

Stories of Resiliency - Community

MMC 6936 **Section #5659, Class #29779** – 3 credits; Fall 2023

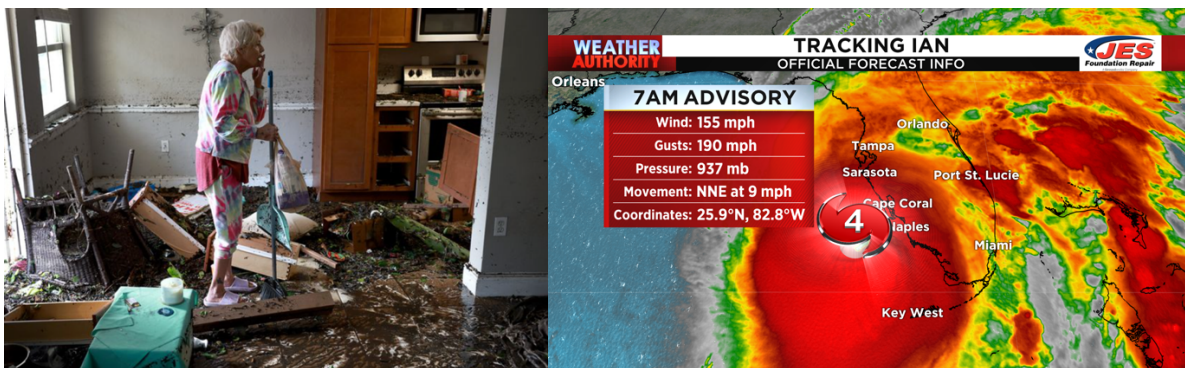
Tuesdays 4:05 pm – 4:55 pm, Period 9, Thursdays 3:00 – 4:55, Periods 8-9

Location – WEIM 3324

Professor: Kim Fowler

Email: k.fowler@ufl.edu

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1 pm – 3 pm



Overview

What is storytelling and how can we use stories to bring about change? That is the core question at the heart of this course. This course is part of a larger group of classes affiliated with a project called the **GulfSouth Studio**. Created by **FIBER** (Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience) through the College of Design, Construction, and Planning, this is a multi-disciplinary course that brings together students from Journalism in conjunction with multiple departments within the College of Design, Construction, and Planning (DCP): Architecture, Urban and Regional Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Housing. The National Academies of Science (NAS) GulfSouth Studio Project explores the critical challenges facing the Gulf of Mexico's coastline and communities in the context of a changing climate including energy transition, changing Gulf Coastline, and community health and resilience. It approaches these challenges through intensive design thinking, community engagement, and computational integration. The studio explores the development of a "digital twin for design" to synthesize diverse research outputs and teaching methods from across a range of disciplines.

Slow Destruction - Rapid Disaster

In October 2022, Hurricane Ian made landfall in Southwest Florida near Fort Myers. While devastating Florida's southwest coast, Hurricane Ian impacted thousands across Florida with insured losses reaching \$12.5 billion.¹ The storm laid waste to Fort Myers Beach and Sanibel Island before sending a massive storm surge up the Caloosahatchee River and into the low-lying back yards of thousands of residents in Cape Coral and the city of Ft. Myers. **However, the region's vulnerability was building long before the storm.** Lee County is the second-fastest growing county in Florida, as well as the ninth fastest growing county in the U.S. (2021). For decades the region's unabated pattern of sprawling development has provided low-density housing at tremendous cost to coastal ecosystems, civic institutions, and public infrastructure. Hurricane Ian exposed the fragility of this built environment but the foundations for catastrophe were constructed over generations.

Studio Purpose: Transforming Suburban Florida

This multi-semester project is designed to focus on the larger Lee County area and then diving into three specific areas that were hardest hit within the county. Teams from the other departments investigate the multi-scalar relationship between land-use patterns, housing, infrastructure, water management policy, and ecological conditions of the greater Ft. Myers metropolitan area in the context of its vulnerability. After that, multi-disciplinary teams will focus on parts of Lee County that are most vulnerable to sea level rise, continued storm damage, as well as economic and cultural challenges that have been present for decades. In the Spring, the studio will propose a series of "suburban retrofits" to envision radical urban transformation to achieve greater resilience, equity, and sustainability. Through a series of architectural designs, landscape infrastructures, planning and policy interventions, as well as multimedia communication tools to reimagine and communicate the civic core of the city each team visually communicates, at a range of scales, different possible futures for the study area, which will culminate in the creating of an interactive "digital twin" on the UnREAL Engine platform.

