

RTV 4681 SECTION 4343 CLASS # 20229

ADVANCED TV REPORTING (“TV2”)

SPRING 2020 SYLLABUS MARK LEEPS (mleeps@wuft.org, 352-294-1504)
& KALISHA WHITMAN

Basics

Prerequisite: Grade of C or better in RTV4301, JOU3101

Class: **Tuesdays & Thursdays 8:30am-9:20am, Weimer 1078**

INC lab: Newsroom shifts = **one full day/wk (9:30am - 6:00pm) pre-arranged**

Instructor’s office hours: M-F 1-2p

(Mark - Room 2324, Kalisha - Room 2309, both offices are in the INC)

Texts

Required Text:

Broadcast News Handbook: Writing, Reporting & Producing in a Converging Media World (4th Edition)

by Charlie Tuggle, Forrest Carr, Suzanne Huffman

Highly Recommended Text:

A Reporters Guide to the Art of TV Storytelling (DVD)

by John McQuiston (available at www.johnmcquiston.com)

Suggested Pro Development Texts:

Shorter, Sharper, Stronger: Writing Broadcast News

by Merv Block

Make it Memorable: Writing and Packaging TV News with Style

by Bob Dotson

Write for the Ear, Shoot for the Eye, Aim for the Heart: A Guide for TV Producers and Reporters

by Al Tompkins

Course

TV2 is *Advanced TV Reporting* at the college level, but in the commercial tvnews world is basic pkg-driven **daily-deadline general assignment reporting**.

In TV2, you will practice the role of an entry-level tv news reporter, including some related work for radio/online/social media.

Background

The pro stations make UF an extraordinary place to gain practical experience, compared to many other J-schools. Many schools create campus news for a campus audience (perhaps a weekly on a totally academic calendar), with a student/campus target audience, “broadcast” only on campus cable.

We do something totally different in your “labs” at the INC for UF Media outlets. We serve a much broader audience (generally age 25+, and throughout the pro market area), and WUFT-TV broadcasts can be received by more than a half-million homes, so our challenge in the INC is to create college student journalism products which are competitive with the pro options in the market (TV20, WKTK, Gainesville Sun, Ocala Star Banner).

Your tvnews work will routinely be broadcast to a 10+ county area...

Gainesville & Ocala first and foremost, but our coverage area also ranges from Jacksonville to Lake City to Live Oak to Cedar Key to Williston to Palatka. Your work can often be seen online (www.wuft.tv) by people anywhere in Florida (or elsewhere). That’s your work, *good or bad*, and people will notice either way. *If you’re a self-starter who fights for winning story elements, your daily shift work will show it. If not, that will also show.*

Objective

The objective of TV2 is to develop a growing base of skills & knowledge needed to succeed in an **entry-level reporter** position at a commercial television news station, to develop skills & experience you can include on your **resume**, and to create reporting clips you can include on your **resume reel** which reflects your reliable skill level as a reporter/photographer/editor. If you score in the top tier on your newsroom shifts, you may be able to further your craft & skills in a future term with an independent study (TV3) in solo daily-deadline reporting. If your enterprise project shows hints of outstanding craftsmanship, you may be able to further your craft in a future term with an independent study (TV4) in tv features reporting. (Note: TV3/TV4/TV5 Independent Studies are not automatic acceptance; they are offered only by selection of the instructor.)

Goals

Demonstrate the following **professional skills**:

1. story selection & story treatment strategy
2. weekly scouting work (**pre-reporting work days before you make a pitch**)
3. writing & storytelling craft
4. **mastery of nat sound**
5. tvnews (broadcast quality) photography craft
6. **tvnews video editing craft**
7. time management & deadlines
8. teamwork with radio/web platforms
9. gatekeeping/editorial influence and quality control
10. dealing with the public & public service.

