

RTV 3303 Audio News and Reporting Spring 2024

Instructor: Ryan Vasquez

Section: 4994

Room: Online

Periods: Tuesday, Period 11-E1 (6:15 PM – 8:10PM)

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Office Hours: Wednesday 6-8 PM (and by appointment)

RTV 3303 is designed to offer instruction and training in news gathering, writing, interviewing, and reporting to increase student knowledge base on the subject matter. Special emphasis is placed on improving writing skills, basic news production and equipping students with the skills to be better multimedia journalists. Students receive additional practical experience in the WUFT newsroom where they will have the opportunity to apply the skills learned in the classroom portion of the course. **This is a real-world experience; you will get the opportunity to produce news content that can be heard both locally to serve the community we are obligated to cover and nationally to an audience interested in how our area fits in a larger news picture.**

Course Objectives and Goals

1. Writing news stories acceptable for on-air and station website use under deadline pressure.
2. Ability to record audio in the field or over the phone and to edit that audio for broadcast.
3. Ability to write and report for both short newscast stories (sound stories) and more in-depth stories (wraps, features).
4. An opportunity and expectation that work produced in class and in the newsroom can and will be used on the radio or on WUFT's website.
5. Opportunity to voice your work, live or recorded, on the air.
6. Better news consumption habits.
7. Improving ability to find news stories, develop sources and be a better enterprise reporter.

Course Eligibility:

Student must be in the College of Journalism and Communication ---- Student must have received a "C" grade or better in RTV 2100 and RTV 3001 if you are still classified as Telecommunication News. If you are a Journalism major your course requirements may be different. If you haven't met this requirement, please come forward ASAP.

Required Equipment:

For your projects, you will be able to check out digital audio recorders. You will also be issued an SD card; this is yours to keep. The newsroom has recorders for you to use during your shifts (See guidelines for checking out equipment).

Recommended Equipment:

- A cell phone that can record audio, access and use social media, and take photos.
- A computer that you can conduct recorded interviews on. This includes storage for interviews, or a portable hard drive that you can store that content on.
- The app Voice Recorder Lite is an option for Apple Users. Samsung and other Android platform users can use their built-in sound recorder. All users can use Smart Recorder Lite. Rev is also a good, free recorder.
- There are also phone call recording apps like TapeACall which is \$10.99 and Google Voice which is limited but free.

Course Evaluation:

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.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Zoom Professionalism:

Please be mindful of maintaining a professional appearance and conduct via our remote meetings. Consider your wardrobe and hygiene just as you would were we all in the same room, as well as your audio and visual backgrounds.

You are expected to have your camera on during Zoom lecture sessions. If you go to a black screen for a significant amount of time, points will be deducted from your attendance/participation score at the instructor's discretion. Note that Zoom lectures will be recorded for educational purposes. If you have extenuating circumstances or concerns about Zoom attendance, please see the instructor.

Virtual backgrounds

You are encouraged to use virtual backgrounds for Zoom if you want to protect the privacy of your environment or surroundings. Please be respectful. I can provide some basic backgrounds to you as well if you would like.

Recordings

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer to, and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

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.

Late Work:

As the news industry is built around time management and down to the second timing, late work will not generally be accepted without penalty unless prior arrangements have been made, and a doctor’s note or another letter (preferably from the university or a university-sponsored group) accompanies the work. While the news industry is strict on time, I understand that sometimes life happens. If for any reason you feel your work will be late, PLEASE approach me before the due date to work out an acceptable alternative timeline. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, any work presented without prior alternative plans will not be accepted.

The Ethical Warning:

You may not interview a family member, friend, fellow fraternity/sorority member, coworker, neighbor or any other close associate for an assignment. We, as journalists, refer to these relationships as conflicts of interest in your reporting. They can be valuable sources of tips, story ideas, or background information that you can then verify. Including one of these situations in your reporting, however, will result in **automatic failure of the assignment**.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. This is even more important if you’re planning to tell true stories. You should be sure you understand the Honor Code, found at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>. If you are found to have fabricated or cheated on any part of an assignment, **you will fail this course**. In our field that includes copying and

pasting content from other sources into your story, passing off other reporters' work as your own, and making up content. There are far worse consequences for academic misconduct than an F, so make sure you are very acquainted with this policy.

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

You Matter:

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 are in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that its team can reach out. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor are available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to many helping resources. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Diversity Statement:

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 with several 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.

This classroom whether online or in-person is meant to be a safe place where we can share ideas and opinions without being judged or ridiculed for those expressions. It is common to have critique in class, but all criticism is respectful and constructive. I do not tolerate disrespect or any other behavior that is divisive or hurtful to anyone in class because of age, background, belief, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences.

If anything strikes you as counter to the above statement in class, please notify me as soon as possible so we can address it. If you would like to speak to someone outside of this course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC Director of Inclusion and Diversity, is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.

Assignments

Project 1: Wrap with two sound bites, 1:30 in length

Project 2: Facebook Live Video from an event

Project 3: Feature story with min. of 4 sound bites, 3:00 -3:30 in length

Project 4: In-depth feature from semester source building, min. of 6 bites, 3:30-4:30 in length

I try to give you as much time as possible to work on a story which is why I have the pitches due when I do. However, I do understand that stories fall through, still for your success, please make sure your final pitch is for *at least one week* prior to your project being due. You can email your pitches ahead of time. First one to pitch, claims the story.

