

RTV 3593: Multimedia Sports Reporting

Spring 2022

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Instructor: Eric Esterline

Place: WEIM 3028

Day and Time: Friday, Periods 4-5 (10:40 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.)

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Course Site: <https://ufl.instructure.com>

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

ISBN-13: 978-1506315683

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Other Readings and Resources will be posted and available online.

Overview and Objectives

RTV 3593 is designed to offer instruction, analysis and training in sports information gathering and research, writing, interviewing and reporting in a digital age. Special emphasis is placed on improving sports writing skills and reporting judgement, research and analysis of sports events and issues, basic sports production, radio reporting assignments and generation of sports content for the Internet. In addition, students receive practical experience in the Innovation News Center and WRUF-ESPN AM 850-FM 98.1 in the College of Journalism and Communications.

Course Learning Objectives

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- (1) develop skills to effectively research, gather and analyze sports information;
- (2) develop skills to write high-quality stories and features related to sports for on-air radio broadcast and posting on the Internet, and to record and edit audio obtained via phone or in-person;
- (3) enhance understanding of the ethics and values of sports journalism;
- (4) develop ability to understand relative newsworthiness of sports stories;

- (5) develop ability to write and report “sound and visual stories and features,” with the expectation work produced can and will be used for WRUF-ESPN AM 850/FM 93.5, including air and the Internet;
- (6) develop skills for interviewing athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners;
- (7) develop understanding of the variety of sports sources used as a reporter;
- (8) enhance skill in voicing work, live and recorded, on-the-air;
- (9) enhance understanding of UF, local, high school, national and international sports;
- (10) learn about websites and other sources for sports research, as well as for production of content for the WRUF-ESPN AM 850-FM 98.1 website.

Course Eligibility

Students must have received a grade of “C” or better in RTV 2100, MMC 2100 or JOU 3109c.

Required Equipment

Gathering sound (interviews, media days, teleconferences, etc.) is vital, and students will use many different means to collect sound. Before you will be able to check out digital audio recorders for projects, you must receive operational training both with and without a stick mic, as well as other means of audio collection. The newsroom has recorders for you to use for your projects and the Dept. of Telecommunication has recorders you may check out (see guidelines for checking out equipment).

Course Grades

The Following table outlines the point-accruing components of the course. The total points earned from each component will be summed and divided by the total points possible in the course.

Evaluation Components	Points Per Component	% of Total Grade
Class Participation, Citizenship (15)	10 pts each = 150 pts	10.7%
Assignments (12)	(10)10 pts each = 100 pts (2) 25 pts each = 50 pts	10.7%
Project One (1)	100 pts	7.15%
Project Two (1)	100 pts	7.15%
Project Three (1)	100 pts	7.15%
Final Project (1)	300 pts	21.4%
WRUF Attendance and Work	500 pts	35.7%
Total	1400 pts	100%

Assignment Descriptions

Class Participation and Citizenship (15 weeks, 10 pts per week)– This includes, but is not limited, to the following: regular and on-time attendance for class; serious preparation of the assigned texts; active listening, including note taking; involvement in classroom activities; posting relevant content to Canvas and Twitter, questions & comments on the course forums; being respectful of others; and, a semester-long sustained effort at contributing to the class discussion through visible attention, helpful questions and worthwhile insights into the issues being discussed.

Please note, if you are using technology in class for non-class related work or doing other distracting things in class (homework for another class, organizing your calendar, reading the newspaper, etc), you are NOT being a good citizen.

The following rubric will be employed to assign participation points

Preferred (10 pts)	Acceptable (7-9 pts)	Needs Improvement (4-6 pts)	Unacceptable (1-3 pts)	Will Ask You To Leave (0pts)
Arrives on time Comments are relevant and reflect understanding and good preparation Clear enthusiasm	Arrives on time Comments are mostly relevant, but understanding may be slightly lacking Not overly enthusiastic, but positive	Arrives no more than 5 minutes late Comments are minimal (“yeah”, “uh huh”) and demonstrate poor preparation Demeanor is sluggish	Arrives more than 5 minutes late No comments are made Sleeping, texting, disengaged	Absent Disruptive or rude comments are made Drawing others into disrespectful behaviors (showing texts, shopping online, etc)

Class Assignments (12 Assignments, (10)10 pts per, (2) 25 pts per) - Over the course of the semester you will complete practice work like Online Discussions, FACT Sheets, Wraps, Trending Now Updates and Web Stories as practice in getting you familiar with the work you will be doing for ESPN Gainesville 95.3. You will be assigned one or two of these per week throughout the semester.

