

JOU 4313: Sports Reporting

Summer 2020

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Place: Online

Day and Time: When you feel like it – as long as you meet deadlines 😊

Instructor: Dr. Roxane Coche

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Office Hours: By appointment.

⇒ Email or text me at any time to set up an appointment. My cell number is on Canvas.

Canvas Link: <https://ufl.instructure.com>

Course Text: [*The Field Guide to Covering Sports \(Second Edition\)*, Joe Gisondi](#)

ISBN-13: 978-1506315683

ISBN-10: 1506315682

Other Readings and Resources will be posted and available online.

Overview and Objectives

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 journalistic stories in many forms. Several 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.

Course Learning Objectives

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 2020 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.

Some Rules

1. Professionalism

Respect your classmates, their work and their views. Be polite, professional and respectful when expressing yourself. In addition, I believe part of my job is to get you as ready for the professional industry as possible. Not following basic instructions disqualifies anyone from jobs, so, to get you ready for these expectations, you will have to follow every single instruction on any given assignment. Failure to do so will result in an automatic 20% deduction (of the maximum number of points possible) the first time, 50% the second time and 100% any time after that. Detailed instructions for all assignments are available on Canvas.

2. Preparation

As the old adage goes, “by failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail,” so do the required reading and listen to the lectures before completing any assignment, story or project. Ask questions if you have any doubts. I check my emails and texts way more than recommended by mental health professionals. I will always get back to you as soon as I can. If I seem to have forgotten for whatever reason (it doesn’t happen often, but it might), message me again. You are not bugging me by staying on top of things. **However:** If you have a question about an assignment, don’t text me at the last minute and expect an answer right away/before the deadline. I may be sleeping or showering at that time. I may use technology in unhealthy fashion (or so *they* say), but I am still a human being.

3. 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 assignments, stories and projects on the date and time they are due. Unlike Spring 2020, this class was prepared to be online, so you may do most of the work at your own pace. If you want to get ahead, you are welcome to. I will always try to provide feedback in a timely manner. Exceptions **may** be made for extraordinary circumstances if the student notifies the instructor before the due date.

4. Feedback

You will complete some assignments on a class discussion board, so everyone in the class can critique your work. While this can be uncomfortable, it is much better to get such criticism in class than from internet trolls. Of course, refer back to rule #1 when you are the one posting feedback.

5. Course Content

In the interest of honest and frank discussions, all materials I post on Canvas or other instructing tools (lectures, comments of guest speakers, discussion boards) 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.

6. Engagement

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

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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

You will be given extensive feedback throughout the semester on your work. You can earn up to 1,200 points in this course with the following breakdown:

Evaluation Components	Note	Points Per Component	% of Total Grade
Assignments (11)	One will be dropped	50 pts each = 500 pts	41.7%
Discussions (12)	Two will be dropped	10 pts each = 100 pts	8.3%
Stories (3)	-	100 pts each = 300 pts	25%
Final Project (1)	-	200 pts	16.7%
Final Exam (1)	-	100 pts	8.3%
Total	-	1200 pts	100%

Detailed instructions and rubrics are available on Canvas.

Note that for every assignment, story or discussion you turn in, errors of fact (including misspellings of proper names) will lower your grade by 20% each time they appear in a story (of the maximum number of points possible). Easily avoidable mistakes (missing words, typos, basic spelling errors) will cost 5% each.

Final grades will be calculated with the following table:

		1,110-1,200 points	A	1,080-1,109	A-
1,050-1,079	B+	1,000-1,049	B	960-999	B-
930-959	C+	870-929	C	840-869	C-
800-839	D+	750-799	D	700-749	D-
699 and under	F				

Course Outline

Week 1	<p>Welcome: Intro to class and review of syllabus Reading: Textbook, Chapters 1 & 5 and Primer A Lecture #1: Getting started Guest speaker #1: TBA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 1: Why is sports reporting unique? • Assignment 2: Newsworthiness in Reporting • Discussion: Newsworthiness in Producing
Story 1 due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 17	
Week 2	<p>Lecture #2: Interviewing skills Guest speaker #2: TBA Reading: Textbook, Chapter 3 + Check Canvas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 3: Write the questions • Assignment 4: Interview an athlete (any level) • Discussion: Interview a classmate (as assigned)
Week 3	<p>Lecture #3: Leads Lecture #4: Story Organizations Guest speaker #3: TBA Reading: Textbook, Chapters 2 & 4 and Primer E</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment 5: Write leads • Assignment 6: Rewrite a story • Discussion: Edit a classmate's story
Story 2 due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, May 31	
Week 4	<p>Lecture #5: Pitching stories Lecture #6: Using Twitter and social media for reporting Guest speaker #4: TBA</p>

	<p>Reading: Textbook, Chapter 6 + Check Canvas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignment 7: Pitch a story (as assigned) ● Assignment 8: Pitch and write a story (or vice-versa) ● Discussion: Pitch a story (of your own)
Week 5	<p>Lecture #7: Writing for radio and TV</p> <p>Lecture #8: Creating visuals</p> <p>Guest speaker #5: TBA</p> <p>Reading: Textbook, Chapters 10, 11 & 12 + Check Canvas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignment 9: Producing infographics ● Assignment 10: Video exercise ● Discussion: The skills needed
Story 3 due by 11:59 p.m. on Sunday, June 14	
Week 6	<p>Lecture #8: Data journalism in sport</p> <p>Guest speaker #6: TBA</p> <p>Reading: Textbook, Chapter 7 + Check Canvas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assignment 11: Viva mathematics! ● Discussion: Final project or TBD
Final project due by 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, June 18	
Timed final exam on Friday, June 19 (You will choose a time frame convenient to you.)	