

RTV4930: Survey of Sports Documentaries

Fall 2025

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Instructor: Geoff Thompson
Place: G030

*****LIVE CLASS MEETING: Tuesday 1040A-1130A*****

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Office Hours: Mondays 2-4pm (other times by appt)

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Course Site: <https://ufl.instructure.com>

Course Text: *None*

Overview and Objectives

This course looks at the art of sports documentary. In essence, this is a filmmaking class with a sports wrapper. We will discuss things like editing, interviews, how to gather B-roll and more.

***** PLEASE NOTE: YOU WILL NEED TO BRING PEN/PENCIL AND PAPER TO CLASS IN ORDER TO TAKE NOTES. I WILL NOT MAKE POWERPOINTS AVAILABLE. IF YOU MISS A CLASS, IT IS UP TO YOU TO GET THE NOTES FROM A CLASSMATE. YOU MAY ALSO ATTEND THE OTHER SECTION *****

Course Learning Objectives

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- (1) Understand the history and forms of documentaries
- (2) Know the techniques behind documentary filmmaking
- (3) Understand different interviewing techniques
- (4) Understand how to research and collect B-roll

College of Journalism and Communications Objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US

- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Course Grades

The following table outlines the point-accruing components of the course. The total points earned from each component will be summed and divided by the total points possible in the course.

Evaluation Components	Percentage
Discussion/Journal Posts	50%
In-Class Discussion	25%
Final Exam	25%

Assignment Descriptions

- **Discussion/Journal Posts:** For every documentary, you will watch it outside of class and answer discussion questions or post comments.
- **In-Class Discussion** – Each week, we will use those discussion/journal entries, and expound upon them in class. Occasionally we will have a guest speaker. You will be expected to present thoughtful questions to the guest speaker.
- **Final Exam** – We will have a final exam (multiple choice, short answer) based on class lectures and the films we watch.

Grading (grades are rounded up or down to the nearest whole number for grading purposes)

93.5%-100%	A	89.5%-93.4%	A-	
86.5%-89.4%	B+	82.5%-86.4%	B	79.5%-82.4%
76.5%-79.4%	C+	72.5%-76.4%	C	69.5%-72.4%
66.5%-69.4%	D+	62.5%-66.4%	D	59.5%-62.4%
0-59.4%	F			

Course Outline (subject to change – Check Canvas for the most up-to-date schedule)

Week 1 (8.26)	Introduction
Week 2 (9.2)	<i>Capturing Reality</i>
Week 3 (9.9)	<i>The All-American Cuban Comet</i>
Week 4 (9.16)	<i>Hoop Dreams</i>
Week 5 (9.23)	<i>Free Solo</i>
Week 6 (9.30)	<i>Portraits</i>
Week 7 (10.7)	<i>Hard Knocks/NFL Films</i>
Week 8 (10.14)	<i>Swamp Kings</i>
Week 9 (10.21)	<i>Lionheart</i>
Week 10 (10.28)	<i>June 17th, 1994</i>
Week 11 (11.4)	<i>In the Arena: Serena Williams</i>
Week 12 (11.11)	NO CLASS – VETERAN’S DAY
Week 13 (11.18)	<i>Quarterback (Season 2 Ep 6 – Headspace)</i>
Week 14 (11.25)	THANKSGIVING
Week 15 (12.2)	FINAL EXAM

Policies

Use of AI to complete assignments is prohibited

Academic Policies:

- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. [See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.](#)

- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
- Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including [a link to the University grades and grading policies.](#)
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:
 1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
 2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
 3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

- The University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the 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.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information.](#) If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

- In-Class Recording:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes,

tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Academic Resources:

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](#) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](#). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](#) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](#), or to make a private appointment: [352- 392-6420](#). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](#) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.](#)
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)
- UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

- UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.ufl.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.