

## **RTV 3303 Audio News and Reporting Summer 2021**

**Instructor:** Ryan Vasquez

**Section:** 8887

**Room:** Weimer 1090

**Periods:** Monday, Period 7-E1 (5:00PM-8:15PM)

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**Office:** Weimer 2304 **Hours:** Tuesday, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (and by appointment)

RTV 3303 is designed to offer instruction and training in news gathering, writing, interviewing, and reporting to increase student knowledge base on the subject matter. Special emphasis is placed on improving writing skills, basic news production and equipping students with the skills to be better multimedia journalists. Students receive additional practical experience in the WUFT newsroom where they will have the opportunity to apply the skills learned in the classroom portion of the course. **This is a real-world experience; you will get the opportunity to produce news content that can be heard both locally to serve the community we are obligated to cover and also nationally to an audience interested in how our area fits in a larger news picture.**

### **Course Objectives and Goals**

1. Writing news stories acceptable for on-air and station website use under deadline pressure
2. Ability to record audio in the field or over the phone and to edit that audio for broadcast.
3. Ability to write and report for both short newscast stories (sound stories) and more in-depth stories (wraps, features).
4. An opportunity and expectation that work produced in class and in the newsroom can and will be used on the radio or on WUFT's website.
5. Opportunity to voice your work, live or recorded, on the air.
6. Better news consumption habits
7. Improving ability to find news stories, develop sources and be a better enterprise reporter.

### **Course Eligibility:**

Student must be in the College of Journalism and Communication ---- Student must have received a "C" grade or better in RTV 2100 and RTV 3001 if you are still classified as Telecommunication News. If you are a Journalism major your course requirements may be different. If you haven't met this requirement, please come forward ASAP.

### **Required Equipment:**

For your projects, you will be able to check out digital audio recorders. You will also be issued an SD card; this is yours to keep. The newsroom has recorders for you to use during your shifts (See guidelines for checking out equipment).

### **Recommended Equipment:**

- A cell phone that can record audio, access and use social media, and take photos.
- A computer that you can conduct recorded interviews on. This includes storage for interviews or a portable hard drive that you can store that content on.
- The app Voice Recorder Lite is an option for Apple Users. Samsung and other Android platform users can use their built-in sound recorder. All users can use Smart Recorder Lite. Rev is also a good, free recorder.
- There are also phone call recording apps like TapeACall which is \$10.99 and Google Voice which is limited but free.

### **Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Students will be given specific times when evaluations are open later in the semester. Summary results of these and previous assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### **Zoom Professionalism:**

There may be a time where we need to utilize Zoom during this semester. Please be mindful of maintaining a professional appearance and conduct via our remote lecture meetings. Consider your wardrobe and hygiene just as you would were we all in the same room, as well as your audio and visual backgrounds.

You are expected to have your camera on during Zoom sessions. If you go to a black screen for a significant amount of time, points will be deducted from your attendance/participation score at the instructor's discretion. Note that lectures will be recorded for educational purposes. If you have extenuating circumstances or concerns about Zoom attendance, please see the instructor.

### *Virtual backgrounds*

You are encouraged to use virtual backgrounds for Zoom if you want to protect the privacy of your environment or surroundings. Please be respectful. I can provide some basic backgrounds to you as well if you would like.

There is some aspect of this course that may require face-to-face instruction or interactions to accomplish the student learning objectives of this course. In response to COVID-19, the following policies and requirements are in place to maintain your learning environment and to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions.

- You are required to wear approved face coverings at all times during class and within buildings. Following and enforcing these policies and requirements are all of our responsibility. Failure to do so will lead to a report to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution.
- This course has been assigned a physical classroom with enough capacity to maintain physical distancing (6 feet between individuals) requirements. Please utilize designated seats and maintain appropriate spacing between students. Please do not move desks or stations.
- Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
- Follow your instructor's guidance on how to enter and exit the classroom. Practice physical distancing to the extent possible when entering and exiting the classroom.

- If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms (Click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus), please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class. Click here for UF Health guidance on what to do if you have been exposed to or are experiencing Covid-19 symptoms.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work. Find more information in the university attendance policies.

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to 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.

### **Late Work:**

As the news industry is built around time management and down to the second timing, late work will not generally be accepted without penalty unless prior arrangements have been made, and a doctor's note or another letter (preferably from the university or a university-sponsored group) accompanies the work. While the news industry is strict on time, I understand that sometimes life happens. If you for any reason feel your work will be late, PLEASE approach me before the due date to work out an acceptable alternative timeline. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, any work presented without prior alternative plans will not be accepted.

