

JOU4011C Audience Engagement

Term: Spring 2024, Wednesdays from 5:10 to 7:05 p.m. ET

Instructor: Megan Kearney, Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Journalism (she/her/hers)
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Office Hours: Virtually by appointment. Please feel free to book time with me here:

<https://calendly.com/megankearney2>. Periodic drop-in office hours via Zoom will be scheduled and announced via Canvas.

About the course:

The relationship between journalists and their audiences has completely changed from a one-way broadcast and publish model of the past, and the communities we serve are at the forefront of our engagement efforts. In this course, we'll take a look at how a collaborative culture is changing journalism, and how journalists can take part. We'll discuss key questions like:

- For whom are your messages and journalism designed to reach — on a brand level or a story level — and how can you reach them?
- How can you be strategic enough to know if what you're doing is successful? How do we know if the journalism is "working"? What is it we hope to accomplish, and how are we measuring success?
- How do you build relationships with your audience and earn their trust?
- How can you reflect diverse perspectives and effectively invite the participation of your whole community?

Specific examples of what we'll cover:

- Inviting the audience to interact with us and with our products, offline and online
- Using social platforms to strategically reach existing and new audiences, taking advantage of a truly social life cycle to tell iterative and evolving stories.
- Telling good stories across multiple platforms, taking advantage of what each does well
- Using digital tools to listen to what our target audiences are saying, and using that data to better serve them
- Defining and measuring the success of journalism

Learning objectives:

- Analyze the role journalists and users will fill as information needs and norms change with the media landscape. Articulate why and how the audience has an increasingly large role to play in journalistic processes and products.

- Evaluate journalism that is strategically designed to reach specific audiences in specific ways.
- Define success, using analytic information, for different types of journalism with regard to its audience.
- Pitch an act of journalism designed for a specific community or group.
- Generate a prototype of an audience engagement project, based on that pitch, that is tested and refined with members of the community identified.

Required texts:

Readings for this course will be selected from open-access resources or resources available to you through the UF library and access system, therefore there are **no additional texts** to purchase for this course. Links to those resources will be provided in Canvas.

Syllabus:

Week 1 | Jan. 10

- Introduction to the course and expectations
- Meet your instructor and classmates!
- Begin discussions on defining journalism objectivity and establishing trust in an audience-engaged age of media

Week 2 | Jan. 17

- Continued discussion: How to talk about journalism and the media in the age of mistrust
- Trusting News exercise: X-Ray Reading

Week 3 | Jan. 24

- Introducing The Science of Trust
- Engaging and listening to build trust
- Trusting News exercise: Understanding mistrust in news coverage

Week 4 | Jan. 31

- Continued discussion: The Science of Trust
- How we feel and who we are affects trust
- **Quiz:** Understanding Trust — Due by **Tuesday, Feb. 6** at 11:59 p.m. ET

Week 5 | Feb. 7

- Engaging audiences: Pillar 1 — The communities we serve
- How to listen and respond to your community
- Sourcing, sourcing, sourcing
- Trusting News exercise: The art of a call to action

Week 6 | Feb. 14

- Engaging audiences: Pillar 2 — The future of social
- Social as a tool, not a strategy
- Social monitoring and amplification
- Ever-evolving platforms
- **Quiz:** Engaging audiences: Pillars 1 and 2 — Due by **Tuesday, Feb. 20** at 11:59 p.m. ET

Week 7 | Feb. 21

- Engaging Audiences: Pillar 3 — SEO
- Habits of information consumption
- Search as a tool
- Exercise: Google Verification Training

Week 8 | Feb. 28

- Engaging audiences: Pillar 4 — A new era
- Subscriber models vs. membership models and everything in between
- Solutions Journalism
- Events
- **Quiz:** Engaging audiences: Pillars 3 and 4 — Due by **Tuesday, March 5** at 11:59 p.m. ET

Week 9 | March 6

- Engaging audiences: Pillar 5 — Product
- Lesson: Audience-focused products and how they're being used in the industry
- Models for pitching your ideas
- Prototyping 101

Week 10 | March 13

- SPRING BREAK! No class this week!