Demonstrate a **professional work ethic**:

1. follow industry standards for ethics & professionalism (FCC compliance)
2. follow UF rules (academic honesty, etc)
3. follow CJC DMP INC rules (dress code, loading zone, equipment, etc.)
4. be attentive in the classroom/office (no cellphone/tablet/laptop use)
5. behave as a pro representative of a business

Outline

Weeks 1-2: introduction & orientation, field gear & workflow training

Weeks 3-5: story selection, target audiences, **understanding viewer benefit**, writing tips & strategies (*Handbook Chapters 1-5*)

Week 6: short formats common to tv news (*Handbook Chapters 7 & 8*)

Weeks 7-9: package basics, storytelling toolbox, **elemental analysis**, **interview/source treatments**, reporter presence (*Handbook Chapter 9*)

Week 10: **ICE TEA enterprise stories**, advanced techniques

Week 11: producing (*Handbook Chapter 11*)

Weeks 12-13: live reporting (*Handbook Chapter 12*)

Weeks 14-16: ethics, deceptive practices & libel, privacy, trespass, situational best practices (*Handbook Chapter 13*)

Red Flags:

If ever during the course of the term you have a late gear return, or gear suspension, or are warned/suspended for misuse of the Weimer Service Drive, you could lose one grade level for each instance. Lost gear incidents will be treated the same if the items are not found promptly or paid for in short order. Note: TEL charges actual costs—replacement plus shipping—for each item.

Calendar Notes:

- LECTURE BEGINS TUESDAY 01/07
- LAB SHIFTS (TRAINING) BEGIN MONDAY 01/13
(but you don't have to submit pitches until the following week)
- LAB SHIFTS (after pre-reporting & pitching) BEGIN TUESDAY 01/21
- LAB SHIFTS END WED 04/22
- SPECIAL DAYS:
 - MON 01/20: MLK DAY, no shifts, no show
 - MON 03/02 through FRI 03/06, SPRING BREAK, no shifts, no show
 - THUR 04/23 & FRI 04/24: READING DAYS, makeup shifts, vol. shows

The normal daily-deadline drill:

Your shift runs 9:30am-6:00pm one day per week, but you must do **advance work** (3-4 weekdays before each shift) to make each shift a success...

You need to be exploring a story idea, making calls and **getting answers**, refining a pitch, and **submitting ONE into our website 48 hours in advance** of your shift.

You will make a **max 1 minute pitch** for your pre-reported story idea at the 9:30am editorial meeting in the INC conference room. Every TV2 pitches every week regardless of whether you think you're likely working as a reporter or photographer that day.

You will work an assignment on daily-deadline, often in pairs but sometimes as a one-man-band. You will work with the 5pm Producer on how your tv story is coming along throughout the day and during the process you may report on **social media**. Afterward you may be asked to submit a web version.

After getting copyediting approval (normally from Mark or Kalisha) you will edit your pkg on deadline while finishing your scripts (our **script deadline is 4:30pm**, our **video editing deadline is 4:45pm**).

When done video editing, you will submit your edited video file(s). We normally edit in Premiere Pro and make an FTP upload to our Nexio HD-playback server.

You may or may not host your story live in the newsroom or studio or in the field. You will attend critique immediately after the newscast in the studio (unless you are live in the field and cannot get back in time). **You will normally be cleared from your shift no later than 6pm**, however, you may be required to rework a piece "tomorrow" to make it airworthy, which would require extra "lab" time.

