

JOU 4313: SPORTS REPORTING

FALL 2023

M | Period 6-8 (12:50 PM - 3:50 PM)

106 Rogers Hall

Prof. Ryan Hunt

ryanhunt@ufl.edu

Office: Weimer Hall #3040D

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs, 10am-12pm OR [by appointment](#)

Office: (352) 392-6303; Mobile: (908) 967-2560

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sports reporting is much more than just game coverage. Yes, games are the lifeblood of sports. But a great sports writer must look beyond the box score in order to inform, educate and entertain fans in numerous ways – on multiple platforms. This course is designed to broaden and deepen a student's understanding of effective sports reporting and to sharpen and develop the student's writing, reporting and other skills required in today's industry.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To expose you to multiple forms of sports reporting and improve your skill set.
- To learn techniques used by sports reporters and apply them to your career.
- To produce original content of professional quality across various genres.
- To get a better understanding of the industry and the change in consumption habits

COURSE TOPICS

Techniques

Understanding audiences

Reporting, developing sources

The art of interviewing

Developing voice

Live-tweeting/social media

Developing story ideas

Working on deadline

Genres

Game coverage (previews, recaps, sidebars)

News coverage (original, aggregation)

Commentary and analysis

Writing Features/Profiles

Multimedia: Video, podcasts

Alternative story types

READING

- The Best American Sports Writing 2022, edited by J.A. Adande; recommended not required
- The Associated Press StyleBook; recommended
- Daily national and local sports coverage

CLASS SCHEDULE

Specific weekly schedule elements subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Week 1 (8/28) Intro; Overview of course and Syllabus; The four main pillars of sports reporting

Week 2 (9/4): NO CLASS ... Labor Day weekend

Week 3 (9/11) Understanding audience; What makes a good sports story?; Leads to stories

Week 4 (9/18) Breaking news; Writing on deadline; Aggregation & attribution; Source building

Week 5 (9/25) Press conferences; Getting (and using) quotes; Art of the interview; Q&A techniques

Week 6 (10/2) Traditional game coverage (previews/recaps/sidebars); Guide to the press box, PR

Week 7: (10/9) Multimedia (video/audio) coverage, social media; turning interview into news story

Week 8: (10/16) Beat coverage: Developing ideas, prioritizing stories and content planning

Week 9: (10/23) Bye Week. No regularly scheduled class. **Will meet for live game coverage TBA**

Week 10: (10/30) Commentary/analysis. Column writing (event/opinion columns); Pitching stories

Week 11: (11/6): Live deadline writing assignment. **Class will meet at game TBA**

Week 12: (11/13) Trend pieces, exploratory and alternative story formats; business of sports, NIL

Week 13: (11/20): Reported storytelling. Short features, profiles, longform; working with editors

Week 14: (11/27) Reporting on serious issues (concussions, legal and ethics)

Week 15: (12/4) Individual meetings to review your final project draft. Project due 12/11.

GRADING

You will be graded on a 1,500-point scale:

A: 92.5-100% (1,387-1,500 total points)

A-: 90-92.4% (1,350-1,386)

B+: 86.5-89.9% (1,297-1,349)

B: 82.5-86.4% (1,237-1,296)

B-: 80-82.4% (1,200-1,236)

C+: 76.5-79.9% (1,147-1,199)

C: 72.5-76.4% (1,087-1,146)

C-: 70-72.4% (1,050-1,086)

D+: 67-69.9% (1,005-1,049)

D: 63-66.9% (945-1,004)

D-: 60-62.9% (900-944)

F: 59.9% and below (Under 899)

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

Note: Specific assignment and due dates will be visible in Canvas.

Participation/Attendance/Professionalism (100 points)

You are expected to attend class on time. You are allowed one unexcused absence. After that, 25 points are deducted for each class missed. Points can also be deducted at the instructor's discretion for chronic lateness, being disengaged in class, and failure to participate in class discussions.

Class Assignments (500 points; 100 points each)

We will have four in-class assignments designed to sharpen a skill for sports reporting. One assignment will involve covering a press conference from class, transcribing the audio as a group and writing on deadline. Details of each assignment will be provided on the day of class, but you will be given one-week notice. Bring laptops.

