
WELCOME TO JOU 4313

TITLE: Sports Reporting and Writing

TIME: Tuesdays, 3-6 p.m.

VENUE: Online ... at least to start

Adj. Prof. Eric Adelson

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(718) 791-6483

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 be better listeners, and better reporters, and better writers ... in that order.

ZOOM ETIQUETTE

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. I realize it's difficult to pay attention to a screen for hours on end, so I will make the Zoom meetings shorter than a regular lecture. In return, I expect as much focus as you can give.

You will be expected to have your video turned on, however I will allow exceptions if you provide a reason in advance (via email or text). Engagement and enthusiasm when guest speakers visit will be noted.

Class participation will be worth 300 points toward your final grade (20 points per week).

A NOTE ON BEING LATE/ABSENT

Life happens. People get sick, WiFi goes down, kids don't have day care, the boss at your day job is being a jerk. In my four 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 20-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> ([Links to an external site.](#))

WRITING STANDARDS

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 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/> ([Links to an external site.](#)) 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 without prior approval.

1. A 500-word “moment” from your life (100 pts ... due Sept. 8)
 2. Ten open-ended questions about a game (100 pts ... due Sept. 15)
 3. A 500-word analysis of *Athlete A* (100 pts ... due Sept. 21)
 4. A 500-word profile of an athlete’s parent (100 pts ... due Sept. 28)
 5. Q&A with a UF professor (100 pts ... due Oct. 13)
 6. A 1000-word profile of a UF professor (200 pts ... due Oct. 27)
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1. A 750-word oral history of a Gator game (200 pts ... due Nov. 6)
 2. Final project (300 pts ... due Dec. 8)

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

We will be starting online, but it is my hope to meet with you all in person by the end of the semester. You are NOT required to show up to in-person lectures if you are not comfortable. But please let me know so we can arrange an online meeting that week.

Note that we have a course “textbook,” *The New New Journalism*. You

will be expected to read it before the end of the semester. (It will help you with interview and writing strategy.)

WEEK 1: Tuesday, Sep. 1

--Due at start of class: Be ready to name a tentative career goal.

--Guest speaker: Shalize Manza Young, Yahoo Sports

--In-class: Class introductions, overview of the course and syllabus

Assignment: Write a 500-word scene about an important moment in your life. Make it as visual as possible. You must quote at least two other people. (100 points)

WEEK 2: Tuesday, Sep. 8

--Due at start of class: Your personal moment.

--Guest speaker: Kate Storey, Esquire Magazine

--In-class: Discussion of interview strategy.

Assignment: Pick a recent game or match -- any sport -- and list 10 *open-ended*** questions you would want to ask players or coaches after the game. (10 points per question for 100 points)**

WEEK 3: Tuesday, Sep. 15

--Due at start of class: Open-ended questions.

--Guest speaker: Pat Forde, Sports Illustrated

--In-class: Breaking news strategy.

Assignment: Watch *Athlete A* and write a 500-word synopsis of the film. (100 points)

WEEK 4: Tuesday, Sep. 22

--Due at start of class: Athlete A analysis.

--Guest speaker: Roxy Bernstein, ESPN

--In-class: Discussion of in-game interviews.

Assignment: Write 500 words on a parent of a famous athlete. (100 points)

WEEK 5: Tuesday, Sep. 29

--Due at start of class: 500 words on an athlete parent.

--Guest speaker: Mirin Fader, Bleacher Report

--In-class: Monkey Bars!

Assignment: Schedule an interview with a UF professor – not journalism, not sports

WEEK 6: Tuesday, Oct. 6

--Due at start of class: Interview with professor scheduled.

--Guest speaker: Alan Springer, Yahoo Studios

--In-class: Discussion of interview synthesis.

Assignment: Q&A transcript with a UF professor. (100 points)

WEEK 7: Tuesday, Oct. 13

--Due at start of class: Full transcript.

--Guest speaker: Evan Moore, Chicago Tribune

--In-class: Sports and social justice.

Assignment (Due Oct. 27): 1000-word profile of a UF professor. (200 points)

WEEK 8: Tuesday, Oct. 20

--Due at start of class: No assignment due

--Guest speaker: Mark Schlabach, ESPN

--In-class: Discussion of investigations.

Assignment (Due Nov. 6): Write 750 words about a moment in Gator sports – any game, any era – and describe it using only quotes from people who were there. (200 points)

WEEK 9: Tuesday, Oct. 27

--Due at start of class: 1000-word profile of UF professor.

--Guest speaker: Shireen Ahmed, Burn It Down Podcast

--In-class: Finding your blind spots.

Assignment: Work on your Gator moment oral history.

WEEK 10: Tuesday, Nov. 3

--Due Friday (Nov. 6): Oral history of Gator moment.

--No class: Election Day.

Assignment: VOTE.

WEEK 11: Tuesday, Nov. 10

--Due at start of class: Three ideas for your final project.

--Guest speaker: Bruce Feldman, FOX Sports

--In-class: Discussion of cultivating sources.

Assignment: Pick your final project.

WEEK 12: Tuesday, Nov. 17

--Due at start of class: Final project assignment due.

--Guest speaker: Frances Reimers, Athlete Brand Expert

--In-class: Career planning/discussion.

Assignment: Work on final project.

WEEK 13: Tuesday, Nov. 24

--Due at start of class: No Assignment Due

--Guest speaker: Dave Briggs, TV Reporter

--In-class: How to report on live TV.

Assignment: Work on final project.

WEEK 14: Tuesday, Dec. 1

--Due at start of class: No Assignment Due

--Guest speaker: Maggie Hendricks, Freelance Blogger

--In-class: Freelance journalism.

Assignment: Finish final project. (300 points)

WEEK 15: Tuesday, Dec. 8

--Due at start of class: COMPLETED FINAL PROJECT.

--Guest speaker: Malinda Adams, ESPN

--In-class: TBA

[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.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me.
- If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC director of inclusion and diversity, is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.
- If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-

8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc (Links to an external site.)) 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> (Links to an external site.)

A NOTE ON DIVERSITY

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our journalism courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

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.