Grading

- **40% - Newsroom Shift Performance** Any missed shifts must be made up before the end of the term (if you're sick, please email and stay away from the INC—just bring in your doctor's note when you return). Each missed shift not made up will lower this overall grade by 5 points. You're graded on the quantity and quality of your package reporting and your ability to handle general assignment daily-deadline work.
This grade component is an *end-of-term assessment* of what skills you've demonstrated on your newsroom shifts—particularly photography, reporting, editing, time management, and your ability to think your way around daily obstacles in newsgathering on deadline. Grading of shifts looks at **quantity and quality of pkg's** completed during the term...and a judgment of whether you've reached the ability to be assigned a lead story on any given day.
- **25% - Story Ideas/Pitches** The key is to expand your "radar", find something interesting, make calls on it *in advance* (**pre-reporting**) to sharpen your focus, and put it in the Slack pitch system 48 hours BEFORE you pitch it verbally at your morning editorial meeting.
At that morning meeting you should ALREADY be our "expert" on this story...should *already know* the basics from talking to sources and already know this is a good day to cover this story, and you must already know/check whether anything like this has been done recently in the paper or TV20 or on our air or website. Good news pitches MUST be something NEW to be newsworthy, and not a rehash of what WUFT or TV20 aired last night or was in the local papers this morning.

Similar to the grade for your shift reporting packages, this is an end of term assessment of your quantity and quality of pre-reporting and story pitches. We will only grade the first entry in the system for each week. 2nd and 3rd pitches for the same shift (because an idea was rejected) will not count into your overall quantity of pitches, but we need you to enter them anyway, so what finally is approved is claimed so that other reporters know you're on it. As for quality, we'll make an overall end-of-term assessment of how viable your ideas were for local tv news reporting in general and how well you avoided the known pitfalls...like student-interest-only stories, or Annual Day/Week stories that lack mass community participation or a new angle, or stories straight-out-of-the-paper without advancing any elements to get ahead.

- **10% - Classroom Attendance** Attendance is mandatory. Participation is optional but college learning “classroom professionalism” is not...don’t be late or overly loud, try to pay attention and/or take notes, don’t become a distraction for others trying to learn this material. **Cellphones and computers should never be used or out in the open during class**, they should be stored for afterward...we only meet for 50 minutes max, sometimes a little less. Attendance checks are frequent, supplemented by whether you missed a quiz or failed to pick-up a returned quiz, so make sure you’re there on time to get all handouts. Each missed class lowers your attendance grade by 3 points...and means you’ll probably struggle on the next quiz.
- **25% - Pop Quizzes** All will be 10 questions...multiple choice...based on lecture material, handouts, textbook material, and news current events. If you miss one for any reason, it’s up to you to take the initiative to make it up within *two weekdays* or get a zero for that quiz. **One key to becoming a better reporter/producer of news is to become a better consumer of news (especially local news, across platforms), so current events (local & national) should never be a problem for a local media reporter.**
- **Extra credit: Advanced Feature** If you want to attempt a well-crafted feature for extra credit, you will have to do it on your own time and submit before classes end.

Any use of file, feed or handout video must be pre-approved. A sweeps-style feature must have at least 3 sources (a central character and at least 2 others weighing-in...but make sure they are not all “insiders” with similar viewpoints—look for at least 1 outsider to add perspective), at least 3 pops of nat sound full, at least 1 active/creative standup, and an overall length of 2:00 to 4:00. If there is a data hook or key number, think about how to reinforce that or visually translate “the shape of a number”.

This package should be *the best story you’ve ever done in terms of craftsmanship.* The grading analysis will follow the ICE TEA formula explained in class, where the Idea times Craftsmanship equals Effectiveness, and Craftsmanship can be thought of as the sum of your Treatment, Elements, and Artistry. Look out for one-stop-shopping; we don’t want an event other than as a jumping-off point to meet someone in a setting with action video...features almost always have to “follow them home” to different settings and go out of the way for creative treatments.

Grading Policies

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

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

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

Grading Scale

The grading scale for TV2 is as follows:

A	95-100
A-	92-94
B+	89-91
B	86-88
B-	83-85
C+	80-82
C	77-79
C-	74-76
D+	71-73
D	60-70
D-	50-59
E	0-49

Course Fees

This course requires 2 additional fees.

