



JOU 4313C: SPORTS REPORTING

SPRING 2025

Monday | Period 7-9 (1:55 PM – 4:55 PM) | 1090 Weimer Hall

Professor Ryan Hunt

Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs, 10am-12pm OR [by appointment](#). Weimer Hall #3040D
ryanhunt@ufl.edu Office: (352) 392-6303; Mobile: (908) 967-2560

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sports reporting is much more than just game coverage. Yes, games are the lifeblood of sports. But a great sportswriter must look beyond the box score to inform, educate and entertain fans in numerous ways – on multiple platforms. This course is designed to broaden and deepen a student's understanding of effective sports reporting and to sharpen and develop the student's writing, reporting and other skills required in today's industry.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- To expose you to multiple forms of sports reporting and improve your skill set.
- To learn techniques used by sports reporters and apply them to your career.
- To produce original content of professional quality across various genres.
- To get a better understanding of the industry and the change in consumption habits

COURSE TOPICS

Techniques

Understanding audiences
Knowledge of AP Style for sports
What makes a good sports story
Asking questions, getting quotes
Developing story ideas, content plans
Working on deadline
Developing your voice, style

Genres

Game coverage (previews, recaps)
News coverage (original, aggregation)
Commentary and analysis
Alternative story types (listicles, rankings)
Multimedia: Video, podcasts
Sports betting and its impact
Social media

READING

- [CJC Sports Style Guide](#): I put this together not just to replicate The Associated Press Stylebook, a guide most professional organizations use, but also to incorporate local elements or other style questions you may run across that are NOT included in the book. Bookmark this. Use it. Learn it.
- Daily national and local sports coverage. Stay on top of the news, especially when it comes to Florida athletics, the NFL/MLB/NBA or general college sports.

CLASS SCHEDULE

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

Week 1 (1/13) Intro/overview; Sports Journalism 101; Your media consumption; CJC Style Guide
Week 2 (1/20): **NO CLASS ... Presidents Day holiday**
Week 3 (1/27): Four pillars of sports reporting; What's a good sports story? Finding the narrative
Week 4 (2/3): Breaking news; Writing on deadline; Aggregation & attribution; Common errors
Week 5 (2/10): Game coverage; Gamers for today's readers; Multimedia project intro
Week 6 (2/17): Covering a press conference; Getting (and using) quotes; What's a good quote?
Week 7: (2/24): **NO LECTURE: Live event coverage: Baseball/softball game Feb. 26**
Week 8: (3/3): Before the game (previews, analysis); Sports betting coverage and impact
Week 9: (3/10) Beat coverage: Developing ideas, content planning; what do audiences want?
Week 10: (3/17): **NO CLASS ... Spring Break**
Week 11 (3/24): Social media: Live tweeting, Reaching audiences and developing your own brand
Week 12: (3/31): Alternative story examples (listicles, trend and explanatory pieces)
Week 13: (4/7): Live deadline writing assignment
Week 14: (4/14): Reporting on serious issues; Sports commentary and analysis
Week 15: (4/21): **NO LECTURE. Final project: Live event coverage: Baseball game April 22**

ASSIGNMENT BREAKDOWN

Note: Assignment specifics and due dates will be visible in Canvas. Always bring charged laptops to class. On average, this class will have one assignment per week, based on that week's lecture topic. On rare occasions, there may be multiple assignments per week.

- **Attendance + Class Participation (250 points)**

You are expected to attend class on time. We only meet 13 times a semester. There will 20 points are deducted for each unexcused absence. Points can also be deducted at the instructor's discretion for chronic lateness, being disengaged in class and/or failure to participate in class discussions.

- **Briefs (300 total points; six at 50 points each)**

We will have six short or in-class assignments designed to introduce a skill for sports reporting, including AP style, sports knowledge, writing news briefs and asking press conference questions.

- **Deadline/Live Assignments (900 points; 10 at 100 pts. each; lowest dropped)**

We will cover topics, games and events as a class, both off television and in person. There will be a minimum of two games we cover as a class, where students will be assigned various tasks from events. We also will introduce elements that are commonplace for every beat reporter, such as game previews, listicles, live social media coverage, commentary/analysis and coverage planning. Of these 10 assignments, the lowest score from this group will be dropped.

