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**Thursday | Period 3-4 (9:35 AM - 11:30 AM) | 3024 Weimer Hall**

**Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs, 1pm-3pm OR [by appointment](#). Weimer Hall #3040D**

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Just as Atrium introduced CJC students to compelling storytelling as the first narrative nonfiction magazine produced by UF students, this soon-to-be-named project will do the same for sports journalism – one that will be a product of this class. And this class will be a part of the launch team.

Advanced Sports Storytelling goes beyond the box score and traditional beat reporting to explore deeper stories within the world of sports, including the human element. Storytelling, in this sense, can be done in various forms — feature writing, infographics, data journalism, social media, photography, audio and video. Finally, the end product will be the debut issue of our own sports magazine and digital website.

## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

- Understand how to compose impactful feature writing, from key elements and structure
- To get a better understanding of the industry and the type of content that connects with audiences
- Learn where and how to find – and then develop – compelling sports features, both short and long.
- Deepen your reporting, interviewing and research skills. How to get the most out of your elements
- Create a sports magazine – print and digital – packed with compelling, engaging content

## **STRUCTURE AND TOPICS**

This is NOT a lecture class; instead, it primarily will function as a newsroom. We will, however, discuss ways to approach great storytelling. It will feature guest speakers throughout the industry who can shine lights on different approaches to feature writing.

Additionally, here are some of the elements we will focus on as a group:

- Idea generation and conceptualization
- Feature storytelling for different mediums
- Constructing and improving a story's narrative
- Elements of effective visual storytelling
- Social media storytelling and promotion
- Magazine/digital design and layout
- Brand strategy and franchise development

## **ASSIGNMENT STRUCTURE**

*You will be graded on the following categories over the course of the semester:*

- **Content Creation** (600 points total). Each student must execute a minimum of **three** pieces that are fit for publication. (You are welcome to do more but I want quality, not quantity.) over the course of the semester. They all don't have to be long features; finding short features, data stories and/or infographics is also highly encouraged. A good sports magazine should have a good mix; everything should be creative and engaging. It all doesn't have to be serious. Sports are fun.
  - All assignments **MUST** be approved in advance by the instructor and editor in chief.
  - Each assignment will be in a minimum of two parts: first and final draft . Long pieces may have a second draft.
  - All assignments are not created equal: a long feature will not be scored the same as a short, light-hearted piece. You will work with me to come up with a customized plan based on the scope of your assignments, factoring in time spent and degree of difficulty.
  - Due to production timelines, we will have **hard** deadlines. However, each person's will be different, spread out over the course of the term before any print deadline.
- **Assignment Briefs** (150 points total; six at 25 points each). There will be six short tasks over the course of the semester designed to incorporate key elements related to a launch of a website, print magazine: branding, series/franchise development, brand strategy, audience analysis and marketing/promotion. There also will be an initial story pitch list at the start of the semester.

- **Ideation and Creativity.** (100 points). Being able to bring compelling ideas to the table are essential for any journalist. We'll have frequent in-class sessions where we discuss ideas. Come prepared ... and be unique. Creativity is not just about your OWN stories; it also includes ways to make all of our content shine (including promotion on social media) and add your thoughts on the design of our magazine and digital stories.
- **Progress Reports** (100 points; four at 25 points each). Each student will have four 20-minute check-ins outside of class over the semester with the professor (and potentially the editor in chief) to discuss your status on each of your individual assignments – approximately one a month. The first will be to finalize your customized plan. It's the student's responsibility to schedule these meetings.
- **Peer Evaluations:** (100 points). Being able to work with others effectively is essentially in any newsroom. Are you a good leader? Are you a good team member? You may be called on to edit your peers and/or offer them feedback on story ideas. You may be asked to find unique ways to promote another student's content. Regardless of your role, you'll be expected to behave professionally with a good attitude. Did you work with your peers collaboratively?
- **Attendance and Participation** (150 points). Always be present and engaged. You will be expected to discuss and critique good sports storytelling (and presentation), bringing examples of content you like to the group. Classes will consist of workshoping and discussion, as a group and with guest speakers. Missed classes without prior notice and/or without a legitimate reason will be an automatic 20-point deduction.

## **GRADING**

*You will be graded on a 1,200-point scale. Students will be graded in accordance with policies for [assigning grade points as articulated here](#). Grades may be rounded up at the instructor's discretion.*

A: 93-100% (1,116-1,200 total points)  
 A-: 90-92.9% (1,080-1,115)  
 B+: 87-89.9% (1,044-1,079)  
 B: 83-86.9% (996-1,043)  
 B-: 80-82.9% (960-995)  
 C+: 77-79.9% (924-959)  
 C: 73-76.9% (876-923)  
 C-: 70-72.9% (840-875)  
 D: 60-69.9% (720-839)  
 E: 59.9% and below (Under 719)

## **STAFF ROLES**

We will run this like a professional newsroom. Certain students will receive leadership roles, either assigned by the professor or the staff at large. These include both management responsibilities plus creative and production roles. Instructions about how to apply for open roles will be provided soon.

I am here to give you advice and feedback, but I will **NOT** be the editor in chief. We will workshop the content and design but the majority of the quality control is up to you and your fellow staff members.

## **PREREQUISITES**

Students must have completed (receiving a C or better), be currently enrolled in Sports Reporting -OR- receive special approval from the instructor to join the class. Students who are not in the class may still participate in certain elements of the magazine/website.

## **DEADLINES**

Journalism is a deadline business. This course and project is designed to mirror the expected behavior of a professional newsroom.

Be considerate. Deadlines missed by one person inevitably affect someone else — and even the eventual production of the magazine. No matter your role, it's essential that you hit your deadlines. Failure to meet assignment deadlines will result in at least a 10-point deduction. Late assignments beyond 24 hours may not be accepted, and could be graded as a zero. They also may miss the magazine.

## **OTHER DEDUCTIONS**

Your work must be grammatically correct and adhere to AP style. Additionally, you will lose points for grammar and/or style errors.

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

## **CONTENT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

In addition to submitting all assignment elements in Canvas, you must also share stories in a Google doc with me at [ryanhunt@ufl.edu](mailto:ryanhunt@ufl.edu). Please also include the top editors on staff.

## **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. Please don't be frequently checking your phone or be buried in your laptop in class.

## **A NOTE ABOUT AI**

Does AI belong in journalism? You are here to learn, improve and get more reps, so my No. 1 expectation for you is to simply do your own work. AI has no part in what we do creatively. You will fail the class if you use AI to generate content; it's akin to plagiarism. That's one of journalism's biggest sins. Using AI as a tool to help with idea generation for stories and/or headlines could potentially be useful, but this project is designed to help foster your creativity.

The use of AI generative tools to create, add, remove, expand or alter images or videos in any way is expressly prohibited. Using generative AI to create graphics should not be done without prior consent AND clear recognition in the image's credit. Visual AI tools (e.g., for simple motion graphics) may be considered on a case-by-case basis for elements such as explainers or data visualizations. These requests must be submitted to the professor and editor in chief and are subject to editorial and legal review.

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 work done by another person. See the Department of Journalism website, as well as UF guidelines, for specific outline of honor code violations. See more: [UF Student Honor 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.

### **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.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 this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are [available to students here](#).

### **U MATTER, WE CARE**

Your well-being is important to UF. 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](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the team can reach out to any student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://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.

### **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Ryan Hunt is a Sports Lecturer at the University of Florida. A 1997 graduate of the UF' CJC, 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 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. He grew up in the St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* during his time at UF.