



Environmental Journalism, Fall 2021

Undergrads/JOU 4314 Grads MMC 6936

Mondays 9:35 a.m.-12:35 p.m.

Leigh Hall Room 242

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Class hashtag: #EJUF

Office Hours for Students: Walk-in @ 3326: Mondays 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays 2 p.m.-4 p.m.

By appointment: Phone; Zoom; or Walk & Talk on campus or in Florida Park.

Environmental Journalism, the craft: Living in what scientists term the Anthropocene Era (anthropo: man, and cene: new), in which human activities have ever-more serious impacts on our communities and the planet, it is increasingly important to report on and improve public understanding of climate change; freshwater quality and scarcity; the decline of our oceans, fish, and wildlife; environmental health; sustainable energy, agriculture, and food systems; and more. But complex science and uncertainty, public apathy and politics, well-funded counter-narratives, zealous stakeholders, and what can (incorrectly) appear a lack of news hook for stories playing out slowly in the decades of a comp plan or two centuries of CO₂ emissions make Environmental Journalism one of the most challenging specializations in our craft.

Environmental Journalism, the course: This project-based course will introduce you to Environmental Journalism and elucidate the roles and differences between journalism and communications; help you find the most accurate, credible and timeliest information on science and issues; and ground you in the essentials of environmental reporting—discerning uncompromised expert sources, using human narratives and descriptive storytelling to relate real-world impact, and tapping the databases, records and other tools commonly used by environmental reporters.



EJUF COURSE OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course, you will:

- Understand the specialization of Environmental Journalism and its role in an informed citizenry, including both watchdog and storytelling roles.
- Evaluate pressing environmental issues with objectivity and fairness.
- Analyze sources and differentiate among them, including ranges of scientific, policy, activist and corporate sources and their press releases; and including the ability to discern manipulation such as greenwashing from scientifically valid research.
- Critique a range of nonfiction environmental communications, from film to photography and from activist to scientific communications.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate in-depth environmental issues in journalistic form to lay audiences in compelling ways.

EJUF COURSE READINGS, PARTICIPATION & GRADES:

READINGS: Please read the assigned works of journalism each week before class. Most are here on the syllabus and some will be added based on news of the day. Graduate students are required to read and review a nonfiction book of environmental journalism, science writing or environmental history—please talk with me about your interests so we can find the right book for you.

For all students, our weekly assigned articles and essays are available free online, or through UF’s electronic databases. Please also do your best to keep up with the Environmental Journalism of the day. This is best accomplished by checking the Society of Environmental Journalists’ “EJ Today,” a well-chosen collection of top headlines from the beat updated every weekday morning. You do not have to be a member of SEJ to access the daily links, here: www.sej.org/headlines/list. You will want to join (\$25 for students) if considering EJ as a career.

PARTICIPATION: Being engaged in this class is part of your grade. Class time will consist of discussion, with each other and some terrific guest speakers. It’s essential that you keep up with the readings, come to class prepared and participate: Share your insights, ask questions, challenge respectfully. Class attendance is mandatory. as is social-media engagement, with a minimum of one Twitter post a week. Twitter has its pros and cons, but is worth trying this semester for its vigorous discussion of the environment, and to connect with our guest speakers. I will tweet from @cynthiabarnett about Environmental Journalism and our class using the hashtag #EJUF. For a good overview of EJ on Twitter, also follow the Society of Environmental Journalists @SEJORG. If you are on Facebook, please “like” UF Environmental Journalism for yet more insights & connections.

OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP TO SEAHORSE KEY! Saturday Oct. 23rd and Sunday Oct. 24th Getting your boots muddy in the field is an important element of environmental storytelling. The field experience is a key part of class, and the related assignment part of your grade. We’ll head an hour’s drive west of Gainesville by car, then another mile into the Gulf of Mexico by boat, to the Cedar Keys National Wildlife Refuge, a chain of rare undeveloped barrier islands. We’ll share a potluck dinner and spend the night in an old lighthouse on the island of Seahorse Key. There is a field trip fee that I will keep to less than \$40, due just before the trip. Please let me know early in the semester if this will be a financial hardship, and I will work on funding for anyone who needs it. Details, directions and contacts in class and by email. No class Mon Oct. 25th for spending your weekend w/ #EJUF!

