

JOU 4930: Special Study, "Fresh Take Florida," Class No. 14906, Section 19H1

Fall semester 2020, University of Florida

Mondays 12:50 p.m. to 1:40 p.m., Hybrid: Online & WEIM 1078

Description:

Students will work as professional journalists closely with instructors to cover issues of statewide importance, including upcoming general elections, Florida's governor, Legislature, Supreme Court and other aspects of state government. They will produce in-depth content under their own bylines that is distributed to and published or broadcast by leading news organizations. **There is no final exam. You will be done with this course after UF's last regular day of fall classes, on Dec. 9.**

Attendance:

Our class meets weekly for roughly one hour on Mondays through the semester. We will discuss upcoming events and coverage plans, so please be prepared. Some weeks, we expect to have occasional guest speakers. Due to the pandemic, this class will meet remotely until further notice. When we are able safely to transition to face-to-face class meetings in Weimer 1078, with masks and social-distancing mandatory, we will still offer a remote option via Zoom. If you miss a meeting, you **must** discuss separately with an instructor any stories you propose pursuing or the status of your upcoming stories. We have provided a dial-in conference number for audio or video connections via the Zoom service for any students or faculty unable to attend in-person. The link is <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/99403523920?pwd=K3RqVmo5RmhtK29FZ0R4NTgwMU1MZZ09> and has been emailed to you as an Outlook calendar invitation, or the direct dial-in number is +16465588656,,99403523920#.

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>.

Office hours:

For Prof. Bridis, drop-in office hours will be 10a to 2p Thursdays via Zoom. You can connect during that time using this link:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/98254086386?pwd=ZUZBMVhGWl9uOER1TFRZc2NYUkhzQT09>

Meeting ID: 982 5408 6386

Passcode: 241155

Please make an appointment in advance, whenever possible, to avoid the virtual waiting room. Bridis is also generally available by appointment on other days. His email is tbridis@ufl.edu. He generally responds within 24 hours to emails during weekdays or within 48 hours during weekends.

Office hours for Ethan Magoc are 9 to 9:30 in his office along the western wall of the INC. We will generally respond within 24 hours to email inquiries during weekdays or within 48 hours during weekends.

Grading:

Print or online journalists are expected to publish at least five stories during the semester, on their own or with classmates. All stories must be approved by instructors before they count for credit. At least one of those stories – but not necessarily only one – should reflect coverage of an under-represented community. This can include policy issues of special significance, human or civil rights threats, profiles of political or public leaders important to such communities, etc. **Any in-person, field reporting for any stories must be approved in advance by instructors to ensure it can be done safely.** At the discretion of instructors, stories that require unusual time or effort may result in additional or even double credit. Each story is worth up to 200 points. Grading rubric for each story is below:

Assignment	Percentage	Points
Originality/distinctiveness	10	20
Collaborating with photo/video	10	20
Reporting depth	40	80
Writing/AP Style	40	80

Visual journalists will meet during the first two weeks of the semester with Prof. Daron Dean to set expectations for the minimum work required and grading rubrics.

For all students, a “professionalism” grade of up to 400 points for the semester, or roughly 25 percent of your grade, will be assigned by instructors. This will reflect a student’s ability to demonstrate initiative; meet deadlines; establish priorities; interact professionally with instructors, peers and classmates; deal with unusual reporting challenges and more.

Additionally, there is one class project due by 6 p.m. Nov. 16 that also is worth up to 400 points, or roughly 25 percent of your grade. You will be assigned to identify at least two extraordinary news stories or broadcasts published or aired during calendar 2020 so far about state government activities in states that we will assign to each of you. We are looking particularly for prize-worthy examples of investigative or breaking coverage about subjects, people, events or scandals. This assignment is intended to help you recognize the elements of what makes a state government news story especially great and worthy of emulation. You may use news clippings or press releases from a governor's office or majority or minority legislative leaders calling attention to a critical piece of journalism, or you may use this as a networking opportunity and contact reporters or editors in those states and interview them for their opinions on the best state government coverage of the year.

Grading scale:

- A = 90-100
- B = 80-89
- C = 70-79
- D = 60-69
- F = 59 or below

Grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Class requirements:

Most of our class-wide communication, including updates to this syllabus, will take place via Slack and Canvas. **Please install the Slack and Canvas apps on your smart phone and enable notifications**, and please regularly log in using your laptop.

You will be provided instructions for accessing a Fresh Take Florida-branded email account for the semester that you may choose to use. Please use it responsibly.

Early in the semester, you will be provided access and training to the commercial LobbyTools service, billed as Florida's most powerful research, monitoring, news and analysis service used by state and local governments, lobbyists, corporations, associations, law firms, and news organizations.

Some travel may be necessary during the semester. There is funding to reimburse travel costs that are approved in advance. Again: **Any in-person, field reporting for any stories must be approved in advance by instructors to ensure it can be done safely.**

Separately, there is funding to pay for public records, if those requests are approved by instructors in advance. We will negotiate aggressively to make sure we are not being overcharged.

Our Zoom class sessions may be audio and visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

When participating in our synchronous classroom sessions over Zoom, you should:

- Dress appropriately as you would in a regular class. I *prefer* but do not require that you leave your video turned on so that our guest speakers and I can see you.
- Use headphones if in a room with ambient noise.
- Situate your computer in an appropriate setting for displaying your video image to the participants of the Zoom meeting.
- Sit on a chair (preferably by a desk) or on a couch with no one behind you, if possible.
- Keep your audio on mute unless you are responding to the participants of the Zoom meeting.
- Use your computer, phone, or tablet only for reading course content and for taking notes.
- Do not use your electronic devices to take or receive calls, text messages, or view material unrelated to the course during the Zoom meeting.
- Use Zoom's chat feature to direct your questions to the whole class rather than a private chat with another student.
- Always be respectful of the ideas of others; if you disagree with the opinion or view of a classmate, express your own comments in a way that is respectful.

- Be open-minded.

A word about 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.

I want to create a learning environment for 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 do not hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.
- 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.

Accommodating 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 which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Textbooks:

There are no required textbooks for this course. We highly recommend "The Associated Press Guide to News Writing: The Resource for Professional Journalists," by Rene J. Cappon.

Course evaluation:

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. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Honesty policy:

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 (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 911 for emergencies.