JOU 4930 Sports Data Journalism

Fall 2022 | Class 24328, Section HW01 | Periods 6-8 Wednesdays | Weimer 2050 | 3 credits

Associate Professor Norman P. Lewis, Ph.D.

Office: 3052 Weimer Hall
Contact: Email nplewis@ufl.edu or message through Canvas
Office hours: Online via Zoom (drop-in): Tuesdays 4:00 to 5:00 pm
                    In person (drop-in): Wednesday 4:00 to 5:00 pm (after this class)
                    In person (drop-in): Thursdays 1:00 to 2:00pm

Office hours are drop-in: first-come, first-served. If the times do not fit your schedule, contact me and we'll find a time.

ABOUT THE COURSE

Course Purpose

To equip you to find meaningful sports stories by acquiring, cleaning, and analyzing data.

Course Description

New for 2022, this course helps you think empirically about sports journalism. It is a hands-on introduction to spreadsheets, databases, and statistics. Data newbies welcome. Open to anyone with a working knowledge of journalism.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Use Excel and SQL to analyze sports data and find meaningful stories.
- Scrape data from PDFs and website tables without customized coding.
- Clean (standardize) data so it can be categorized and analyzed accurately.
- Use basic statistics to detect meaningful patterns and differences in data.
- Contextualize numbers through normalization and fair comparisons.
- Produce a publishable sports data story suitable for a job application.

My Related Data Courses

- JOU 3121 Dataviz and Mapping (me; spring): online data viz & geospatial analysis
- JOU 4930 Advanced Data Journalism (me; spring): data coding using R
- JOU 3304 Data Journalism (me; fall): a general-topic version of this course

Required Materials

- Basic laptop, either Mac or Windows
- Spend $12 for an annual license for a browser extension for Table Capture
- Download Office 365 on your laptop free through UF Tech
- No textbook; no materials and supplies fee

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Wk	Date	Theme	Key Question	Key Skills	After Class
1	Aug 24	NCAA Finances	How does UF athletic spending compare?	Excel: format, sort, filter, calculation, sum, averages, percent change, transpose	H1: tba Due Aug. 30
2	Aug 31	Salaries	Which conferences & teams pay the most?	Excel: pivot table, histogram, percentile rank	H2: tba Due Sept. 6
3	Sept 7	Salary Stats	Which team best plays Moneyball?	Excel: descriptive stats, standard deviation, logic test, scatterplot, correlation	H3: tba Due Sept. 13
4	Sept 14	Gender Equity	How does UF rank for Title IX gender equity?	Comparing numbers, data analysis from public spreadsheet	H4: tba Due Sept. 20
5	Sept 21	Rosters	Where does the UF football team get its players?	Web scraping, Google Sheets, PDF scraping. Excel: text parsing, text functions	H5: tba Due Sept. 27
6	Sept 28	Home Field	Which sport has the biggest home field advantage?	Excel logic functions	H6: tba Due Oct. 4
7	Oct 5	Messy Salaries	What English Premier League position or team pays the best?	Excel logic functions	H7: tba Due Oct. 11
8	Oct 12	Midterm	(In class; open book)		
9	Oct 19	Streaks	Is there a hot hand?	Calculating probability, calculating expected value, separating signal from noise	H8: tba Due Oct. 25
10	Oct 26	Performance	How best to measure individual performance in team sports?		H9: tba Due Nov. 1
11	Nov 2	Big Data 1	What can MLB Statcast data reveal?	SQL queries using DB Browser	H10: tba Due Nov. 8
12	Nov 9	Big Data 2	What can MLB Statcast data reveal?	SQL joins using DB Browser	H 11: tba Due Nov. 15
13	Nov 16	Exam 2	(In class; open book)		
	Nov 23	No class	Why do we ruin a nice holiday with turkey?	Be thankful	
14	Nov 30	Story Presentation		5 minutes to present your story and get feedback	Final story Due Dec. 2
15	Dec 7	R	What can NFL NextGen stats reveal?	A gentle introduction to programming in R	

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Semester Grade Allocation

Homework .... 50%   Weekly; low score drops, highest 10 count (each = 5%)
Midterm .... 15%   In class Oct. 12
Exam 2 .... 15%   In class Nov. 16
Data story .... 20%   Presented in class Nov. 30; due Dec. 2

If you have issues arise during the semester, contact me <u>before</u> deadline.