GRADES

- Attendance & Engagement in EJ class: 100
- EJ presentations: 100
- Greenwashing analysis: 100
- Science/research story: 100
- Pitch, EJ project story: 100
- Place-based story: 100
- First draft, EJ project story: 200
- Final draft, EJ project story: 200

Total points possible: 1,000

Grading scale:
 930-1,000 points: A
 900-929: A-
 880-899: B+
 830-879: B
 800-829: B-
 780-799: C+
 730-779: C
 700-729: C-
 680-699: D+
 630-679: D
 600-629: D-
 599 or below: E

EJUF COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

EJ Assignment 1: ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM PRESENTATIONS

Undergrads: A 500-word critique of a work of Environmental Journalism you choose from this list of the winners of this year's SEJ Annual Awards for Reporting on the Environment:

<https://www.sej.org/winners-sej-20th-annual-awards-reporting-environment>

Plan to give us an informal class presentation on the strengths and weaknesses of the piece. It could be a long-form story; conservation film; conservation photography project; multimedia story; or other EJ work. Please post the story you choose on the Canvas discussion thread where I've asked so we don't have duplicates.

Grad students: A 500-word analysis + formal class presentation on a special problem or issue in Environmental Journalism. This could relate to your graduate study or a special interest you have, and ideally should teach the rest of us something. Here are just a few possibilities; feel free to come talk to me about others, and get my approval for your topic: The lack of diversity in environmental journalism; "junk science"; battling climate denial; covering GMOs; the problem of doomsday climate reporting; digital security for journalists and researchers; etc.

Due midnight Friday September 3rd; undergrads, turn in text on Canvas with link to story or trailer etc. Grad students should turn in text, + slides for an approx. 15-min. class presentation. We will schedule the presentations over the next few weeks in class.

EJ Assignment 2: GREENWASHING ANALYSIS

A 500-word critique and informal class presentation on a corporate press release, website, or green campaign. You may feature a campaign that really is making a difference, or expose one that is greenwashing or pink-washing, ie, pink-ribbon-promoting companies whose products are linked to increased risk of breast cancer, see thinkbeforeyoupink.org. **Due midnight Sunday September 19th;** please include link to company or ad etc., and be prepared to present over the next few weeks.

EJ Assignment 3: STUDY STORY

The “study story” is a basic of science and environmental journalism; a new study publishes and you translate the research into a story that draws in your audience and helps them understand what’s important. Sometimes you’ll get a head’s up about a study from a scientist you’ve gotten to know, but you can also follow journals in your area of interest and sign up for email alerts. We’ll talk about how to find research; how to access journals and avoid scammy ones; and how to write the story—including interviewing not only one of the study’s authors, but at least one independent expert who was not involved in the research. 350-500 word written story or 2-3 minute audio or video story.

Due midnight Sun October 3rd; Please provide me a PDF of the study when you turn in your story. If your story is audio or video, please also provide a transcript.

EJ Assignment 4: PITCH FOR YOUR #EJUF PROJECT STORY

A reported, 500-word story pitch (plan) for your project story. This is essentially the skeleton of your story—the angle; the data on which the story is based; the sources you’ll interview (5 at minimum); any places you’ll visit and describe; and the outline you envision. **Due midnight Sun Oct. 17th.**

EJ Assignment 5: FIELD TRIP (PLACE-BASED) STORY

A 500-word, descriptive story reported during our field trip weekend. The format is flexible; consider trying out a new story form. You may tackle place, ecological biography, botany, climate, environmental history, a wildlife or ocean story, a clam-aquaculture story, a work of nature writing, anything goes. Each piece should include a compelling storyline; detailed descriptive writing; and credible sources, among other tenets of good journalism, storytelling and observation. 500 words or 3-min video/audio story, **due midnight Sun Oct 31st.**

EJ Assignment 6: EJ SEMESTER PROJECT, FIRST DRAFT Your project story should be between 1,200 and 1,500 words unless we agreed on a video story, NPR-style audio story, interactive graphic, or other form. The story should include at least two additional elements—photos; audio or video clips; data visualizations; a timeline or other elements to draw people in. **First draft is not a rough draft!!! Now and in the future, the first draft your editor sees should be the best possible work you can do. You’ll be graded on your effort to make this draft as excellent and complete as possible.** **Due midnight Tues Nov. 16th.** I will return edits as quickly as possible. Please plan to spend considerable time the last two weeks of class working through edits and polishing with me to ready the final draft for publication.

