start of class: No Assignment Due

--Guest speaker: TBA

--In-class: TBA

Assignment: 500-word column on a topic of your choice (100 points)

WEEK 12: Tuesday, March 31

--Due at start of class: No Assignment Due

--Guest speaker: TBA

--In-class: TBA

Assignment: 500-word column on a topic of your choice (100 points)

WEEK 13: Tuesday, April 7

--Due at start of class: 500-word column

--Guest speaker: TBA

--In-class: TBA

Assignment: Work on feature *OR*** class project**

WEEK 14: Tuesday, April 14

--Due at start of class: No Assignment Due

--Guest speaker: TBA

--In-class: TBA

Assignment: Finish feature *OR***class project**

WEEK 15: Tuesday, April 21

--Due at start of class: 1000-word feature story ***or*** class project

[Schedule subject to change based on guest availabilities and other factors.]

A PERSONAL NOTE

I am grateful to be your teacher and I want to help you get better. I hope to be a resource for you, in your academic career and in your professional career. If I feel your work is good enough, I will reach out to publications and pitch your stories. If you need me to look over your resume or advise you on a job application, please let me know. I've been very blessed during my career and I want to pay it forward.

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 that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this process as early as possible in the semester. 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 announcements will be made giving specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the evaluations website URL above. 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>

U MATTER, WE CARE

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.