Grading Scale

	Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent
		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-93%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	92-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	D-	62-60%

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point: 89.4 rounds down to 89 (B+) while 89.5 rounds up to 90 (A-). The UF grading policy details how GPA is computed.

Attendance Policy

Although no participation points are awarded, regular class attendance is expected.

Homework

Homework is assigned after each class and is due at 11:59 pm on Tuesdays. The lowest score from the semester drops and the highest 10 count. Because you will have at least 5 (sometimes 6) days to complete each assignment, no extensions will be allowed unless you have an exemption covered by UF policy for the entire time period.

Better yet, you have an incentive to get it done early. If you complete the homework before 6 pm Friday, you get 10 bonus points.

Exams

Each exam is in person during the three-hour class. Each is an open-book, and open-Web (though must be your own work). Exams are like the homework assignments, only under deadline, as if you were in a job tryout.

A makeup exam is possible only if all these are met: (1) The absence is covered by UF policy, (2) you contact me at least 30 minutes before class begins, and (3) you promptly provide written documentation if appropriate.

Data Story

Present your completed (not a draft) data story in class on Nov. 30 so you can get peer feedback and make refinements before submitting a version for grading (before 11:59 pm Friday, Dec. 2). In 5 minutes max, show on screen your headline and first few paragraphs (Word doc is sufficient), and describe how you analyzed the data.

The story must:
1. Require your original use of a spreadsheet or database.
2. Be solely your own work. This is not a group project.
3. Be unique to this class. No double-dipping.

The assignment requires you to upload 3 files (2 Word files and 1 Excel file) as follows:

File 1: Data story (Word file; 70 points)
About 400 words. Criteria used for grading:
1. Ready for publication, and of sufficient quality to submit with a job application.
2. Driven by a meaningful question or a hypothesis.
3. Detects a meaningful pattern.
4. Relies on data you obtained or generated and with enough complexity that it required a spreadsheet or a database.
5. After analysis, centered by a single data point.
6. Writing minimizes the use of numbers: no more than 1 number in a sentence, and no more than 5 numbers overall.
7. Tone is journalistic: based on empiricism, and all sources cited.
8. Interview at least 2 people who can offer meaningful, essential information. Likely to be an independent expert on and/or someone affected by your finding.

File 2: "Nerd" box (Word file; 10 points)
Publishable sidebar of about 100 words describing to the audience how the data was obtained and analyzed using a spreadsheet or database. Write for the audience, not me.

File 3: Spreadsheet and Data Diary (Excel file; 20 points)
Upload the spreadsheet you used to evaluate the data. It may have multiple sheets. Be sure 1 sheet is labeled "Diary" and tells me what you did with the data, as a data diary.

OTHER VERY IMPORTANT DETAILS

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 (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. Also, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me. Violations can result in a failing grade for the course and referral to the dean of students.

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting the get-started page. It is important to share any accommodation letter with me and discuss access needs as early as possible in the semester.

Diversity
The College of Journalism and Communications embraces an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along several dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class, and religion. Each course is expected to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communication in a global society. To that end:
1. Please let me know if you find any material in the course violates that expectation.
2. Please alert me if you have a name or preferred pronouns that differ from the class roll information, which is my only source of information about you.
3. If you have any concerns involving diversity in this course that you feel uncomfortable discussing with me, I encourage you to contact Professor Joanna Hernandez, CJC director of inclusion and diversity, at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.

Course Evaluations
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/.

In-Class Recording
The official UF policy regarding in-class recording, to comply with a 2021 Florida law can be found here.

Health and Wellness
- **U Matter, We Care**: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center**: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- **Student Health Care Center**: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- **University Police Department**: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).

- **UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center**: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville. Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center [website](#).

Academic Resources

- **E-learning technical support**: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk [website](#), or phone 24/7 at 352-392-4357, or email helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- **Career Connections Center**: Career assistance and counseling services. Visit the [website](#). Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601.
- **Library Support**: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Visit the [website](#).
- **Teaching Center**: General study skills and tutoring. Visit the [website](#). Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.
- **On-Campus Student Complaints**: Details are available through the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code, also known as the [Orange Book](#).