EJ Assignment 7: EJ SEMESTER PROJECT, FINAL DRAFT A polished, fact-checked, final story with all my ??s answered and edits completed and any additional elements ready for publication. **Due midnight Tues Dec. 7th.**



DETAILED EJ CLASSTIME AGENDA & WEEKLY READINGS

Week 1, Monday Aug 23rd: Introductions to the course, to the syllabus and to each other, including our mutual interests in the environment and the place(s) most important to you.

Introduction to the craft of Environmental Journalism, and finding the roots of modern EJ stretching back to the seventeenth century, when John Evelyn writes “Fumifugium, or the Inconvenience of the Aer and Smoake of London Dissipated” (1661), proposing remedies for London’s choking black air: *The immoderate use of, and indulgence to, sea-coale in the city of London exposes it to one of the foulest inconveniences and reproaches that can possibly befall so noble and otherwise incomparable City. Whilst they are belching it forth their sooty jaws, the City of London resembles ... the suburbs of Hell [rather] than an assembly of rational creatures.*

PREPARE: To introduce yourselves!

Week 2, Monday Aug 30th: To finish our introduction to EJ and its history, we’ll devote some time to the 20th Century environmental writing that changed America’s (and Florida’s) environmental ethos and helped give rise to modern environmental protection, including a look at Florida’s Marjory Stoneman Douglas – a journalist and author long before she became an environmental activist at age 76 – and Rachel Carson, whose 1962 book *Silent Spring* remains one of the best-known works of EJ for its profound impact. *Silent Spring* helped launch the modern environmental movement, spurred the federal government to ban DDT, and helped bring about a remarkable recovery of eagles, falcons and other fish-eating birds then at the brink of extinction.

In the second half of class we’ll shift to modern Environmental Journalism and the great challenge of our time, climate change.

Guest speaker: #EJUF alumnus Alex Harris, climate change reporter, The Miami Herald, @harrisalex

PREPARE: To finish EJ history: 1) “[Marjory Stoneman Douglas, ‘Voice of the River,’](#)” by Tim Collie, the *Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel*, 1998; 2) *Silent Spring* Part I, Carson’s first excerpt in *The New Yorker*, published in the June 16th 1962 issue, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1962/06/16/silent-spring-part-1>.

To introduce modern EJ and reporting on climate change, all by our guest speaker:

1. "Feds Consider a Plan To Protect Miami-Dade From Storm Surge: 10-Foot Walls by the Coast"
2. "As Seas Rise, Your Coastal Home in Florida Could Lose Value. One Report Says 15% by 2030"
3. "A Town's Pioneering Plan To Fund Retreat From Sea Rise: Have New Development Pitch In"
4. "Sea Rise makes septic tanks ‘ticking bombs.’ Why does Miami-Dade still allow them?"
5. "At \$60 Million a Mile, The Keys May Abandon Some Roads To Sea Rise Rather Than Raise Them"

MONDAY SEPT 6th LABOR DAY & NO CLASS

Week 3 Monday Sept 13th Greenwashing and spin: Is that new housing development really green? How much water will the proposed organic beef operation pump? Is phosphate feeding the world or depleting the Earth? Asking the questions and the follow-up questions... reporting with sophistication and fairness ... and recognizing greenwashing vs. effective corporate social responsibility/sustainability programs.

Guest speaker: #EJUF alumnus Dr. Jasper Fessmann, UWVa professor of public interest communications, who will help us identify and counter the greenwashing PR strategies and tactics used to manipulate journalists and the public. @JasperFessmann

PREPARE: Watch the documentary film *Merchants of Doubt*, directed by Robert Kenner. The film is available free online UF students via the UF Library's catalogue. Watch this fantastic movie with a friend/classmate if you can. (93 minutes)

Week 4 Monday Sept 20th Reporting on science in a post-truth world: Facts, communicating risks, and understanding statistics.

