

## RTV 3303 Audio News and Reporting // Fall 2024

### Course Eligibility:

To take this course, students must attend the College of Journalism and Communication. The prerequisite for this class is JOU2100. If you haven't met this requirement, please let me know immediately.

**Instructor:** David Barasoain

**Section:** 4487

**Room:** Weimer 1090

**Periods:** Tuesday // Period 4 - 5

**Time:** 10:40 am - 12:35 pm

**Email:** dbarasoain@ufl.edu

**Phone:** 352-294-1500

**Textbook:** (none) This semester, there is no textbook for this class. Handouts will be provided throughout the term.

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (and by appointment) in Weimer 2304.

FALL SEMESTER 2024

|       | S  | M          | T          | W            | T   | F        | S   |
|-------|----|------------|------------|--------------|-----|----------|-----|
|       |    |            |            | Registration | --- | Drop/Add | --- |
| Aug.  | 18 | 19         | 20         | 21           | 22  | 23       | 24  |
|       |    | Drop/Add   | ---        |              |     |          |     |
|       | 25 | 26         | 27         | 28           | 29  | 30       | 31  |
| Sept. | 1  | Holiday    | 3          | 4            | 5   | 6        | 7   |
|       | 8  | 9          | 10         | 11           | 12  | 13       | 14  |
|       | 15 | 16         | 17         | 18           | 19  | 20       | 21  |
|       | 22 | 23         | 24         | 25           | 26  | 27       | 28  |
|       | 29 | 30         |            |              |     |          |     |
| Oct.  |    |            | 1          | 2            | 3   | 4        | 5   |
|       | 6  | 7          | 8          | 9            | 10  | 11       | 12  |
|       | 13 | 14         | 15         | 16           | 17  | 18       | 19  |
|       | 20 | 21         | 22         | 23           | 24  | 25       | 26  |
|       | 27 | 28         | 29         | 30           | 31  |          |     |
| Nov.  |    |            |            |              |     | 1        | 2   |
|       | 3  | 4          | 5          | 6            | 7   | 8        | 9   |
|       | 10 | Holiday    | 11         | 12           | 13  | 14       | 15  |
|       | 16 | 17         | 18         | 19           | 20  | 21       | 22  |
|       | 23 | 24         | 25         | 26           | 27  | 28       | 29  |
|       | 30 |            |            |              |     |          |     |
| Dec.  | 1  | 2          | 3          | 4            | 5   | 6        | 7   |
|       | 8  | 9          | 10         | 11           | 12  | 13       | 14  |
|       | 15 | 16         | 17         | 18           | 19  | 20       | 21  |
|       |    | Grades Due | Dep. Cert. |              |     |          |     |

Reading Days

Commencement

Welcome to RTV 3303 (Audio News Reporting). This skills development course will provide students with comprehensive instruction and hands-on training in news gathering, writing, audio editing, interviewing, and reporting. This class is a gateway to becoming a more proficient audio journalist. You'll discover foundational storytelling elements applicable to both broadcast and podcast. You'll learn everything from planning and writing to question development. You'll also learn how to plan and record interviews, edit audio, and enhance your vocal presentation. Special emphasis will be given to effective pitching, writing, and production. This course will train you to create meaningful, community-based stories that inform and educate. In addition to classroom learning, you'll gain valuable practical experience in the community and WUFT newsroom. You'll be expected to apply your skills in real-world scenarios, producing news content that serves our local community. Your stories will be broadcast locally – on WUFT 89.1 FM – and, in some cases, distributed across Florida. Think of this class as a chance to follow your curiosity, explore community issues, and expand your audio-based journalism skills.