Newsroom Work:

You are required to work **six hours per week during the semester at the station**, preferably on one day of the week for every week of the semester through exam week for a total of **13 total shifts**, which is where your newsroom grade is derived. You are required to work those 13 shifts even if one of your shifts lands on a holiday. It can be made up at a different time in the semester. Your work will be scored on three things: pitching, content, and social media. A rubric is included in your training materials. Training sessions will be held during the **SECOND WEEK** of the semester at WUFT-FM in the INC or Online depending on how you are attending. The sessions will be held at 6 PM unless otherwise stated. Attendance is mandatory! Newsroom shifts must be covered ---- come to me with questions ---- if you can't work, you will need to get someone to work for you. **More info on makeup shifts is at the end of the syllabus.**

Final Exam:

The final will be administered during Finals Week outside of normal class time (Final Exam: 4/29/2024 @ 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM). **You have the option of taking the final or working a final news shift in the newsroom during Finals Week.** As we are in a practical field, I advise you that no test will replace actual work experience. The final will be comprehensive and will consist of 40 short answer questions covering skills, practice, and general info learned in class and in the newsroom plus two essays written during the exam. The first will be on the role of news in today's society. The second will be on a topic chosen from recent newsworthy events. More info to be given during the semester.

Source Building:

We will be working to learn about the community we cover throughout the semester. You will be asked to select a commission or board to follow in our coverage area for your beat (these will aim to be in Alachua and Marion County but may fall outside of that area if necessary). Through a series of exercises and class assignments, you will learn how to find sources and build your source list for stories. Through these assignments, you will also gain knowledge of the community workings and insight as to how to be better enterprise reporters which will serve you well as you both move through the curriculum and your career.

Assignments/Quizzes:

You will be given a weekly news quiz starting with week 2 of the course. These quizzes are to ensure that you are consuming local, state, national, and world events as journalists should. Steady consumption of the news will assure your success on these quizzes. Questions will be determined by the instructor, and you will be given five minutes to complete the quizzes. Alternatively, you will have several assignments throughout the semester that will ask you to show application of the skills learned in class. These will replace the quiz for that week and class will know in advance when those instances are in the semester.

The Breakdown:

Assignment (How Many)	Percentage
Newsroom Work	30%
Project 1	10%
Project 2	10%
Project 3	15%
Project 4	15%
Source Building (5)	10%
News Quizzes	10%
Final Exam*	10%

Grading Scale:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	89-87
B	86-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-77
C	77-74
C-	73-70
D+	69-67
D	66-63
D-	63-60
E	Below 60

***The Final Exam counts as 10% of your grade if you take the final. That would make your newsroom grade 20%. If you elect to work your final shift and not take the final, then your newsroom grade is 30% of your final grade.**

Spring 2024 COURSE SCHEDULE

Instructor reserves the right to amend and change lecture and class plan as necessary.

Week #1	01/09	Introduction: Syllabus and welcome to the newsroom, and reporting in this community.
Week #2	01/16	Finding Stories: Introduction to the community you cover and finding the stories within that community. * Source Building: Research your assigned sources
Week #3	01/23	Pitching Stories: How to do it like a pro * Source Building: Contact your assigned sources.
Week #4	01/30	Broadcast Writing: Writing to be successful in your newsroom shifts. <i>Assign Project 1</i> * Source Building: Attend a meeting in February
Week #5	02/06	The Art of the Interview: How to ask for and conduct interviews in person, over the phone, and through other means. <i>Project 1 pitches due</i>
Week #6	02/13	Performance: How to get the best out of your voice and improve your stories. Audio Gathering and Editing: How to record air-quality audio and edit it using Adobe Audition. Project 1 Due, Project 2 Assigned
Week #7	02/20	Social Media: A tool in your multimedia journalist toolkit. <i>Project 2 pitches due</i>
Week #8	02/27	Beats and Specialization: Understanding beats and specialty reporting in the general context of news. Project 4 Check-In: Last minute checks and a workshop with peers. Project 2 Due, Project 3 Assigned * Source Building: Interview and grow your sources in March.
Week #9	03/05	Covering Elections: An introduction to political reporting and how to navigate being a reporter in these partisan times. <i>Project 3 Pitches Due</i>
Week #10	03/12	SPRING BREAK

Writing for Web: How to gather assets and get more out of your radio story

Week #11	03/19	Writing for Web: How to gather assets and get more out of your radio story
Week #12	03/26	Finding Stories Part 2: How to find stories through public records and searchable content on the Internet. Project 3 Story Due, Project 4 Assigned
Week #13	04/02	Storytelling: Crafting interesting narratives in the field of news. <i>Project 4 Pitches Due</i>
Week #14	04/09	Writing for Web 2.0: Telling a multi-platform story including audio, writing and visuals. *Source Building: Complete a beat book for your sources.
Week #15	04/16	AI and the challenges and ethics of using technology in your reporting
Week #16	04/23	Ethics and Opinions: Two important things reporters have but use in very different ways. Fin: Project 4 Due. We will present our final stories.