Guest speaker: #EJUF alumnus Dr. Joan Meiners, now covering water issues in Utah for Report for America. @beecycles

PREPARE: "Polluter's Paradise" by Tristan Baurick, Joan Meiners, Gordon Russell and Sara Sneath, *The Times-Picayune and The Advocate*, and Claire Perlman, Al Shaw and Lylla Younes, *ProPublica*, October 2019:

1. "Welcome to "Cancer Alley," Where Toxic Air Is About To Get Worse"
2. "In a Notoriously Polluted Area of the Country, Massive New Chemical Plants Are Still Moving In"
3. "How Oil Companies Avoided Environmental Accountability After 10.8 Million Gallons Spilled"
4. "In "Cancer Alley," Toxic Polluters Face Little Oversight From Environmental Regulators"
5. "Chemical Companies Are Building Their Plants Overseas and Shipping Them Back In. They Still Get State Tax Breaks."

Also read Joan's story from Massive Science, "It will take over one billion dollars to protect one small Louisiana town from climate change," and skim some of the 2,000 comments from when it went viral on Reddit.

Week 5 Monday Sept 27th International Environmental Reporting: 21st Century globalism means we're all connected to life, water, and land on other continents, from toxic chemical pollution in China linked to our products and companies to the dumping of our digital waste in Ghana. Climate change, species extinction, water strife, and all major environmental issues are at once local and global. Making the international connections offers great opportunities for journalists and also requires overcoming lots of assumptions about the rest of the world. We'll also spend time on travel grants available for international environment, climate and health journalism.

Guest speaker: Gloria Dickie, award-winning international environmental journalist, has reported from five continents and on topics as diverse as maggot farming and giant pandas for The New York Times, National Geographic, and many other publications. Her forthcoming book, *Eight Bears*, explores our relationships with bears around the world. @GloriaDickie

PREPARE: Read some of our guest speaker's favorite stories:

- 1) [How to Make Peace with the World's Deadliest Bears](#), National Geographic (grant funded).
- 2) [Green Glove, Iron Fist](#), Biographic Magazine
- 3) [These scientists created a 'cloud curtain' in Peru's tropical forests to mimic the future](#), PRI's The World
- 4) [Amid High-Tech Options, a Reckoning for Iceland's Glacier Keepers](#), Undark
- 5) [The Polar Crucible](#), Scientific American.

Week 6, Monday October 4th: **Begin our shift to project reporting:** By this week we will have decided, together, what project we'd like to pursue as a class, each of you contributing your own story to the whole in the spirit of Energy Burden, The Human Hazard, and other #EJUF projects. Many of our guest speakers will now shift to sources/experts on the project. Given that your pitches are due Sunday evening Oct. 17th, we will make part of this class a workshop on great pitches.

PREPARE: Please spend some time with the Open Notebook's "Pitch Database," a fantastic resource for learning to write great pitches: <https://www.theopennotebook.com/pitch-database/>

Week 7 Mon Oct 11th Environmental Journalism & Justice: Low-income, minority neighborhoods bear the brunt of environmental threats such as exposure to chemical plants, Superfund and other toxic waste sites. A growing body of research shows that the chronic stressors of poverty fundamentally alter the way the body reacts to pollutants, especially in young children. Meanwhile the environmental movement and Environmental Journalism alike have faltered in inclusion, cultural sensitivity and work on vulnerable communities.

Guest speaker: Lyndsey Gilpin, Founder and Editor-in-Chief, Southerly Magazine @lyndseygilpin

- PREPARE:**
- 1) Letter from SouthWest Organizing Project to the president of the National Wildlife Federation, March 16th 1990: <http://www.ejnet.org/ej/swop.pdf>;
 - 2) ["The rural South's invisible public health crisis,"](#) by Lyndsey Gilpin, Southerly, July 5th 2018.
 - 3) ["Toxic floodwaters threatened a Florida jail,"](#) by Jenn Hayes, Aug. 11th 2021, Southerly.
 - 4) Energy Burden, Part I, Energy comes at a much greater cost for Gainesville's poor: <https://www.wuft.org/news/energy-burden/>
 - 5) Energy Burden Part II, the Power of Irma: www.wuft.org/news/energy-burden/the-storm/

PERUSE: "Toxic City," the Philadelphia Inquirer investigation that uncovered thousands of poor children poisoned by lead – all preventable by landlords – in Philly, http://www.sej.org/sites/default/files/SEJ_ToxicCity.pdf.

Week 8, Mon Oct 18th **The art & power of environmental filmmaking:** Shorts & documentaries, dead-serious or hilarious, environmental films can raise awareness, expose wrongdoing, promote solutions, inspire action.