## **Course Objectives and Goals**

- 1. Writing for broadcast:** You'll learn to write news stories that meet the standards required for on-air broadcasts/podcasts. You'll also develop your skills in writing and reporting for short newscast stories (sound stories) and more in-depth pieces (voicers, wraps, and super spots).
- 2. Field and Phone Audio Recording:** You'll learn to record high-quality interviews in the field or over the phone. You'll also learn how to edit audio for broadcasts/podcasts using Audition and Descript.
- 3. Real-World Application:** The work you'll produce is for broadcast. This deadline-driven work will be used on the radio and/or published digitally or as part of a podcast.
- 4. On-air Experience:** You'll get presentation experience with the chance to voice some of your work for distribution throughout Central and North Florida.
- 5. Enhanced Reporting and Consumption:** You'll develop better habits for consuming news, which will inform and improve your reporting and your ability to cultivate reliable sources.

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### **Required Equipment:**

For your audio projects, you will be able to check out digital audio recorders. You will also be given an SD card. The newsroom has recorders for you to use during your shifts.

### **Software and Hardware needs:**

- Students are expected to have a laptop and purchase Adobe Audition if needed (at a student discount) Link: <https://software.ufl.edu/adobe-offering>
- A dedicated Google account for this class (not a personal one). It is for sending and receiving emails, entering sources, accessing the newsroom email account, AP Playbook, and storing audio files.
- A cell phone with enough storage space to record audio and take photos.
- The free REV Call Recorder App. Florida is a two-party consent state, so you must get permission to record an interviewee's voice.

### **Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Students will be given specific times when evaluations are open later in the semester. Summary results of these and previous assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

**Zoom Professionalism:**

There may be times when we will use Zoom during class sessions. You are expected to have your camera on during these times. Please maintain a professional appearance and conduct during our remote lecture meetings, including considering your wardrobe and visual backgrounds.

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students to refer back to and for enrolled students who cannot attend live. By participating, you consent to have your voice, video, or image recorded. If you do not consent to having your profile or video image recorded, please keep your camera off, mute your voice, and refrain from using a profile image. You can communicate with the class using the "chat" feature, which will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and sharing of recorded materials are prohibited.

**Late Work:**

As the news industry operates on strict deadlines, managing time effectively is important. Late submissions won't be accepted without penalty unless prior arrangements have been made, accompanied by a doctor's note or a letter (preferably from the university or a university-sponsored group). While unexpected situations can arise, if you anticipate that your work may be delayed for any reason, please contact me before the due date to discuss alternative timelines. Unless extenuating circumstances exist, work submitted without prior arrangements may not be accepted.

**Ethical Warning:**

As a journalist, you must refrain from interviewing family members, friends, fellow fraternity or sorority members, coworkers, neighbors, or any other close associates. In journalism, we consider these relationships as potential conflicts of interest. These individuals can provide valuable tips, story ideas, or background information, but interviewing them for this class will likely result in an automatic assignment failure.

**Academic Misconduct:**

Academic honesty and integrity are core principles of the University of Florida community and are especially crucial when reporting true stories. Familiarize yourself with the Honor Code, available at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Any fabrication or cheating in assignments will result in a failing grade for this course. This includes copying and pasting content from other sources, claiming another reporter's work as your own, or inventing information. Understanding the serious consequences of academic misconduct beyond a failing grade is important, so please review the policy thoroughly.

**You Matter:**

*Asking for help is a sign of strength*. 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 campus by encouraging us to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a community member is in need. If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), or call 352-392-1575 24/7. You can also visit them at their walk-in clinic on the 4th floor of Peabody Hall (located near Library West). The *U Matter, We Care Team* can also help connect students to various support resources. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

**Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities can request accommodations by registering with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting an accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

## **Assignments**

### **Newsroom Work:**

A large part of this class is the requirement to work in the WUFT newsroom. Throughout the semester, you'll work 6 hours per week over 15 weeks for 15 shifts. This is the bulk of where your overall grade is derived. Your work will be scored on pitching, writing, and producing. You must get someone to work for you if you cannot work your WUFT newsroom shift. *More info on makeup shifts is at the end of the syllabus.*

### **Final Exam:**

The final will be given during Finals Week, outside of class time. You can take this final exam or work a final news shift in the newsroom during Finals Week. The final will be comprehensive and consist of 50 fill-in-the-blank questions covering skills, practice, and general info learned in class, the field, and the newsroom.

