



# SPORTS DIGITAL EDITING

**JOU 4930 | FALL 2025**

**M | Period 9 (4:05 p.m. - 4:55 p.m.) WEIM 2056**

**W | Periods 9-10 (4:05 p.m. - 6 p.m.) WEIM 2056**

**Professor Ryan Hunt**

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

**[ryanhunt@ufl.edu](mailto:ryanhunt@ufl.edu) Office: (352) 392-6303; Mobile: (908) 967-2560**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A comprehensive look at the skills required to be a vital member of a sports newsdesk at any digital media organization. This course introduces students to the foundational elements of news editing and content distribution. It teaches you to think like an editor from a macro- and micro-perspective to improve critical thinking toward sports journalism content across platforms.

The primary goal is to replicate the skills and tasks you'd be asked to have if you were in a modern newsroom. If you were to get an internship or an entry-level job at a place like Sports Illustrated, for example, this is what you would need to know.

## **COURSE TOPICS AND FOCUS**

The course will focus on the best practices of digital sports journalism, such as:

- Macro-editing. Thinking about the big picture and how to approach stories
- Working with writers collaboratively to improve (even tighten) content
- Skills in copy editing (topics such as AP style; grammar, word usage/choice)
- News judgment and pitching/assigning stories. What makes a good story idea?
- Elements of storytelling for digital, mobile audiences
- Skills in headline, decks, caption writing for digital audiences (and even print ones)
- Fairness, balance and accuracy in content. Avoiding bias, libel and ethical missteps.
- The role of a newsroom CMS (Content Management System) in formatting stories
- Understanding SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and why it matters
- Content distribution: crafting impactful social shares, push notifications, newsletters

## **COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to better understand ...

1. The many different roles an editor may have on a newsdesk
2. The dynamic between writers and editors, and the different types of editing
3. The different types of content and how a reader/viewer/listener may find it
4. How audience behavior can shape everything from story ideas to the final headlines
5. Have a deeper appreciation for the importance of editing in journalism.

## **TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE, SCHEDULE**

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

Week 1: Course intro; Role of an editor at a modern news org; News judgment & budget meetings  
Week 2: *Labor Day*; CJC Style Guide; Macro-editing vs. micro-editing (looking at the big picture)  
Week 3: Macro-editing II (Improving/tightening stories); Micro-editing (grammar/style)  
Week 4: Micro-editing II (news editing); Ethical missteps ... and how to avoid them  
Week 5: Understanding libel + editing for fairness/taste; Libel case studies; Plagiarism/fabrication  
Week 6: Quick-turn breaking news, curation & aggregation; Jumping on deadline stories  
Week 7: The importance (and lost art) of fact checking; Checks stats, charts; AI in journalism?  
Week 8: Headline writing: Catchy without clickbait; Subheads/decks; Critiquing headlines  
Week 9: Working w/ writers; Alternative story editing (lists/Q&As);  
Week 10: Editing opinion columns; Analyzing the best and worst sports columns  
Week 11: Finding and developing an audience; Data analytics; Search Engine Optimization (SEO)  
Week 12: Content distribution (Social media, push notifications, newsletters)  
Week 13: Photo selection, photo caption writing; Putting it all together; final project Qs  
Week 14: *No Class. Thanksgiving Week*  
Week 15: *No in-class lectures.* Work on your final project. Due Wednesday, Dec. 3.

Guest speakers to also be incorporated on a rotating basis over the course of the semester.

## **RECOMMENDED 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 local and national sports coverage. ESPN, The Athletic, SI, On3, 247Sports, The Orlando Sentinel, The Alligator, The Gainesville Sun, even social media. Reading will help you become a better editor and writer, as well as develop a better understanding of audience behavior.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Each week, we'll have one assignment or quiz tied to one of that week's topics. There will also be a final project that incorporates the majority of skills learned over the course of the semester. *Note: Specific quiz, assignment and due dates will be visible in Canvas.* Assignments subject to change.

- ***Field Assignments (900 total points: nine worth 100 points each)***

These assignments are designed to replicate an editor's daily responsibilities – including tasks such as copy editing (style and grammar), fact checking, trimming stories, headline writing, SEO, social media copy, newsletters and photo cutlines. At the end of the semester, there will be an optional bonus assignment available that can be completed to replace the score of another assignment.

- ***Quizzes/Evaluations (300 total points; six at 50 points each)***

There will be five short quizzes or content reviews designed to reinforce an important skill for digital editing, including understanding news judgment, AP style, grammar, libel & ethics.

## **FINAL PROJECT: (300 points)**

At the end of the semester, your final project will consist of one overarching newsdesk assignment that encapsulates everything you will have learned. The assignment is worth 400 points; each of the following sections are worth 50 points each. The story for the editing assignment will be given to you no later than Nov. 15. It will be due Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 11:59 p.m.

Students will be given a pre-written story and they will be required to complete the following tasks.

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| - Trim it to a certain word length             | - Write headlines, subheads |
| - Edit for style and grammar                   | - Write photo captions      |
| - Fact check the article for accuracy          | - Compose SEO headlines     |
| - Ensure the article is fair and in good taste | - Write social shares       |

**ATTENDANCE: (100 Points)** One unexcused absence is permitted per semester. Any additional unexcused absences outside of documented emergencies will result in a five-point deduction from your total attendance score. If you miss a class, however, you still will be expected to turn in your budget meeting pitches.

**PARTICIPATION/BUDGET MEETINGS: (150 points):** Each student will be assigned a team/topic to follow for the duration of the semester. Starting Aug. 28 (Wednesday before Labor Day), we'll begin each Wednesday class with a brief budget meeting. Each student will be asked to pitch at least one story idea involving their team/topic. Don't just pitch what you've already seen elsewhere. Creativity is encouraged and rewarded.

Participation is cumulative throughout the semester -- worth 150 points toward your overall score -- but essentially each class is worth 10 points. Your pitches will be judged based on newsworthiness, timeliness and creativity. Come prepared. Come ready to engage. To get the most out of this class, you'll need to do those things. If you're an active participant in class, these will be easy points. And, hopefully, you'll enjoy what a typical morning news budget process is like.

### **GRADING**

*You will be graded on a 1,750-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% (1,627-1,750 total points)

A-: 90-92.9% (1,575-1,626)

B+: 87-89.9% (1,522-1,574)

B: 83-86.9% (1,452-1,521)

B-: 80-82.9% (1,400-1,451)

C+: 77-79.9% (1,347-1,399)

C: 73-76.9% (1,277-1,346)

C-: 70-72.9% (1,225-1,276)

D: 60-69.9% (1,050-1,224)

E: 59.9% and below (Under 1,049)

### **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.

### **DEADLINES**

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

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/HONOR CODE**

Plagiarism is one of the biggest sins in journalism. Do your own work.

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. 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. See more: [UF Student Honor Code](#).

## **A NOTE ABOUT AI**

Does AI belong in journalism? You are here to learn, improve and get reps, so my No. 1 expectation for you is to simply do your own work. Don't take the easy way out. There may be opportunities to source headline ideas or use programs for editing help. But those should never be used to replace your own work. The only AI welcome here is Allen Iverson.

## **CLASSROOM NEEDS**

Students requesting special classroom needs must register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide documentation to the instructor.

## **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.

## **COURSE 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.

## **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Ryan Hunt is a Sports Journalism 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 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 magazine. He grew up in the St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* as a student at UF.