Guest speaker: Environmental filmmaker Eric Flagg, director and producer, Jellyfish Smack Productions, coordinator, Digital Media Technology Program, Santa Fe College,

PREPARE: 1) Watch Terra Blight, by Eric Flagg and Isaac Brown, a documentary exploring America's consumption of computers and the hazardous waste we create in pursuit of the latest technology. 2) "One reason why coronavirus hits Black people the hardest," by Ranjani Chakraborty, Melissa Hirsch, Mona Lalwani, Christophe Haubursin, Dion Lee, Mona Lalwani and Ashley Sather for Vox.

Week 9, Mon Oct 25th **FIELD TRIP WEEKEND! NO CLASS MONDAY AS LONG AS OUR FIELD TRIP IS A-GO.** I will be assigning a few readings for the field trip. If it is canceled due to a hurricane, COVID-19 or other life's storms, we'll have a class devoted to the craft of nature writing. **PREPARE:** Sy Montgomery, "Deep Intellect," Orion Magazine. 3) Drew Lanham, "9 Rules for the Black Birdwatcher," Orion Magazine.

Week 10, Mon Nov 1st **Project guest speakers, reporting and story workshop.**

Week 11, Mon Nov 8th **Project guest speakers, reporting and story workshop.**

Week 12 Mon Nov 15th **Project guest speakers, reporting and story workshop.**

Week 13 Mon Nov 22nd **Project guest speakers, reporting and story workshop.**

Week 14 Mon Nov 29th **Women in conservation history/journalism/#scicomm—from the Marjories to #MeToo:** Florida's Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Marjory Stoneman Douglas and Marjorie Harris Carr ... along with the dynamic FL journalistic platform The Marjorie ... make a great prism through which to view the influence of women on environmental journalism & ethics; sexism in sci-comm; and change. (Rawlings the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer, Carr the activist, Douglas, who balanced those two worlds to save the Everglades, and The Marjorie an independent start-up covering the environment in Florida.) We look at the past, present and future of gender and EJ through several Marjories, including some of the modern perils facing women who work to communicate science to general audiences. **This class will also cover the rise of nonprofit environmental reporting, and funding opportunities for your own passion projects.**

Guest speakers: Dr. Hannah O. Brown (another #EJUF alumnus!) and Becca Burton, co-founders, The Marjorie. @hannah_o_brown & @dabeccaburton.

PREPARE: 1) "The Three Marjories, Rachel and the Rise of Ecology," pp 88-103 in Leslie Kemp Poole's book Saving Florida. (On Canvas.) 2) United by Cane—all parts, by Hannah O. Brown, Becca Burton and Anna Hamilton. 3) "Catching Snakes with Long Nails: How a Herpetology

Conference Brought #MeToo to Science,” by Hannah O. Brown, and 4) “ ‘Ugly fake scientist.’ Women say sexist attacks on the rise,” E&E News, August 21st 2018.

Week 15 & last day of class, Mon Dec 6th Sustainability and success stories: Humans have turned around major environmental crises, including acid rain at the global level; littering at the national level; the clean-ups of severely polluted water bodies from the Hudson River to Tampa Bay. Reporting on both steady progress and success is crucial to give people a sense of solutions—and hope for the future. Also! Getting Published, Promoting Your Work and Careers in Environmental Journalism. The good, the bad, and the ugly of making EJ a career; pitching your story to professional outlets; building your brain trust; finding and keeping professional mentors; social media and how to promote your work without being insufferable.

PREPARE: 1) Lest we don’t talk enough about the importance of humor in these dark times: View this [frank video](https://vimeo.com/121081128) of Chip Giller, founder of Grist, on helping create the “future that doesn’t suck.” <https://vimeo.com/121081128>. 2) “Envision 2050: The Future of Cities,” By Todd Reubold, *Ensia* magazine. 3) “Climate Journalism Enters the Solutions Era,” by Abby Rabinowitz, *Columbia Journalism Review*, April 21st, 2021. 4) Check out the fantastic podcast [How to Save a Planet](#) with Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR

Cynthia Barnett is Environmental Journalist in Residence at UF’s College of Journalism and Communications. She is the author of four books including this year’s *The Sound of the Sea: Seashells and the fate of the Oceans* and *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*, long-listed for the 2015 National Book Award and a finalist for the PEN/E.O. Wilson Award for Literary Science Writing. She’s written on the environment for *National Geographic*, the *New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, the *Atlantic*, *Discover*, *Salon*, *Politico*, *Orion*, *Ensia* and many other publications. She earned her bachelor’s in journalism and master’s in environmental history, both from UF, and spent a year as a Knight-Wallace Fellow at the University of Michigan specializing in freshwater. She lives with her family in the Florida Park neighborhood just north of campus and likes to do walk-and-talk office hours.