Week 11 | March 20

- Pitch Week — what we covered before Spring Break and how you'll use it to form your pitches

Week 12 | March 27

- Prototype Lab — Refining your concepts
- **Deadline:** Product Pitches — Due by **March 27** at 5 p.m. ET

Week 13 | April 3

- Prototype Lab — Community feedback

Week 14 | April 10

- Prototype Lab – Build-measure-learn cycle

Week 15 | April 17

- Audience Engagement Product Presentations (first half)
- **Deadline:** Final prototype reports — Due by **April 17** at 5 p.m. ET

Week 15 | April 24

- Audience Engagement Product Presentations (second half)
- Final exercise: Applying what we've learned — and what's to come

Disclaimer: *This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives for this course. As we go through the semester, I hope to create an environment that serves each of you, along with amplifying course objectives. Therefore, plans are tentative and may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.*

Course Performance Evaluation

Quizzes (3) on required readings and in-class lectures	25 percent
In-class exercises, both individually and in groups	15 percent
An assessment of your participation and attendance in classroom discussions and work	15 percent
Pitch session	15 percent
Final assignment. Submissions close at 5 p.m. ET on April 17 .	30 percent

Grading Policies

This course follows standard [UF grading policies](#). If applicable, grades are rounded to tenth of a point.

Class attendance is mandatory. Up to one half hour missed (0-30 minutes), including arriving late or leaving early, is excused. After that, each missed half-hour period results in 5 points deducted from your final course grade. Absences due to illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements, etc., will be handled in accordance with UF policies that can be found [here](#). If you need to miss class or step out early, let me know in advance and we can figure out a game plan for you.

We'll move quickly in class, and there won't be time to zone out. Stay engaged. Keep multitasking to a minimum, or at the least share funny TikToks in the chat (we will stop and watch with you). Join the conversation. I promise it will be fun! I know this class is at the end of the day, but please plan to participate fully in group and class work. You'll want to be present in order to earn 15 percent of your grade that is based on participation, not have it handed to you automatically.

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 which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

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/>

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 (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Additionally, you may not turn in work that is not your own, including work generated by Chat GPT and other AI programs.

Inclusion, Diversity and Equity

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism 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.

In this class: The craft of journalism strives to be objective. I acknowledge that it is possible that there may be both overt and covert biases in the course's material due to the lens and/or period of time in which it was written. Please contact me with feedback if you have any suggestions to improve the quality of the course materials.

I strive to have students of all backgrounds and perspectives feel educated and well-served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class and that the diversity that the students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit.

It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender identity, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, nationality, religion and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

I will attempt to foster an environment in which each class member is able to hear and respect each other. It is critical that each class member show respect for all worldviews expressed in class. It is expected that some of the material in this course may evoke strong emotions — please be respectful of others' emotions and be mindful of your own. Please let me know if something said or done in the classroom, by either myself or other students, is particularly troubling or causes discomfort or offense. While our intention may not be to cause discomfort or offense, the impact of what happens throughout the course is not to be ignored and is something that I consider to be very important and deserving of attention. If and when this occurs, there are several ways to alleviate some of the discomfort or hurt you may experience:

1. Discuss the situation privately with me. I am always open to listening to students' experiences and want to work with students to find acceptable ways to process and address the issue.
2. Discuss the situation with the class. Chances are there is at least one other student in the class who had a similar response to the material. Discussion enhances the ability for all class participants to have a fuller understanding of context and impact of course material and class discussions.
3. Notify me of the issue through another source such as your academic adviser, a trusted faculty member or a peer. If for any reason you do not feel comfortable discussing the issue directly with me, I encourage you to seek out another, more comfortable avenue to address the issue.
4. If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC director of inclusion and diversity, is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.

Course Etiquette

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats. For a fuller exposition of our shared 'netiquette' can be accessed [here](#).

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 Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

<http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>

(352) 392-HELP (4357)

Walk-in: HUB 132

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues must be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You must e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources

- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Health and Wellness

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.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services: Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department: 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

<http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to learningsupport@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>
- Career Connections Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://career.ufl.edu/>
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>