### **Source Building:**

We will learn about our community throughout the semester. You may be asked to select a field of interest. You will learn how to find sources and build a source list for stories through a series of class assignments. This source list should be maintained throughout the term and turned in at the end of the semester. Through these assignments, you'll better understand the community and gain insight into becoming a better reporter.

### **Assignments/Quizzes:**

You will be given a weekly quiz starting with week 2 of the course. These quizzes will also include questions that ensure you consume local, state, national, and international audio news. A steady consumption of the news will also help grow your writing skills.

### **Attendance and Make-ups**

This is a deadline profession. Per the UF attendance policy, an absence is unexcused unless you provide the instructor notice in advance, with documentation after the fact. Regardless of why you miss class, you must inform the professor beforehand. In-class work missed for unexcused absences earns zero points and may not be made up. In-class work missed during an excused absence must be made up within seven days of the absence. Late-class arrivals and early departures are noted and may count against your Punctuality grade. Missing more than 30 minutes of a class session is an absence.

### The Breakdown: Grading Scale:

| Assignment      | Percentage       |  | Grade | Score    |
|-----------------|------------------|--|-------|----------|
| Newsroom Work   |                  |  | A     | 93-100   |
| • Pitch         | 15%              |  | A-    | 90-92    |
| • Content       | 25%              |  | B+    | 89-87    |
| • Production    | 20%              |  | B     | 86-83    |
| Punctuality     | 5%               |  | B-    | 82-80    |
| Participation   | 5%               |  | C+    | 79-77    |
| Source Building | 10%              |  | C     | 76-73    |
| Weekly Quiz     | 20%              |  | C-    | 72-70    |
| Final Exam      | (Newsroom scale) |  | D+    | 69-67    |
|                 |                  |  | D     | 66-63    |
|                 |                  |  | D-    | 62-60    |
|                 |                  |  | E     | Below 60 |

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, **be honest**, how excited are you to be in this class: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Where 1 = your mom said you had to // 5 = it's fine, I'm here // 10 = Let's go!)*

What's your working knowledge of any of the following (check all that apply):

|                          |                      |                          |                     |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Portable audio gear  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Radio Production    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Podcast facility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | SoundCloud           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Audition / ProTools | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adobe Premiere   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Zencastr / Riverside | <input type="checkbox"/> | Descript            | <input type="checkbox"/> | AP Playbook      |

Please share your top three podcast or broadcast programs. Include a sentence about why you listen – or what they mean to you:

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Please share a bit about your background or career goals.

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As a student reporter, what fields might you be interested in covering (check all that apply):

|                          |                   |                          |                |                          |                  |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Immigration       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Elections      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Business         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Arts & Culture    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Environment    | <input type="checkbox"/> | Economics        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Housing           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Addiction      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Science / Energy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | History / Culture | <input type="checkbox"/> | Human Interest | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Government        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Crime            |

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The instructor reserves the right to amend and change the lecture mechanics and this course schedule as necessary.

- **August 27** - Introduction: Syllabus and welcome to the newsroom.
- **September 3** - Audition overview with interview exercise and the NPR Lexicon.
- **September 10** - NPR Ethics. Audition understanding.
- **September 17** - Writing and idea generation.
- **September 24** - The making of a story. Audio dissection. Audio nomenclature.
- **October 1** - Solutions and Engagement Journalism.
- **October 8** - Audio dissection. Writing for the Ear. Interview tips and planning.
- **October 15** - "Specimen tree" identification.
- **October 22** - A guide for new reporters/producers. Capturing "good tape."
- **October 29** - Before you start. Advanced audio interviewing. Tape syncs and call recorders.
- **November 5** - Gathering Vox and recording Vox Pops. Digging for "gold coins."
- **November 12** - Studs Terkel and the human voice. Voiceing tips.
- **November 19** - More writing tips from an NPR legacy editor and the layered superspot.
- **November 26 - No Class**
- **December 3** - Audition Mastering and 'close micing.'
- **December 10 - Exam Week**