Role of Communications Students in this project

Storytelling is one of the greatest tools we have as communicators, and your responsibilities in this course are to tell stories of resiliency. The Lee County community has suffered catastrophic damage due to Hurricane Ian, both in property damage as well as a massive disruption in the lives of those affected. While the focus on Southwest Florida was intense immediately following the storm, many residents are still struggling with rebuilding their homes, businesses, and the very structure of their everyday lives. This semester we will be focusing on the community members and the challenges they are facing within the Lee County area - that might be housing, environmental and

¹ Florida Office of Insurance Regulation, 12/21/22, <https://floir.com/home/ian>

landscape rebuilding and protection, or even something related to how to best bring together the community through areas designed for community gatherings. As a communication specialist, you will be tasked with finding a member or members of the community who have been affected by or are working on solutions for one of the specific areas of concentration. What challenges do they face as a community? Were those challenges present before the storm? If so, how were they exacerbated by the devastation? Who are they relying on to help rebuild – the government, non-profits, or perhaps local members of the community? The story of how people rebuild after disasters is an important part of the larger story of community resilience.

By taking part in this course and the larger program, you will be the outlet for community members to share their stories, the challenges they've faced, and the choices they must make in rebuilding. Your work this semester will be used to help students in the Spring course create solutions for the community that are focused on resiliency, equity, and sustainability. As a communications student, you are responsible for working in a team environment to research, assess, and report on community values and concerns to ensure the solutions that are created are in line with community input and best interests. We will be travelling down to the area to interview residents and organizations that have been affected by and are working towards solutions to community challenges. Using your skillset in written and/or visual storytelling, you will need to find a way to properly communicate community needs, desires, and roadblocks they face. Your stories will be shared with residents, community leaders, and government officials as part of the project's final deliverables.

For a look into a [similar course](#) that was offered previously, you can look at the [FIBER Resilient Cities site](#).



This course will be broken up into three parts.

Part 1 - Background and lectures

For the first part of the semester, we will be diving into the background and the history of the area. We will look at how the area has built up rapidly and what specific events and policies have led this area to face certain challenges. Students will focus on certain areas – population, land use, housing, economic growth, natural resources and ecosystems – and how the changes within those areas have developed. We will then focus on the storm and how Ian affected the region and how all those areas of focus have been impacted because of the disaster.

Part 2 - Trip(s) to Lee County

We will take one or more trips down to Lee County throughout the semester. Lodging and travel will be paid for or reimbursed (depending on how many cars we need down there). On these trips, the class will meet with community leaders and experts from the area to further explain the challenges they face in the area. You will need to connect with and interview residents who have been affected by the storm, as it relates to the different areas of concentration being worked on.

Part 3 - Developing your story

In the second half of the semester, you will be working on finishing your story for the final deliverable. Depending on your skillset, you will create a visual or written story that accurately shares the information you have gathered over the semester in a cohesive and thoughtful piece that will be shared with the community. The audiences for your stories are the Ft. Myers/Cape Coral community at large as well as a smaller audience of the local community leaders and policy makers who will use this information to help craft solutions.



Course Objectives:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of concepts and information in areas of expertise outside of communications as they relate to the challenges faced by the Lee County area
2. Participate in teams to work on complex challenges surrounding disaster recovery, changing coastal environments, and social and economic disparities
3. Examine information and reports from fellow students and produce clear, concise communication that is easily digestible for multiple audiences
4. Identify Lee County community members whose experiences demonstrate challenges faced by the larger community
5. Interview and construct storylines by applying communications strategies and tools to create an in depth and dynamic storytelling piece for insertion into a larger project presentation

Course Expectations

Assignments

Assignments will be posted to Canvas and are meant to measure your understanding of the topics presented as well as your ability to craft a story and work within a group setting on a larger project.

