RTV 3303 Audio News and Reporting // Spring 2025

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

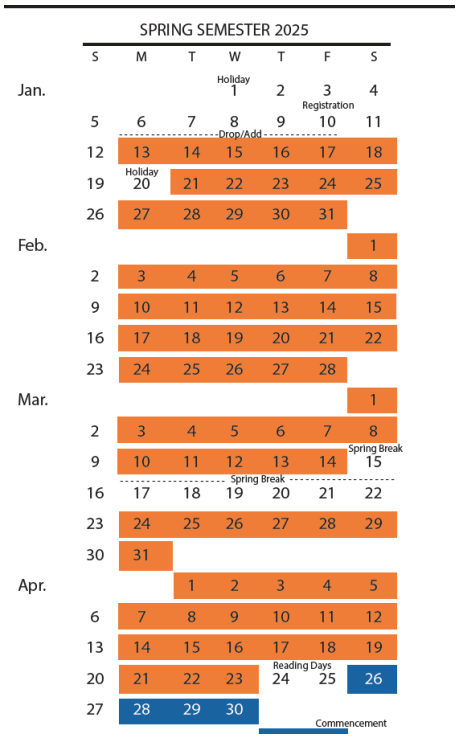
Time: 10:40 am - 12:35 pm

Email: dbarasoain@ufl.edu

Phone: 352-294-1500

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

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



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 at least one case) distributed across Florida's network of news stations. Think of this class as a chance to follow your curiosity, explore the community, 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, Zoom, and phone 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:

You can check out digital audio recorders for your audio projects. 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 emails and source lists and sharing audio more easily between your computer and the INC server (INC Daily).
- 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. Participating allows you to have your voice, video, or image recorded. If you do not consent to recording your profile or video image, 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:

Managing time effectively is essential as the news industry operates on strict deadlines. 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 not interview family members, friends, fellow fraternity or sorority members, coworkers, neighbors, or 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.

AI Policy: Students are prohibited from using AI tools to generate, write, or substantially edit news reports. All stories written for WUFT must be the student's original work. The use of AI to write or significantly alter the content of news reports is prohibited. Students *may* use AI tools for research and fact-checking purposes. If AI tools are used for research, students must properly cite and attribute any information obtained from these tools. Using AI to generate content submitted as the student's work will be considered plagiarism and subject to the university's academic integrity policies. Students must disclose any use of AI tools in their research process.

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, 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 Libary 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:

The most significant 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. If you cannot work your WUFT newsroom shift, you must get someone to work for you. *More info on makeup shifts is at the end of this 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 would 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 community or 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	[redacted]	Grade	Score
Newsroom Work		[redacted]	A	93-100
• Pitch	15%	[redacted]	A-	90-92
• Content	25%	[redacted]	B+	89-87
• Production	20%	[redacted]	B	86-83
Punctuality	5%	[redacted]	B-	82-80
Participation	5%	[redacted]	C+	79-77
Source Building	10%	[redacted]	C	76-73
Weekly Quiz	20%	[redacted]	C-	72-70
Final Exam	(Newsroom scale)	[redacted]	D+	69-67
		[redacted]	D	66-63
		[redacted]	D-	62-60
		[redacted]	E	Below 60

COURSE SCHEDULE

The instructor may change the lecture mechanics and this course schedule as necessary. The dates below correspond to the class dates for R1 (Spring 2025). This is a Tuesday morning class, so the weeks listed below *begin on a Tuesday* and end the following Monday:

Week 1	January 14	Introduction: Syllabus and NPR Lexicon
Week 2	January 21	INC Chain: Ideas and Pitches, AirTable
Week 3	January 28	INC Chain: Booking and Prepping
Week 4	February 4	INC Chain Research
Week 5	February 11	Interviewing Others 2, Active Sound
Week 6	February 18	Audition: Understanding/overview
Week 7	February 25	Non-narrated, Audition In-class lab
Week 8	March 4	Vox Pop, Audition In-class lab
Week 9	March 11	Voicing your script
Week 10	March 18	SPRING BREAK
Week 11	March 25	Voice work - for Qs
Week 12	April 1	Wrap production and online publication
Week 13	April 8	The Newscast for class
Week 14	April 15	The Superspot
Week 15	April 22	Futures reporting and PRX story distribution
	April 29	EXAM WEEK

Shift Policy

Everyone in Audio News and Reporting must work a **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 regular 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 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: _____ Source Database link

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
Pitch **3 Points**	-Your pitches arrived by 9:15 am. -You pitched *original* story ideas. -The pitches were focused. (3 points)	You only met one or two of the points (from Excellent) (1 to 2 points)	You did not pitch a story before your shift. (0 points)	
Content **5 Points**	You completed all of the following: -North Star opening sentence -No factual errors -A written story -A written story (with sound) --Cultivated one source (5 points)	You only met one to four of the points (from Excellent) (1 to 4 points) (<5 points)	You haven't completed any of the acceptable content criteria. (0 points)	
Production **5 Points**	You completed all of the following: -Great audio levels -Great audio edits -Great audio quality -Identified three *possible* soundbites. -Saved clearly (in NewsBoss and the INC Daily folder) (5 points)	You only met one to four of the points (from Excellent) (1 to 4 points) (<5 points)	You haven't completed any of the acceptable production criteria. (0 points)	
			Student Totals >>>	
			Professor Totals >>	

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):

.	Portable audio gear	.	Radio Production	.	Podcast facility
.	SoundCloud	.	Audition / ProTools	.	Adobe Premiere
.	Zencastr / Riverside	.	Descript	.	AP Playbook

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

_____

_____

_____

Please share a bit about your background or career goals.

_____

_____

_____

_____

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

.	Immigration	.	Elections	.	Business	.	Rural areas
.	Arts & Culture	.	Environment	.	Economics	.	Aviation
.	Housing	.	Addiction	.	Science / Energy	.	LGBTQ
.	History / Culture	.	Human Interest	.	Health	.	Religion/spirituality
.	Government	.	Transportation	.	Crime	.	Veterans