

# JOU 4930: SPORTS DIGITAL EDITING

## FALL 2023

M | Period 9 (4:05 p.m. - 4:55 p.m.) WEIM 3024

W | Periods 9-10 (4:05 p.m. - 6 p.m.) WEIM 3024

Prof. Ryan Hunt

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A comprehensive look at the skills required to be a vital member of a sports newsdesk at any media organization. This course will introduce students to the foundational elements of news editing and content distribution. My goal is to replicate the skills and tasks you'd be asked to have if you were in a modern newsroom. If you were to get an internship or an entry-level job at a place like Sports Illustrated, for example, this is what you would need to know.

### **FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES**

The course will focus on the best practices of digital sports journalism, such as:

- Macro-editing. Thinking about the big picture and how to approach stories
- Working with writers collaboratively to improve (even tighten) content
- Skills in copy editing (topics such as AP style; grammar, word usage/choice)
- News judgment and pitching/assigning stories. What makes a good story idea?
- Elements of storytelling for digital, mobile audiences
- Skills in headline, decks, caption writing for digital audiences (and even print ones)
- Fairness, balance and accuracy in content. Avoiding bias, libel and ethical missteps.
- The role of a newsroom CMS (Content Management System) in formatting stories
- Understanding SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and why it matters
- Content distribution: crafting impactful social shares, push notifications, newsletters

## **COURSE OUTCOMES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to better understand ...

1. The many different roles an editor may have on a newsdesk
2. The dynamic between writers and editors, and the different types of editing
3. The different types of content and how a reader/viewer/listener may find it
4. How audience behavior can shape everything from story ideas to the final headlines
5. Have a deeper appreciation for the importance of editing in journalism.

## **RECOMMENDED READING**

- *Think Like An Editor: 50 Strategies for the Print and Digital World*. By Emilie Davis and Steve Davis. The entire book is not required but we'll read excerpts for specific topics.
- *The Associated Press Stylebook*. You probably already have a copy. While it's not the backbone of this class, you'll need to develop a good grasp of it.
- Daily local and national sports coverage. ESPN, The Athletic, The Ringer, SI, On3, 247Sports, The Orlando Sentinel, even social media. Reading will help you become a better editor and writer, as well as develop a better understanding of audience behavior.

## **TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE**

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

Week 1: Introduction to me and the course

Week 2: The role of an editor at a modern news org; News judgment and budget meetings

Week 3: *Labor Day holiday*; Macro-editing vs. micro-editing (looking at the big picture)

Week 4: Macro-editing II (Improving/tightening stories); Micro-editing (grammar/style)

Week 5: Micro-editing II (news editing); Ethical missteps ... and how to avoid them

Week 6: Understanding libel + editing for fairness/taste; Plagiarism and fabrication

Week 7: Quick-turn breaking news, curation & aggregation; Timed writing drill

Week 8: Working with writers; The importance (and lost art) of fact checking;

Week 9: Storytelling for digital and mobile audiences; Alternative story editing (lists/Q&As)

Week 10: *No class Oct. 23 (open date)*; Headline writing: Catchy without clickbait; Subheads/decks

Week 11: Editing opinion columns; Digital web production and Content Management Systems

Week 12: Finding and developing an audience; Search Engine Optimization (SEO) for beginners

Week 13: Content distribution (Social media, push notifications, newsletters)

Week 14: Photo selection, photo caption writing; final project Qs; *Thanksgiving holiday*

Week 15: How it all works together; how you can hone your skills; final project review

Week 16: The future of sports journalism and storytelling; *no class Dec. 6; final project due.*

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Most weeks, we'll have one assignment or quiz (either in-class or take home) tied to one of that week's topics. There will also be a final project that incorporates the majority of skills learned over the course of the semester. Each assignment is worth 100 points; quizzes are worth 50 points each. *Note: Specific quiz, assignment and due dates will be visible in Canvas.*

Assignment 1: Trimming a story (Week 4)

Assignment 2: Editing a news story (Week 5)

