

# JOU 4111 Advanced Reporting - Fall 2025

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Class Hours: Mondays, 4:00-6:05 p.m.

Modality: Online

Office Hours: By appointment (M-F 9a-5p), Drop in (W 1p-3p)

## Course Description

The college's course listing is: "Produce quality news and feature stories for publication. Gain experience enhancing your news gathering and writing skills. Produce clips for your portfolio and as possible entries in the Hearst Journalism Awards Program."

In this course, I'm your editor. We'll be treating this similar to a newsroom internship to get firsthand knowledge of beat reporting, which is what advanced reporting is in essence. You'll choose or be assigned a beat (topic of focus) in the first week (examples could be transportation, education, crime & courts, environment, or even regions like Alachua County or Gainesville, etc.), and then you'll be expected to turn in **one same-day and one enterprise story** each month of September, October and November. Each week, you'll also be learning the tenets of quality news reporting and complete a quiz for your attendance grade.

As a reporter in a newsroom, you're expected to pitch, report and write a story for publication. That's how this class will work, and it'll be your responsibility to get these story pitches approved by me in writing as your editor and keep me updated on its progress. I'll also work with you to get these stories published, so you can use them as clips as you apply for jobs.

## Objectives

Students will learn to:

1. Maintain a beat and follow stories in that topic of interest, including how to generate stories with that focus.
2. Revise and turn in stories in a timely manner, while also ensuring clear and concise writing and appropriate story structure
3. Understand what to expect when entering a newsroom and what types of classic assignments to be ready to tackle: pressers, disasters, protests, breaking news
4. Communicate with an editor and receive feedback, as well as return ideas and feedback to other reporters
5. How to address ethical dilemmas, whether with sources or situations that come up in traditional, daily reporting

# Grading and Coursework

Assignment	Percentage	Deadline
Same-Day Story 1	12.5%	Sept. 30 @ 11:59 p.m.
Same-Day Story 2	12.5%	Oct. 31 @ 11:59 p.m.
Same-Day Story 3	12.5%	Nov. 30 @ 11:59 p.m.
Enterprise 1	12.5%	Sept. 30 @ 11:59 p.m.
Enterprise 2	12.5%	Oct. 31 @ 11:59 p.m.
Enterprise 3	12.5%	Nov. 30 @ 11:59 p.m.
Attendance Quizzes	12.5%	Weekly
Final Project	12.5%	Dec. 5 @ 11:59 p.m.

**HOW STORIES WORK:** Each story you turn in will not be the immediate final grade. I'll run through revisions with you and grade your story based on the final revisions, meaning the story you should turn in on Canvas is the story with revisions, including structural fixes, further context, additional sourcing or even multimedia improvements. The goal is to get your story to a publishable state. At least one story (same-day or enterprise) should involve state or local government and another (daily or enterprise) should include criminal or civil court.

**SAME-DAY STORY EXPECTATIONS:** I'm looking for you to communicate with me about your story progress and to turn in the story the same day the news occurs. It would include pitching the story and coordinating with me what product will be ready for publication, such as photos or videos or any additional multimedia. The goal is to train the following skills: quick turnaround, news judgment and news contextualization (how you interpret news as it happens). These stories should remain within 300-450 words.

**ENTERPRISE EXPECTATIONS:** This assignment is meant to test your timeliness with enterprise stories while also giving you the room to thoroughly report a feature story. In real-life newsrooms, enterprise stories usually have expectations for quick turnaround, but not as fast as a same-day story. It's an in-depth report on a particular topic that covers its nuance and relevance, and this assignment would need to be pitched in writing by the pitch deadline assigned on Canvas. These stories should remain within 750-1000 words.

**ATTENDANCE QUIZZES:** Unexcused absences will be treated as a 0-grade for attendance that week, and tardiness will only get you 50% for that week. Contact me in advance for an excused absence, but your grade will be determined by your performance in the attendance quizzes after each lecture. The attendance quizzes are based on the contents in the lecture and the reading

material prior to each class. [See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.](#)

**FINAL PROJECT:** For your final project, you'll write a 1,500-word essay based on an in-person/phone/video conference conversation with two professional beat reporters, ideally from a news organization or a beat you're interested in or would like to work in. More details to come on the specifics of the essay in Canvas.

**COURSE MATERIALS:** There's no official textbook for this class, other than referencing the AP Stylebook in whatever method you have to ensure consistent style for your stories (doesn't matter if you have it online or a physical copy). But prior to each lecture, you will be assigned a story to read related to the lecture topic, and you'll be expected to discuss this story in class. You'll find these Canvas with either the direct link or a PDF to the story.

**GRADING SCALE:** Also note: [UF's grading policies.](#)

A	90-100
B+	85-89
B	80-84
C+	75-79
C	70-74
D+	65-69
D	60-64
E	59 and below

## Weekly Topics

Aug. 25	Class Expectations
Sept. 1	HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
Sept. 8	Beat Reporting
Sept. 15	News Judgment: Finding a Story
Sept. 22	Interviewing & Source Development
Sept. 29	Writing Structure & Ledes
Oct. 6	Getting a Rewrite

Oct. 13	Fact Finding: Public Records and Courts
Oct. 20	Ethics & Press Freedoms
Oct. 27	Your First Job
Nov. 3	The Basics: Pressers, Protests, Disasters
Nov. 10	AI in Journalism
Nov. 17	Personal Branding & Multimedia
Nov. 24	HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
Dec. 1	NO CLASS

## Stay Honest

You can't turn in work that isn't yours – that includes work generated or facilitated by ChatGPT or other AI programs. You also can't post the course materials informally through social networks or online services that are meant for academic assistance. It's against UF's policy and would involve a formal complaint with the Dean of Students. See [UF Student Conduct Code](#) for more information.

We're expecting simple honesty – don't plagiarize, fabricate, lie, take sides or mislead a source. Just as you would in a professional newsroom, stay professional, honest, objective and fair.

If you're concerned about an ethical dilemma, immediately reach out to me.

As a UF student, you're bound by [the Honor Pledge](#): *We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity by abiding by the Student 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."*

## Seeking Help and Accommodations

Please reach out to me for any questions, advice, or helpful tips in your professional career. I was a student at UF just like you, studying at the journalism school. I'm here to help and want you to succeed in this course, and my line is open to do what I could to help you develop professionally so you could land a job after graduation.

Here's other important contact links, in case it's applicable to your circumstance:

- [Counseling and Wellness Center](#): 352-392-1575
- [University Police Department](#): 352-392-3261
- [Disability Resource Center](#): 352-392-8565
  - Students with disabilities requesting accommodations [should register with the Center](#) by providing appropriate documentation, and this registration should happen as early as possible in the semester. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter. This letter must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation.
- See more helpful links at [UF's Academic Policies](#).

## Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at [this link](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary results of these assessments are available to students [here](#).