- 1. Research Presentations – first half of the semester (30% of final grade)**
 - a. Each week you will be compiling information about certain aspects of the community and presenting those findings to the class.
 - b. This is meant to confirm your understanding of the area and discuss with your classmates any outstanding questions or thoughts you might have on the topic.
 - c. The expectation is not that you have gathered all the information about the specific topic, but that the topics you are researching build part of the larger picture of the area.
- 2. Class participation (10% of final grade)**
 - a. This includes being present for class as well as coming on any trips we have planned. I will work with student schedules to make sure the timing of the trips works with other courses.
 - b. You will be graded on how you work with other students in the class and how you interact with community members as well.
- 3. Assignments – 3 assignments (60% total)**
 - a. **Assignment 1 – Lee County background story. (10%)**
 - i. The background information you collect and present to the class will need to be consolidated into a concise, produced story.
 - b. **Assignment 2 – Analyzing the challenges (20%)**
 - i. After spending time in Lee County and speaking with local residents and organizations, you will need to create a story that focuses on

the area of interest you have been assigned (more information in class on that). You will need to clearly show the challenges faced by the community, interview local residents and conduct research on how prevalent those challenges are felt in the community.

- c. **Assignment 3 – Final Story/Deliverable (30%)**
 - i. The work you have gathered in the background and analysis sections will be combined and edited to create a presentation and final story that will be presented to the community as your work in the area of interest you are assigned.

Grading

<i>Course Grade Breakdown</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Research discussions	30%
Class Participation	10%
Assignment 1	10%
Assignment 2	20%
Final story deliverable	30%

Course Grading Scheme

		A	100% to 94%	A-	< 94% to 90%
B+	< 90% to 87%	B	< 87% to 84%	B-	< 84% to 80%
C+	< 80% to 77%	C	< 77% to 74%	C-	< 74% to 70%
D+	< 70% to 67%	D	< 67% to 64%	D-	< 64% to 61%
E	< 61% to 0%				

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is mandatory. Please plan to attend all lectures as we only meet once a week and attendance is necessary to understand the background information. If you are not able to attend a lecture, please notify me before class via Canvas, Slack or Email. Since we will be working with students from other disciplines, participation in class discussions and working with your group is essential for your success in this course.

Please review this link to review the University policy on acceptable reasons for absence <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absencestext>

Class Format

We will meet in WEIM 3324 twice a week. Our Tuesday meeting will be discussions and lectures and the Thursday meetings will be reserved for class presentations. For the

certain parts of the semester, it may be necessary to meet via Zoom. Students will be notified in advance of these exceptions. Keep in mind that Zoom meetings require the same professional level of participation as in class meetings. Students are expected to have cameras on, sitting up and be engaged in class. Students who don't abide to these guidelines may be counted as absent. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner whether providing feedback to classmates or engaging with our guests.

Academic Integrity

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-codestudentconduct-code/>

UF Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism Definition - A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authorized by the student.
- Unauthorized use of materials or resources.
- Prohibited collaboration or consultation.
- Submission of paper or academic work purchased or obtained for an outside source.

For UF's Plagiarism Policy visit

<http://regulations.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/4.040-1.pdf>

If you have any questions or concerns if it qualifies for plagiarism, just ask!

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) by visiting their Get Started page. The DRC will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible during the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the

university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student

Student Resources

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392- 1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Students will be required to use various databases found in the library and used by industry professionals, such as, AdSpender, Census Bureau, Demographics Now, Hoovers, IBISWorld, MarketResearchi.com, Mintel, Simmons, Simply Analytics, Statista, etc.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

Health and Wellness Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Proposed Schedule

Week 1	August 24 th	Class Overview
Week 2	August 29 th & 31 st	Storytelling for Social Good
Week 3	Sept 5 th & 7 th	Lee County – history & ecosystems
Week 4	Sept 12 th & 14 th	Lee County – people & economics
Week 5	Sept 19 th & 21 st	Hurricane Ian
Week 6	Sept 26 th & 28 th	Local Organizations
Week 7	Oct. 3 rd & 5 th	Possible trip (over weekend)
Week 8	Oct 10 th & 12 th	Discuss Storylines
Week 9	Oct 17 th & 19 th	Expert Interviews
Week 10	Oct. 24 th & 26 th	Work on stories
Week 11	Oct. 31 st & Nov. 2 nd	Crafting robust stories
Week 12	Nov. 7 th & 9 th	Possible second trip – follow up
Week 13	Nov. 14 th & 16 th	Story editing
Week 14	Nov. 21 st	Individual Meetings
Week 15	Nov. 28 th & 30 th	Story Rough Draft Presentations
Week 16	Dec. 5 th	Final Stories Due

Please note this schedule is subject to change. All changes will be noted on the course Canvas page.