PROJECTS - All projects will be expected to be of high quality work. Be sure to work ahead to secure a subject and sources for your stories.

Make certain that all stories are completely clear of fact errors, typos and any possible spelling or grammatical errors. The subject/topic area of the assignment is locked in and cannot be changed. After suggestions for revisions by the instructor or multimedia properties staff members, students will be expected to produce work of sufficiently high quality to post to the ESPN Gainesville website.

On days projects are due, students will present a report on their work in class and receive feedback from the instructor and classmates.

Projects will be posted on the course website and could possibly be posted on the ESPN Gainesville website if warranted.

- **Project One** – Writing a game recap of a UF sporting event with assets provided. (details will be provided within assignment module, no stories permitted on football or men's basketball teams)
- **Project Two** – Write a professional sports game recap with assets provided. (details will be provided within assignment module)
- **Project Three** – Create a ranked list or argumentative according to the specifics discussed in class (details will be provided within assignment module)
- **Final Project** – Longform Multimedia Sports Story

WRUF Attendance and Work - Students are required to receive professional training and experience for a minimum of **3-4** hours each week in the Innovation News Center and WRUF-AM ESPN 850 studios. This is a critical component of the course and the evaluation of the effectiveness of this training experience will comprise 33% of the final grade. This experience may include research, writing sports updates and web stories, control board operations and covering and reporting on events such as press conferences and sports competitions.

Shifts may include evening or weekend hours, and can change, and you may be asked to work during times outside your regular shifts. The weekend and evening shifts should be seen as recognition of your good work. This typically means you have been asked to cover an event because you have done excellent work at the station. This will provide you with additional valuable experience. Steve Russell, Sports Director for the multimedia properties, will assign the shifts.

Introductory training sessions will be held during the second and third weeks of the semester at ESPN Gainesville. Attendance is required even for students who have worked previously at one of the College's multimedia properties. Attendance at the session is required. Please let the instructor know ahead of time if you become contagiously ill or otherwise too ill to attend either session.

You will be advanced through different phases throughout your time in this class and ESPN Experience to best prepare you for your time in the INC. You must master all the skills in a phase before you can move on to the next. Phase One must be mastered before you are allowed to start your shifts at the ESPN Experience in the INC.

ESPN Experience Progress

You will be given information on expectations. There will be a checklist of skills in phases, and you will be tested on them before you are moved to the next phase. This should make you aware of what is expected, and it should also let you know whether you have moved ahead during the semester.

Phase One Objectives

- Ability to do telephone interview and record
- Ability to edit sound bites and write sound story
- Can do fact sheet on a story/interview
- Answer and transfer telephones
- Follow proper social media accounts and aware of what WRUF.com posts on social media

Phase Two Objectives

- Ability to do in-person interviews in the field on stories, help cover press conferences for audio/radio
- Pitch viable story ideas
- Ability to compose a web story for WRUF.com

- Begin to understand workflow for social media protocols
- Continued mastery of Phase One

Phase Three Objectives

- Can cover a press conference on your own
- Ability to compose more than one web story during a shift
- Higher level of expectation for field work—perhaps breaking news or other higher level news stories.
- Has the understanding and ability to post to WRUF.com social media account
- Continued mastery of Phases One and Two.

*You must cover your shift each time and be on time. If you cannot work, you are responsible for getting someone to cover the shift for you and informing the sports director. **If you miss 3 or more shifts without communication to the sports director and/or your professor, we reserve the right to remove you from ESPN Gainesville and you will fail this portion of the class (500 points)***

There is a professional dress code for the multimedia properties. Students must be prepared at all times to be sent out to press conferences or other events. When you go, you represent the properties, the College and the University of Florida. Closed toed shoes and collared shirts are required. Neutral colors are required for sports journalism students, meaning no orange or blue or UF attire. In addition, athletic wear, hats, sleeveless shirts and flip-flops are not allowed. The dress code for the current year will be distributed in class.