### **The Ethical Warning:**

You may not interview a family member, friend, fellow fraternity/sorority member, coworker, neighbor or any other close associate for an assignment. We, as journalists, refer to these relationships as conflicts of interest in your reporting. They can be valuable sources of tips, story ideas, or background information that you can then verify. Interviewing one, however, will result in **automatic failure of the assignment**.

### **Academic Misconduct:**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. This is even more important if you're planning to tell true stories. You should be sure you understand the Honor Code, found at <http://bit.ly/dontcheatUF>. If you are found to have fabricated or cheated any part of an assignment, **you will fail this course**. In our field that includes copying and pasting content from other sources into your story, passing off other reporter's work as your own, and making up content. There are far worse consequences for academic misconduct than an F, so make sure you are very acquainted with this policy.

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

**You Matter:**

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 are in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that its team can reach out. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor are available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to many helping resources. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

**Diversity Statement:**

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 with 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.

This classroom whether online or in-person is meant to be a safe place where we can share ideas and opinions without being judged or ridiculed for those expressions. It is common to have critique in class, but all criticism is respectful and constructive. I do not tolerate disrespect or any other behavior that is divisive or hurtful to anyone in class because of age, background, belief, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences.

If anything strikes you as counter to the above statement in class, please notify me as soon as possible so we can address it. If you would like to speak to someone outside of this course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC director of inclusion and diversity, is an excellent resource. You can email her at [jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu).

## Assignments

**Project 1:** Wrap with two sound bites, 1:30 in length

**Project 2:** Live tweet from an event or meeting

**Project 3:** Feature story with min. of 4 sound bites, 2:30 to 3:00 in length

**Project 4:** In-depth feature from semester source building, min. of 6 bites, 3:30-4:30 in length

**I try to give you as much time as possible to work on a story which is why I have the pitches due when I do. However, I do understand that stories fall through, still for your success please make sure your final pitch is for *at least one week* prior to your project being due. You can email your pitches ahead of time. First one to pitch claims the story.**

### **Newsroom Work:**

You are required to work six hours per week during the semester at the station, preferably on one day of the week for every week of the semester through exam week for a total of **14 total shifts**, which is where your newsroom grade is derived. You are required to work those 14 shifts even if one of your shift lands on a holiday, that would have to be made up at a different time in the semester. Your work will be scored on three things: pitching, content, and social media. A rubric is included in your training materials. Training sessions will be held during the **SECOND WEEK** of the semester at WUFT-FM in the INC or Online depending on how you are attending. The sessions will be held at 6pm unless otherwise stated. Attendance is mandatory! Newsroom shifts must be covered ---- come to me, Skyler Lebron, or Ethan Magoc with questions ---- if you can't work, you will need to get someone to work for you. **More info on makeup shifts is at the end of the syllabus.**

### **Final Exam:**

The final will be administered during Finals Week outside of normal class time (April 30<sup>th</sup> 10 AM-12 PM). **You have the option of taking the final or working a final news shift in the newsroom during Finals Week.** As we are in a practical field, I advise you that no test will replace actual work experience. The final will be comprehensive and will consist of 40 fill-in-the-blank questions covering skills, practice, and general info learned in class and in the newsroom plus two essays written during the exam. The first will be on the role of news in today's society. The second will be on a topic chosen from recent newsworthy events. More info to be given during the semester.

### **Source Building:**

We will be working to learn about the community we cover throughout the semester. You will be asked to select a county in our coverage area for your beat (these typically are outside of Alachua and Marion County). Through a series of exercises and class assignments, you will learn how to find sources and build your source list for stories. Through these assignments, you will also gain knowledge of the community workings and insight as to how to be better enterprise reporters which will serve you well as you both move through the curriculum and your career.

### **Assignments/Quizzes:**

You will be given a weekly news quiz starting with week 2 of the course. These quizzes are to ensure that you are consuming local, state, national, and world events as journalists should. Steady consumption of the news will assure your success on these quizzes. Questions will be determined by the instructor and you will be given ten minutes to complete the quizzes. Alternatively, you will have several assignments throughout the semester that will ask you to show application of the skills learned in class. These will replace the quiz for that week and class will know in advance when those instances are in the semester.