Assignment 3: Short essay on 'Shattered Glass' (Week 6)

Assignment 4: Fact checking (Week 8)

Assignment 5: Editing a long conversation into a focused 750-word Q&A (Week 9)

Assignment 6: Headline writing (Week 10)

Assignment 7: Editing an opinion column (Week 11)

Assignment 8: SEO headline writing (Week 12)

Assignment 9: Social media teasers and push notifications (Week 13)

Assignment 10: Writing photo captions (Week 14)

Quiz 1: News Judgment (Week 2)

Quiz 2: AP Style (Week 3)

Quiz 3: Edit 1: Spot the errors (Week 5)

Quiz 4: Libel and ethics (Week 7)

Quiz 5: Edit 2: Spot the errors (Week 15)

## **FINAL PROJECT**

At the conclusion of the semester, your final project will consist of one overarching newsdesk assignment that encapsulates everything you will have learned this semester.

Students will be given a pre-written story and they will be required to complete the following tasks.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| - Trim it to a certain word length             | - Write headlines, subheads              |
| - Edit for style and grammar                   | - Write photo captions                   |
| - Fact check the article for accuracy          | - Compose SEO headlines                  |
| - Ensure the article is fair and in good taste | - Write social shares/push notifications |

The assignment is worth 400 points; each of the following sections are worth 50 points each.

The story for the editing assignment will be given to you Nov. 16. It will be due Dec. 6 at midnight.

There will be opportunities in class in the final weeks to ask questions and seek assistance.

## **PARTICIPATION/BUDGET MEETINGS**

Each student will be assigned a team/topic to follow for the duration of the semester. Starting Aug. 30 (Wednesday before Labor Day), we'll begin each class with a brief budget meeting. Each student will be asked to pitch at least one story idea involving their team/topic. Don't just pitch what you've already seen elsewhere. Creativity is encouraged and rewarded.

Participation is cumulative throughout the semester -- worth 250 points toward your overall score -- but essentially each class is worth 10 points. Your pitches will be judged based on newsworthiness, timeliness and creativity, while ideas with potential significance (could it be a story that would run outside of a sports page, for example) could earn bonus points.

Come prepared. Come ready to engage. To get the most out of this class, you'll need to do those things. If you're an active participant in class, these will be easy points. And, hopefully, you'll enjoy what a typical morning news budget process is like.

### **ATTENDANCE**

One unexcused absence is permitted per semester. Any additional unexcused absences outside of documented emergencies will result in a five-point deduction from your total attendance score. If you miss a class, however, you still will be expected to turn in your budget meeting pitches.

### **GRADING**

You will be graded on a 2,000-point scale:

- **Assignments:** 1000 total points (100 each): 50 percent
- **Quizzes:** 250 total points (50 each): 12.5 percent
- **Final Project:** 400 Points: 20 percent
- **Participation** (Mock Budget Meetings + Discussion): 250 points: 12.5 percent
- **Attendance:** 100 points: 5 percent

### **Final grade calculations:**

A: 92.5-100% (1,850-2000 total points)  
A-: 90-92.4% (1,800-1,849)  
B+: 86.5-89.9% (1,730-1,799)  
B: 82.5-86.4% (1,650-1,729)  
B-: 80-82.4% (1,600-1,649)  
C+: 76.5-79.9% (1,530-1,599)  
C: 72.5-76.4% (1,450-1,529)  
C-: 70-72.4% (1,400-1,449)  
D+: 67-69.9% (1,340-1,399)  
D: 63-66.9% (1,260-1,339)  
D-: 60-62.9% (1,200-1,259)  
F: 59.9% and below (Under 1,199)

Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points as articulated here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **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.

### **DEADLINES**

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 are required. If advance notice is not possible because of a true emergency, written documentation will be required ASAP.

### **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/): <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.

### **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](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 here](#). 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 [here in this link](#).

### **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.

### **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Ryan Hunt is a Sports Journalism 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 renowned magazine. 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 St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* as a student at UF. Nearly 30 years ago, I was in the same position as you are today.