Note: There will be times the class covers a live game outside of class hours. During those weeks, the Monday class lectures will be shorter or canceled entirely.

- **Multimedia Project (150 points)**

Each student will be required to do one independent multimedia video project – sample ideas: either a postgame video standup, a topical video essay with voiceover or a short podcast – off a selected topic or sporting event. To simplify production and execution, video standups can be done in partnership with one other student. Each student, though, is required to submit their own projects independently. Ideas for the project will be due Feb. 24. The project will be due March 9.

- **Enterprise Feature (150 points total; pre-reporting: 50 points; final story 100 points)**

Students will research, report and write a 1,000-plus word sports feature story connected to an issue, topic, or individual connected with UF athletics or locally in Alachua County. Enterprise stories should have a minimum of three sources you *personally* interviewed. (Attributed quotes do not count.) You must pitch your story idea in writing by Feb. 24 to your instructor. Once approved, a pre-reporting assignment (source development) will be due March 10. You may turn in a draft before April 6 if you desire extensive feedback. Your final draft is due no later than Sunday, April 20.

- **Final Project (250 Points)**

Your final project is to cover a live sporting event as if you were a beat writer covering a team. You will be responsible for three elements about the game:

- * **Game Story:** Minimum of 600 words. You must include at least two quotes from the postgame press conference. (100 points)

- * **Multimedia Video:** A video standup postgame that complements your game story. Must be between 1-2 minutes in length. (100 points)

- * **Social Media Live Tweeting** (50 points): You must live-tweet the game from the stadium as you are covering it.

GRADING

You will be graded on a 2,000-point scale. Grades may be rounded up at the instructor's discretion.

A: 94-100% (1,880-2,000 total points)

A-: 90-93.9% (1,800-1,879)

B+: 87-89.9% (1,740-1,799)

B: 83-86.9% (1,660-1,739)

B-: 80-82.9% (1,600-1,659)

C+: 77-79.9% (1,540-1,599)

C: 73-76.9% (1,460-1,539)

C-: 70-72.9% (1,400-1,459)

D+: 67-69.9% (1,340-1,399)

D: 60-66.9% (1,200-1,339)

E: 59.9% and below (Under 1,199)

Students will be graded in accordance with policies for [assigning grade points as articulated here](#).

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.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please submit all assignment elements in Canvas. Occasionally, you may also be asked to share a Google doc with me at ryanhunt@ufl.edu.

A NOTE ABOUT AI

Does AI belong in journalism? In this class, it does not. You are here to learn, improve and get more reps, so my No. 1 expectation for you is to simply do your own work. Don't take the easy way out.

In the real world, [you would be fired \(or be forced to resign\)](#) if you turned in a piece of work to your editors with your name on it that was written or had significant elements [generated by AI](#). Major companies [have been embarrassed](#) by using AI and [passing it off as human](#) work. And [jobs have been eliminated](#) across the industry.

In this class, I will randomly pick certain stories over the course of the semester and run them through [multiple AI checkers](#). If assignments are flagged as generated by AI by each detector (over a percentage determined by your instructor), the assignment will not be accepted. You may receive a 0 for assignment plus a half-letter grade deduction from your final grade.

Using AI is akin to plagiarism. And that is one of the biggest sins in journalism. Do your own work.

If you have **any** degree of uncertainty, please ask.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/HONOR CODE

Additionally, academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Violations of the honor code include plagiarizing material from other sources, fabricating material or using any work done by another person for a class assignment. 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/>

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.

DEADLINES AND DEDUCTIONS

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

Fact errors – misspelled names, incorrect stats, wrong titles, inaccurate information – will result in a significant deduction at instructor's discretion, depending on the scope of the error(s) and assignment. ***At a minimum, any fact error is at least a 15-point deduction.***

Check the names in your story. Then double check them.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

This is a workshop-style class in which we will all contribute ideas and engage in discussion. For the sake of other students, please don't be a distraction in class. Professional courtesy is expected. No checking your phone in class. If you need to use your phone, please leave the room to do so.

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.

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, respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.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 this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are [available to students here](#).

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 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 at [GatorEvals](#). Evaluations are typically open during the final weeks of the semester, but announcements will be made giving specific times they are available. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the evaluations website URL above.

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 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 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 brand. 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 Tampa-St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* during his time at UF. Nearly 30 years ago, I was in the same position as you are today.