- A Materials & Supplies fee of about \$50 covers expendables. Roughly \$10 covers paper/toner for printer/copier supplies for course handouts and for your access to INC printers and copiers. Roughly \$40 covers SD memory cards you will be given to use on any projects.
- An Equipment fee of about \$265.00 covers access to professional field gear kept as an earmarked fleet for TV2 use in G020, plus access to professional edit gear maintained in the INC, plus a share of the costs of studio gear which supports TV2 work being able to air on WUFT-TV newscasts.

Academic Honesty: Team vs Solo Work

Your lab work is a shared responsibility, but **I expect reporters to take the lead on writing and editing on deadline (“ownership”) of their own packages.**

Quizzes, tests, story ideas, story analysis papers, and any other written material handed in must be your own work with no help for others. If you do one for extra credit, **any in-depth project should be all your own work** *except* you can (and should) recruit someone to shoot a compelling standup.

UF Honor Code

You are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. Any violation of the academic integrity expected of you will result in a minimum academic sanction of Zero for the assignment. Any alleged violations of the Student Honor Code (academic cheating, false statements for academic advantage) will result in a referral to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution with a minimum recommendation of **Zero for the Assignment AND a grade of E for the course.** Please review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code at www.sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/

Accommodations

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.

TV2 students typically handle 20-30 pounds of gear in all sorts of weather conditions; students with physical limitations or ongoing medical conditions should seek accommodation from the instructor as needed.

Campus Resources

Please be aware of UF’s Health & Wellness resources for students:

U Matter, We Care: **if you or a friend is in distress, please reach out** umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can respond

Counseling & Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
352-392-1575

First Responders: University Police Department 352-392-1111 or 911 for emergencies <http://www.police.ufl.edu/> & SARS (Sexual Assault Recovery Services) at the Student Health Care Center 352-392-1161

CJC/DMP/INC Policies

It is your responsibility to learn and comply with all INC policies (posted online: wuft.org/newsroom), and these apply to everyone regardless of platform involved: WUFT-TV, WUFT-FM, wuft.org, WRUF-TV, ESPN-am/fm/web, etc. Please pay particular attention to the well-established policies involving our newsroom dress code, ethics, computer usage, and field gear usage & liability.

There are specific rules in the Dress Code but the bottom line is **you will not be treated as a professional if you do not look business-like**. Anyone who violates the dress code will be notified at the time of the violation and advised to comply in the future or sent home to change, if necessary, in the judgment of the newsroom staffer. Students who appear on tv or the web will get feedback about clothing, makeup and performance...in order to keep our work products on-par with industry standards.

The G020 Loading Zone Student Policy emphasizes that any access to the Weimer Service Drive is only for stopping to load/unload heavy/bulky gear and stops are limited to 10 minutes. **Follow instructions closely, you are personally responsible for any tickets you get.**

The CJC/DMP/INC Equipment Policy emphasizes that **gear checkout is for official course or INC business only**. The college/stations hold the rights to all work-product and published/broadcast material generated, and it may not be redistributed or repurposed in any form without permission of college/station officials. Don't post anything we generate to YouTube or other non-wuft websites without checking.

The Computer Policy emphasizes that **all the computers in the INC are for official station business (including select courses) only**. Many are reserved for people in specific roles at certain times of day. Make sure you work in an area appropriate to your role/course, that you log-in as instructed and save & log-out everytime you walk away.

We embrace the RTDNA Code of Ethics and the similar SPJ Code of Ethics, but we also have our own Ethics Policies you should study and follow.

The food & drink policy for the INC is that no eating or drinking is allowed outside the break room, nothing except for drinking (bottled) water...but be careful not to spill onto computers or gear.