## **Shift Policy**

Everyone in Audio News and Reporting must work one **six-hour** shift per week in the audio newsroom at the Innovation News Center (INC). If, for some reason, you can't make it to your scheduled shift, you must make it up – and notify Professor Dave. Here's what to do if you miss a class:

- *Holidays*: Excused.
- *Sickness*: You must have a doctor's note (see *Late Work*, above).
- *School-sanctioned/class-related reasons*: A note from your instructor, coach, or administrator.
- *Planned events*: Traveling for a wedding, vacation, or a football game is not a reason to miss a shift. Nor are panhellenic functions, doctor's appointments, or projects.
- *Extreme circumstances*: Addressed as/if needed.

## **Make-up Shifts**

INC make-up shifts are only available for students who have an excused absence. These shifts typically occur outside of the normal Newsroom schedule. Throughout the semester, Professor Dave will notify students needing to make a shift. They'll likely be asked to cover an event or an opening (usually at night or on the weekend) that WUFT would like to cover. These assignments would be completed just like a regular shift.

**Ensure you get approval from Professor Dave before conducting a make-up shift — “pitch before you produce” (pitch your idea before you head out to report) always.**

## **A Few Important Notes**

If you know you'll need to miss a shift for any planned reason, *please inform Professor Dave in writing with plenty of notice*.

Remember, however, that *these are not excused absences, nor is a busy schedule*.

However, you *can* switch shifts with a classmate if both shifts are covered and Professor Dave is informed.

## Weekly Shift Rubric

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ // Date: \_\_\_\_\_ // Stories: \_\_\_\_\_

Each week, students will self-assess their submitted work and the grade they believe they should receive, as shown below. The professor will determine the final grade.

|                                | Excellent   | Acceptable   | Unacceptable  | Your Score |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|------------|
| <b>Pitch<br/>3 Points</b>      | <p>Your pitch arrived by 9:15 am.</p> <p>Pitched original story ideas – <i>something you came up with</i> – or a follow-up.</p> <p>(3 points)</p>   | <p>Pitched an original story idea before your shift – but after the pitch meeting (and/or)</p> <p>-You only pitched one story idea.</p> <p>(1 point)</p>   | <p>You did not pitch a story before your shift.</p> <p>(0 points)</p>                     |            |
| <b>Content<br/>5 Points</b>    | <p>You completed all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No factual errors</li> <li>-One written story</li> <li>-One written story with sound</li> <li>-Vivid opening sentence</li> <li>-Cultivated one source</li> </ul> <p>(5 points)</p>                                       | <p>You <i>haven't</i> completed one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-No factual errors</li> <li>-One written story</li> <li>-One written story with sound</li> <li>-Vivid opening sentence</li> <li>-Cultivated one source</li> </ul> <p>(&lt;5 points)</p>                                       | <p>You haven't completed any of the acceptable content criteria.</p> <p>(0 points)</p>    |            |
| <b>Production<br/>5 Points</b> | <p>You completed all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Great audio levels</li> <li>-Great audio edits</li> <li>-Great audio quality</li> <li>-Identified three possible soundbites.</li> <li>-Saved clearly (in NewsBoss and the INC Daily folder)</li> </ul> <p>(5 points)</p> | <p>You <i>haven't</i> completed one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Great audio levels</li> <li>-Great audio edits</li> <li>-Great audio quality</li> <li>-Identified three possible soundbites.</li> <li>-Saved clearly (in NewsBoss and the INC Daily folder)</li> </ul> <p>(&lt;5 points)</p> | <p>You haven't completed any of the acceptable production criteria.</p> <p>(0 points)</p> |            |
|                                |   |  | Student Totals >>>  |            |
|                                |   |  | <b>Professor Totals &gt;&gt;</b>  |            |