In-Class Assignment 1: Breaking news on deadline (Week 4)

In-Class Assignment 2: Covering a mock press conference (Week 5)

In-Class Assignment 3: Writing a news story off an interview (Week 7)

In-Class Assignment 4: Content Planning: Generating and pitching story ideas (Week 8)

In-Class Assignment 5: News exercise: Sports business and contract releases (Week 12)

Live Assignments (500 points; 100 points each)

We will cover games and events as a class, both off television and in person. There will be a minimum of two games we cover as a class, where students will be assigned various tasks from particular events. The schedule is as follows:

Assignment 1: Game recap (off TV) (Assigned Week 6)

Assignment 2: Live social media game coverage/analysis (Assigned Week 7)

Assignment 3: Live in-person game recap (on deadline) (Assigned Week 9)

Assignment 4: Live in-person topic/game/event opinion column (Assigned Week 11)

Assignment 5: Alternative story (exploratory, list, trend, Q&A, other) (Assigned Week 12)

Multimedia Project (150 points)

Each student will be required to do one independent multimedia video project – sample ideas: either a postgame video standup, a voiceover video or a short podcast – off a selected topic or sporting event. The multimedia projects will be done in partnership with at least one other student. Ideas for the project will be due Oct. 11. The project will be due Nov. 1. More details to come later.

Final Project (250 Points)

Reported, in-depth feature or profile with multimedia element. Minimum 1,500 words. Professor will review, discuss drafts with each student at a selected scheduled time. More specific details on the assignment to come later. Ideas for the project due no later than Nov. 20. Project due Dec. 11.

EXTRA CREDIT

There will be select opportunities to earn extra credit during the course of the semester. Details to come in specific classes. Class attendance is required to participate in that extra-credit assignment.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

- Please always directly email me your completed assignments, in addition to submitting them in Canvas.
- When applicable, include source info (name, phone/e-mail, links) at bottom of your email or story. Failure to follow guidelines will result in a point penalty at instructor's discretion

DEADLINES AND DEDUCTIONS

Journalism is a deadline business. This course is designed to mirror the expected behavior of a professional newsroom. They're called deadlines for a reason.

Failure to meet assignment deadlines will result in a 20-point deduction in the first 24-hour period it's late. Late assignments beyond 24 hours may not be accepted, and could be graded as a zero, unless an emergency can be documented. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, advance notice and written documentation will be required. If advance notice is not possible because of a true emergency, written documentation will be required ASAP.

Fact errors will result in a deduction at instructor's discretion, depending on the error and assignment.

COURSE GUESTS

The class will also include guest speakers who cover prep, college and professional sports on a local and national level, including reporters and editors from The Athletic, ESPN, Fox Sports, Sports Illustrated, The Ringer, Yahoo! Sports, On3, 247Sports and additional media outlets.

In the interest of honest and frank discussions, my lectures and comments of guest speakers are strictly off-the-record, unless otherwise noted. This means that they may not be published in any format, either in a print publication or on a web site, personal blog or social media.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/HONOR CODE

Plagiarism is one of the biggest sins in journalism. Do your own work.

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources, using artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT), fabricating material or using any work done by another person for a class assignment. Even copying photos from the internet could lead to a copyright claim in the real world. See the Department of Journalism website, as well as UF guidelines, for specific outline of honor code violations.

UF Student Honor Code: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

Any violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. Failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action compliant with the UF Student Honor Code Procedures.

If you have **any** degree of uncertainty, please ask.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

This is a workshop-style class in which we will all contribute ideas and critiques of others' work and ideas. Please use professional courtesy. Turn cell phones off. No texting (or checking your phone) in class. If you need to use your phone, please leave the room to do so. Bring laptops to class.

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.ua.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 this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are [available to students here](#).

CLASSROOM NEEDS

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to the instructor.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department embraces a commitment toward 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.

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>

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.

THE INSTRUCTOR

Ryan Hunt is a Sports Lecturer at the University of Florida. A 1997 graduate of UF's College of Journalism and Communications, Ryan spent 25 years at *Sports Illustrated*, including the last four as its co-Editor-in-Chief. Ryan managed SI's editorial staff, leading a team of experienced reporters and editors and overseeing the digital strategy – from daily content planning to major event coverage to franchise development..

At SI, Ryan started as an entry-level Associate Producer in Atlanta before climbing the ranks – Homepage Editor, News Director, Associate Managing Editor to Executive Editor – to become one of only 11 people to hold the top editorial title at the brand. Hunt won a Sports Emmy in 2017 for Outstanding Digital Innovation for his involvement on the SI/Life VR 'Capturing Everest' project, the first ever bottom-to-top climb of Mount Everest captured in virtual reality.

He grew up in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* during his time at UF. Nearly 30 years ago, I was in the same position as you are today.