TV2 Newsroom Basics

- To start your newsroom shift, be present and be prepared (with at least one *fully researched and scouted-out* story idea) at **9:30am** for the morning **editorial meeting**
- **You could perform in the newscast**, presenting your story in a newsroom live shot or on-set live shot or a field live shot
- **You are expected to attend the post-show critique** which will normally wrap by 5:50pm but there may at times be additional review work needed (to check scripts or editing timelines or review taped performance) which could take longer
- A **typical WUFT reporter crew workload is 1 pkg** on daily deadline, but we may ask you to pick up an extra vo or vo/sot, and if you come across spot news you should take a few minutes to gather something and call in. You need to get your news event out on social media ASAP from the field...you may need to work with digital and radio before you air on tv or may need to finish work on those other platforms afterward
- **You may be asked to get more elements before a story can air**; if you are able to devote time to that before your next shift, so much the better, you may also have to work it again the next time in (regardless of whether you would normally shoot or report that week)
- **In our shop, reporters should edit (or at least co-edit) their own pkg's.** This varies in the commercial world: sometimes there is the luxury of letting a skilled photographer/editor finish a piece, sometimes that person has to go out on another news assignment and the reporter finishes, sometimes it's a team effort or it varies. We want reporters to take the lead and take ownership of what goes on air.
- **Always call in to the assignment desk before returning to the station from the field, especially when you've traveled out of town.** WUFT-TV serves a 17-county area; out-of-town news coverage is routine and essential...and you will be expected to assume these costs as part of your normal lab shift duties (we generally work in teams of two and alternate driving when possible) unless you can demonstrate an extreme hardship.
- The tv **script deadline is 4:30pm and the "tape"/file deadline is 4:45pm**; by this time all video files should be delivered in final form and all related scripts should be in final form. Time management to make this deadline each and every time is part of your grade for the newsroom component.
- **Never leave your newsroom shift without prior approval** from a faculty/staff INC newsmanager.

- All work is done for potential broadcast on WUFT-TV, WUFT-FM and publishing on WUFT.ORG and related in-house platforms but you should **make no promises** to the public about if or when certain stories will air.
- We **never give copies** of our taped material (raw, edited, or airchecks) to **anyone**, but can take requests from the public to post a particular story on our web site.
- All the camcorder packages we have are expensive. The cheapest costs about \$3000, the TV2 HVX200 kits cost about \$7,000, we have some kits that cost almost \$20,000. **Treat all gear with care, you are responsible—for any reason other than normal professional handling wear and tear—if it is not returned in similar condition as when you checked it out.** You are required to sign a gear liability acknowledgement at the start of the semester and to sign a daily checkout form for the specific gear you're taking every time you use college gear.
- **All our equipment is for newsroom business only.** Treat all items with care, and do not abuse the privilege of borrowing them. Do not download any software onto the station computers.
- To help secure our gear and help keep our workplace secure, **do not let strangers into the newsroom and do not prop the doors open after normal business hours.** Report any unusual activity to managers and report any suspicious activity to managers or police.
- **Keep backups.** The material on all of our workstations gets routinely deleted at the end of each term...and failures could happen at any time. **Protect your best work and save it to your portable hard drive.**
- In addition to INC NewsManagers, other station staffers may provide feedback at any time. **All criticism from the pro staff is meant to be professional, not personal...learn to accept it and learn from it.** You may also get feedback from special guests.
- We have outside partnerships ongoing with NBC NewsChannel Florida, CNN, and sometimes others. **Don't assume material we generate can be shared or posted anywhere; always check with Mark first.**

Important notes about wrapping up the course

- Editing computers may have their memory cleaned during the term, so **make sure you are saving as you go** and before the end of term **make sure you have a digital copy of everything dear to you.** Don't depend on being able to find anything later in the editing machines, or in the playback servers, or in the archives of newscasts....you might get lucky, but don't count on it when you can make your own luck by making multiple backups (to a portable hard drive or cloud storage) **AS YOU GO.**
- **Students are expected to provide feedback** on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.
- **Your swipe access to the INC that comes with registration in this class will expire after the end of the term.** **TV2 does not come with automatic access to the 3rd floor editing lab;** we generally edit our projects in the newsroom after-hours.