Grading (grades are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number for grading purposes)

935-1000 points = A	895-934 points = A-		
865-894 points = B+	825-864 points = B	795-824 points = B-	
765-794 points = C+	725-764 points = C	695-724 points = C-	
665-694 points = D+	625-664 points = D	595-624 points = D-	
0-594 points = F			

Course Outline

Week 1 (1/7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to class and review of syllabus; intro to Canvas and course website • Lecture #1: Why is sports so popular and the basics of multimedia sports journalism • Assignment (1)
Week 2 (1/14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture #2: History and growth of sports journalism • Using the Edirol/Smart Phone to gather sound; audio workflow and editing; FACT Sheets and Wraps • Discussion of Project One • Assignment (2) • Guest Speaker:
Week 3 (1/21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project One pitch deadline • Lecture #3: Ethics and values of high quality sports journalism; Emphasis on sports writing for the Web;

	<p>Announcing Sports Updates and Trending Now(s); conducting and recording live phone interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project 1 Pitch Deadline • Assignment (2) • Guest Speaker:
Week 4 (1/28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture #4: Sports News judgment; various forms and approaches to sports reporting; Story types, ledes, story angles, structure and information gathering and aggregation • Project Two Discussion • Assignment (2)
Week 5 (2/4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project One Due: presentations and analysis • Lecture #5: Interviewing techniques for athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners; Argumentative articles, Ranked Lists; effective use of sound bites, quotes and social media; writing exercises. • Project Two pitches deadline • Assignment • Guest Speaker:
Week 6 (2/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture #6: Covering live events, Handling press conferences/teleconferences; social media and sports journalism; using your smartphone to gather media assets; Live Tweeting; attribution and hyperlinks; writing exercises. • Assignment
Week 7 (2/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Two Due: presentations and analysis • Lecture #7: Sports talk programming vs. sports reporting and the live broadcast; textual correctness; sentence and paragraph structure; diction and authorial voice; writing exercises. • Discuss Project 3 • Assignment • Guest Speaker:
Week 8 (2/25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture #8: Writing headlines; style and formatting, multimedia assets; using a mobile phone to gather multimedia assets • Assignment • Project Three pitches deadline
Week 9 (3/4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture #9: Working a sports journalism beat; obtaining media credentials and communication with sports communications officials • Assignment • Discuss Final Project • Guest Speaker:
Week 10 (3/18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Three Due: Presentation and Analysis

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Pitches Deadline
Week 11 (3/25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker:
Week 12 (4/1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture #10: Ethics Case Studies and exercises
Week 13 (4/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Day, In Class help with Final Project
Week 14 (4/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project Due

Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance in the class is required. Excused absences include approved UF attendance exceptions. In all instances of excused absences the instructor and student will work out a plan for completing missed assignments.

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Please turn off cell phones prior to class. Sports reporting is a deadline-based profession, so you are expected to arrive on time for each class.

In case of illness, the instructor should be notified in advance and a physician's note may be required. Unexcused absences will result in deductions from the students final percentage 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>

Attendance is recorded and you **WILL** lose attendance and participation points for absence from class time. This could affect up to 15% of your final grade. There are **NO** free absences from class. We only meet once a week. For each absence you will lose class participation points, unless you have a note and it is excused and approved by UF.

Absences and Make-up Work

Students are expected to be in class on time and remain until the dismissal. Absences are unexcused when the professor has not been notified of an acceptable reason within 24 hours of the class meeting. When absent, please contact a fellow student to find out what was missed. You are responsible for all material covered or assigned during classes, even if you are not there. Your grade on late assignments will drop one letter grade for every day they are late.

Academic Integrity

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-conduct-honor-code/> or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

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.

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>

Respect for Diversity Statement

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

It is imperative that there be an atmosphere of trust and safety in the classroom. I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences, and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. Notify me of the issue through another source such as your academic advisor, a trusted faculty member, or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.

COVID Policies

We will have face-to-face instructional sessions 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, please use the UF Health screening system and follow the instructions on whether you are able to attend class.
- 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.

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.

***NOTE: Topic schedule subject to change based on guest availability and other factors.**