COURSE POLICIES

Student Health and Wellness: **Your well-being is important** to me, and to the University of Florida. I trust you will wear a mask to protect yourself and others from COVID-19—even if you are vaccinated. Also! The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging everyone in our community to look out for one another and reach out for help if anyone is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime/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 911.

Students with disabilities: All reasonable accommodations will be made. Should you need them, please register first with the Disability Resource Center (352-392- 8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) and provide appropriate documentation. Once registered, you'll receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to me when requesting accommodation. Please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty is expected at all times. As a UF student, you've agreed to comply with the University Honor Code. Please make sure you understand the code and consequences, which are here: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>. Any violations of this code in Environmental Journalism class will be reported to the Dean of Students. You must also pay special attention to journalistic ethics and issues of plagiarism and copyright; please read and understand UF's College of Journalism and Communications statement on these matters: www.jou.ufl.edu/academics/bachelors/journalism/academic-honesty/

Class attendance: Requirements for attendance and other work fall under UF policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. If you need to quarantine for COVID-19 exposure, I will provide guest speakers' zoom lectures and slides from my lectures; please get notes from a classmate. Otherwise, any reason for absence from regular class that does not appear on UF's list of excused absences will result in an automatic 25-point deduction per missed class.

Late assignments: Meeting deadline is crucial to your future success and relationship with bosses/editors, whether in journalism or any other field. On all assignments, your grade will drop one full letter grade for each day overdue.

Diversity & Inclusion: The College of Journalism and Communications is committed to 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.

Our classrooms are places where you will be treated with respect. We welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability—and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Class Sustainability Policy: Please, no bottled water or any beverages in throw-away bottles. Beverages in durable, reusable containers are fine. Starting with this syllabus, I will distribute all course materials/hand-outs electronically, either through email or Canvas. All assignments should be turned in via Canvas. Regarding the nonfiction book graduate students will read: As a reader and author, I do not consider printed books waste, especially if you enjoy keeping favorite books, hand-writing your impressions in them, or collecting author signatures/inscriptions. Otherwise, e-readers

or used copies are both great ways to read more sustainably and cut down on accumulations.

Storytelling Sources, Diversity and Conflicts of Interest: For our class and always, please pursue storytelling that is fair, accurate and complete—and based on information gathered from a variety of diverse sources. A greater understanding of the cultural and ethnic differences in our society will enhance learning, and help students develop habits and sensitivities that will be of great value in their workplaces and communities. This emphasis on diversity of sources shall not focus just on race and ethnicity or sexual orientation, but also age, education, gender, geography, occupation, politics, religion, socioeconomics, etc.

Avoid conflicts of interest at all times. Students in this course shall not be used as sources for your assignments. The same applies to relatives, roommates, friends (from campus or back home), sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, or members of any other co-curricular or extracurricular organizations to which you belong. Interviewing UF faculty, staff, or employees may be allowed provided they and the student do not have a prior relationship – and only with prior approval from the instructor.

Sources must be interviewed either in person or on the phone. Email interviews are discouraged and permitted only with my permission in advance of that interview. Sometimes a source will want you to let her read a story before it's submitted or published. Do not do so. It may be appropriate – sometimes, depending on the story, even ideal – to call the source back to confirm facts or context, or, in the case of complex science, to read a sentence back to ensure you've accurately translated the science. Be wary, however, of allowing someone else to steer, censor or otherwise undermine your reporting or story approach.

Multiple sourcing is required – and “sources” means interacting with real human beings, not simply relying on organizational statements, news releases or websites. This also involves contacting as many people or obtaining as much related documentation as you can. It's wise to interview as many sources as possible, so you have more than you need for your story.

All facts and opinions in your story must be attributed to sources. Anonymous or off-the-record material is not acceptable any more than fictional people. If there's a compelling reason to not use a source's full name in a story, you must run it by me before agreeing.

Assignments not abiding these sourcing, diversity and interview mandates will lose points.

Course and instructor evaluations: Finally, please 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 weeks of the semester; you'll be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available for students at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>