

# RTV 4930: MLB Spring Training Experience

Spring 2023

College of Journalism and Communications  
University of Florida

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Instructor: Eric Esterline  
Place: Weimer Hall 3020 and on location  
Day and Time: Wednesdays, Period 5  
Credit: Varies

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E-Mail: [eeesterline@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:eeesterline@jou.ufl.edu)  
Twitter: [@ericesterline](https://twitter.com/ericesterline)  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Office: Weimer Hall 2311 (INC)  
Phone: (352)846-0172  
Course Site: <https://ufl.instructure.com>  
Course Text: NONE

\*\*\*Readings and Resources will be posted and available online.\*\*\*

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## **Overview and Objectives**

**Students will meet once a week on Wednesdays during Period 5 prior to a spring break trip to the Tampa/South Florida area for the Grapefruit League of MLB Spring Training from March 13-17.** Students will be responsible for reporting on Grapefruit League games, fan experiences, features and other events surrounding spring training in the Tampa area. Students will file these stories to our class website including multimedia elements and much more. Students will also be required to participate in the planning of events to be covered, obtaining credentials for events and planning travel. We will also meet for one day following spring break to decompress from the experience and share strengths and weaknesses of the program. It is strongly recommended that students have prior reporting experience, but not required. You must meet with Eric Esterline for approval to do this experience. Students are chosen on a case-by-case basis. **Students are required to register for credit for this student experience.** **\*There is an additional cost to this experience in providing travel and lodging**

## **Course Learning Objectives**

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

- (1) to develop skills to effectively research, gather and analyze sports information;
- (2) to develop skills to write high quality stories and features related to sports on the internet;

- (3) to enhance understanding of the ethics and values of sports journalism;
- (4) to develop ability to understand relative newsworthiness of sports stories;
- (5) to develop ability to write and report with the expectation work produced can and will be used for WRUF.com
- (6) to develop skills for interviewing athletes, coaches, sports managers and owners;
- (7) to develop understanding of the variety of sports sources used as a reporter;
- (8) to enhance understanding of MLB and spring training
- (9) to learn about websites and other sources for sports research, as well for production of content for the WRUF-ESPN AM 850-FM 98.1 website.

**Course Eligibility**

No Prerequisites

**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.

<b>Evaluation Components</b>	<b>Points Per Component</b>	<b>% of Total Grade</b>
Class Participation, Citizenship and Attendance	100 pts	10%
Coverage Plan	400 pts	40%
Multimedia Stories Submitted (4)	500 pts	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000 pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Assignment Descriptions**

**Class Participation, Citizenship and Attendance (100 Points)**– This includes, but is not limited, to the following: regular and on-time attendance for class; serious preparation in class meetings; active listening, including note taking; involvement in classroom activities; posting relevant content to Canvas, 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

<b>Preferred</b>	<b>Acceptable</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Will Ask You To Leave</b>
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Arrives on time	Arrives on time	Arrives no more than 5 minutes late	Arrives more than 5 minutes late	Absent
Comments are relevant and reflect understanding and good preparation	Comments are mostly relevant, but understanding may be slightly lacking	Comments are minimal (“yeah”, “uh huh”) and demonstrate poor preparation	No comments are made	Disruptive or rude comments are made
Clear enthusiasm	Not overly enthusiastic, but positive	Demeanor is sluggish	Sleeping, texting, disengaged	Drawing others into disrespectful behaviors (showing texts, shopping online, etc)
Participates in Twitter course hashtag activity with 3-4 per class	Participates in Twitter course hashtag activity with 1-2 per class	Participates in Twitter course hashtag activity with 0-1 per class	Participates in Twitter course hashtag activity rarely if at all	Never participates in Twitter course hashtag activity

**PROJECTS** - All projects will be expected to be of high quality work. 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.

- **Coverage Plan** - students will work with instructor and peers to develop a team and individual coverage plan for events for the spring training experience. Active participation and execution of planning, execution and evaluation of coverage plan is essential in successfully completing this portion of the course. Obtaining credentials, tickets, interviews, travel schedule, lodging and all other duties assigned are a part of the coverage plan.
- **Multimedia Stories** - students will be required to submit 4 stories for review and publication to the ESPN Gainesville website. Students can work on groups of up to 2 or can work individually if they so choose.

### Multimedia Story Rubric

Criteria							Pts
Concept	'A' Work: The blog is focused and well-written. The post makes	'B' Work: The blog is pretty focused but the writing could be improved. Concerns	'C' Work: Concept could use some more development but it has potential. Writing is	'C' Work: Concept could use even more development but it has potential. Writing is all over	'D' or Below: Concept basically fails. It is way too broad or offers no take on the	Incomplete	25

	sense and centers on an interesting idea. It's publishable.	about publishing because of typos, other errors.	all over the place. Probably not publishable.	the place. Probably not publishable.	subject. Not publishable.		
External Connections	'A' Work: There are ways for audience to engage with material. At least three links in post, several photos.	'B' Work: Some good linking, but could be better. Photos are there but not the best.	'C' Work: Poor or improper linking (links don't work); links are not embedded. Photos aren't relevant.	'C' Work: Poor or improper linking (links don't work); links are not embedded. Photos aren't relevant.	'D' or Below: No links, no photos, no audience connection on any level.	Incomplete	25
Posts: Is content appropriate, meaningful? Are the posts long enough? Well cited? Are sources varied and reputable?	'A' Work: Interesting stuff. Great analysis; some primary reporting; good mixture of analysis, interviews, commentary.	'B' Work: Good variety of content. Maybe some of the posts are too long or not substantial.	'C' Work: Little variety of content but there is stuff here to read.	'C' Work: Not much variety of content but there is stuff here to read.	'D' or Below: Pretty light on content, not substantial, perhaps just a bunch of links. Adds nothing new to the blogosphere.	Incomplete	25
Promoting: Is the student promoting their work.	'A' Work: At least 4 tweets via own Twitter	'B' Work: At least 3 tweets via own Twitter handle	'C' Work: At least 2 tweets via own Twitter handle	'C' Work: At least 1 tweet via own Twitter handle	Rating Description	Incomplete	25

	handle and promoting your post on other social media outlet. Use @mentions and #s	and promoting your post with either on other social media outlet or using @mentions and #s					
Writing:	'A' Work: Coherent; strong word choice; well-organized. No typos; no grammatical errors.	'B' Work: Some organizational issues. Some typos and grammatical errors.	'C' Work: Poor word choice, lack of coherence, filled with typos.	'C' Work: Even worse word choice, lack of coherence, filled with typos.	'D' or Below: Major organizational issues, no coherence, poor word choice	Incomplete	25

**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**

<b>Week 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introductory Class Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Week 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coverage Plan Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Week 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coverage Plan Meeting</li> <li>● Guest Speaker</li> </ul>
<b>Week 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coverage Plan Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Week 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coverage Plan Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coverage Plan Meeting</li> <li>● Guest Speaker</li> </ul>

<b>Week 7</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coverage Plan Meeting</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trip Week</li> </ul>
<b>Week 9</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decompress/Evaluation with Group</li> </ul>

## Policies

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### **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](http://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>

### **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](mailto: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 availabilities and other factors.**