**The Breakdown:**

<b>Assignment (How Many)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Newsroom Work	30%
Project 1	10%
Project 2	10%
Project 3	15%
Project 4	15%
Source Building(5)	10%
News Quizzes	10%
Final Exam*	10%

**Grading Scale:**

<b>A</b>	<b>94-100</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90-93</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>89-87</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>86-83</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>82-80</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>79-77</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>77-74</b>
<b>C-</b>	<b>73-70</b>
<b>D+</b>	<b>69-67</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>66-63</b>
<b>D-</b>	<b>63-60</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Below 60</b>

**\*The Final Exam counts as 10% of your grade if you take the final. That would make your newsroom grade 20%. If you elect to work your final shift and not take the final then your newsroom grade is 30% of your final grade.**

## SUMMER 2021 COURSE SCHEDULE

Instructor reserves the right to amend and change lecture and class plan as necessary.

Week #1	05/10	Introduction: Syllabus and welcome to the newsroom, and reporting. Finding Stories: Introduction to the community you cover and finding the stories within that community. <b>*Source Building:</b> Research your assigned sources
Week #2	05/17	Broadcast Writing: Writing to be successful in your newsroom shifts. The Art of the Interview: How to ask for and conduct interviews in person, over the phone, and through other means. <i>Assign Project 1</i> <b>*Source Building:</b> Contact your assigned sources.
Week #3	05/24	Performance: How to get the best out of your voice and improve your stories. Audio Gathering and Editing: How to record air-quality audio and edit it using Adobe Audition. <i>Project 1 pitches due</i> <b>* Source Building:</b> Attend a committee meeting in June and follow an issue or item.
Week #4	05/31	<b>MEMORIAL DAY – NO CLASS</b>
Week #5	06/07	Social Media: A tool in your multimedia journalist toolkit. <b>Project 1 Due, Project 2 Assigned, Project 2 pitches due Friday</b>
Week #6	06/14	Beats and Specialization: Understanding beats and specialty reporting in the general context of news. <b>Project 2 Due, Project 3 Assigned</b>
Week #7	06/21	<b>SUMMER BREAK</b>
Week #8	06/28	Writing for Web: How to gather assets and get more out of your radio story <i>Project 3 Pitches Due</i> <b>* Source Building:</b> Attend a committee meeting in July and interview a member.
Week #9	07/05	<b>FOURTH OF JULY OBSERVED – NO CLASSES</b>
Week #10	07/12	Finding Stories Part 2: How to find stories through public records and searchable content on the Internet Writing for Web 2.0: Telling a multi-platform story including audio, writing and visuals. <b>Project 3 Due, Project 4 Assigned</b>

Week #11	07/19	Storytelling: Crafting interesting narratives in the field of news. <i>Project 4 Pitches Due</i>
Week #12	07/26	Covering Elections: An introduction to political reporting and how to navigate being a reporter in these partisan times.
Week #13	08/02	Ethics and Opinions: Two important things reporters have but use in very different ways. <b>Project 4 Due.</b> We will present our final stories.

## **Make-Up Shift Policy**

Everyone in Audio News and Reporting is required to work one **six-hour** shift per week. These shifts start in week two of the semester and run through exam week. You have the option of working your last shift or taking a written exam in class.

### **Missing Shifts**

If for some reason you can't make it to your scheduled shift for a particular week you need to let Forrest and Ryan know as soon as possible. Reasons for missing and what you should do are as follows:

*Holidays:* Excused

*Sickness:* You need to have a doctor's note

*School-sanctioned/class-related reasons:* A note from your instructor, coach, or administrator

*Planned events:* Traveling for a wedding, vacation, or football game is not a reason to miss a shift. Neither are Greek-related functions, doctor's appointments, or projects.

*Extreme circumstances:* We understand certain things don't fall under the previous classifications and will deal with those occasions as they arise.

### **Making Up A Missed Shift**

Make-up shifts are for students who have an excused absence. Make ups happen typically outside of the normal shift coverage schedule. Throughout the semester Forrest and Ryan will notify students owing a make-up shift of an event usually at night or on the weekend that we want covered for WUFT. A student will accept that shift and complete it as they would a normal shift including fact sheet, sound story and wrap to satisfy their requirement of making up a shift.

**You cannot make up a shift without approval from Forrest or Ryan. If you try and do a make-up shift on your own without the approval of a news manager it will not count towards what you owe.**

### **A Few Important Notes**

Most of you should know well in advance if you are going to miss a shift for a planned reason like a doctor's appointment or a vacation. Let us know with plenty of time in written advance. These are not excused. Same with needing to miss because "I have a really busy schedule." An option available to you is switching a shift with a classmate. As long as both shifts are covered, and Forrest and Ryan know, that is perfectly fine for satisfying those instances in a semester when life gets in the way of your shift.

**I acknowledge and agree to the policy set forth here on make-up shifts for Audio News and Reporting.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_