

welcome

to Principles of Journalism

JOU3105

Online course

SPRING 2026

Instructor:

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Office hours:

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday mornings

You can text me simple or urgent questions.

Please send emails through Canvas.

Journalism is an important field that plays a key role in our democracy. Have you wondered what's happening in politics, sports, entertainment, local events, the economy and more? You can find out courtesy of a journalist. Regularly read or watch stories from reputable news organizations, and you can become a more informed citizen. Can you spot misinformation or disinformation when you see it? This course will help you understand why verification of information is so important. My goal is for everyone to leave the class with an understanding about why quality journalism matters.

Course Purpose

In this course, students will learn about the role and function of journalism in a democratic society, legal and ethical issues in journalism, economic challenges and the changing landscape of the media industry. Students will read stories that represent quality reporting. They will learn about the major principles of journalistic practice and the ethical principles that journalists follow. Students will be introduced to techniques used by journalists to cover society. Each week, students will be expected to read local and national news to be aware of current events. This course includes a Writing Mechanics unit in which punctuation and grammar rules are covered so that students can also learn how to avoid common mistakes.

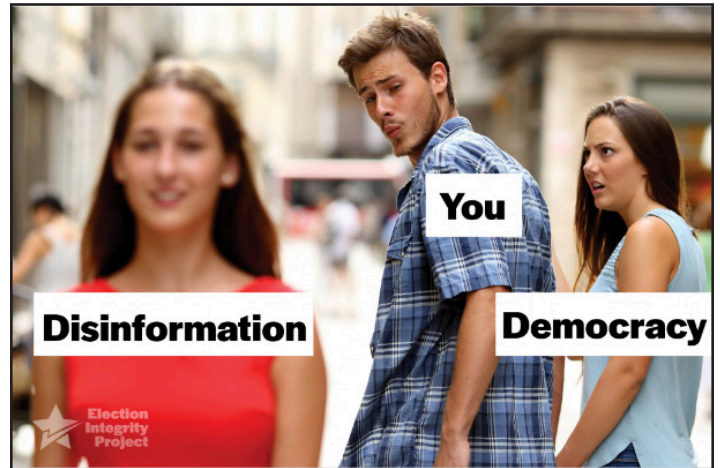


Image source: Center for Journalism Ethics

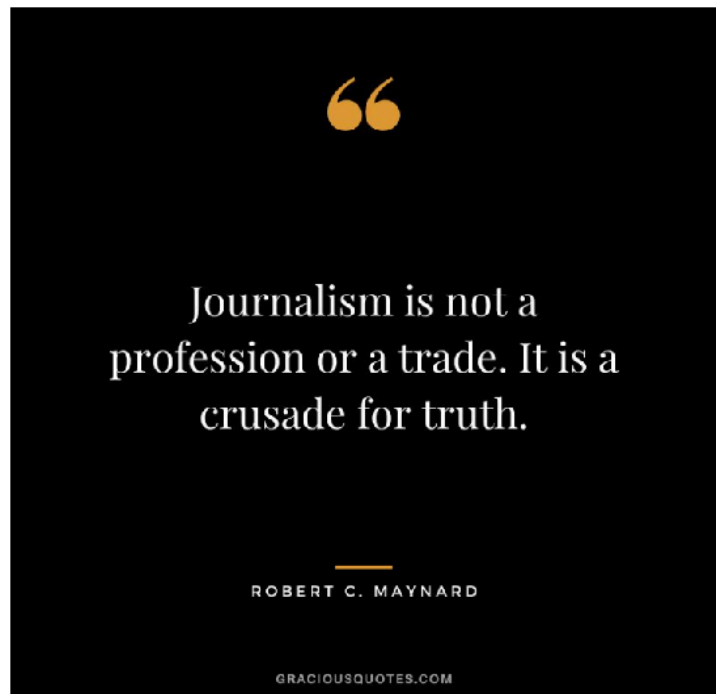
Required Textbook and Software

- **You need to purchase the book "Principles of American Journalism" by Stephanie Craft and Charles Davis. You must purchase this book through the platform Perusall that is part of our course.** Do not purchase a hard copy or an electronic copy from any other source because you will need access to the book within Perusall to make required comments that are for points. Also, I will provide some weekly readings from other sources within Perusall.
- You will access **Adobe Express** in order to complete three assignments. The basic version is free and can be accessed at <https://www.adobe.com/express/pricing?tab=3>. The premium version can be purchased monthly from Adobe, but it's also part of the Adobe Creative Cloud, which can be purchased by UF students here: <https://portal.helpdesk.ufl.edu/>.
- **The Associated Press Stylebook**, updated annually. It can be purchased as a book, a subscription website or an app for the iPhone and iPad. The punctuation guide at the end of the book is especially helpful. (Recommended — not required)

Computer Equipment & Help Desk

Because this course is an online course, you must have a computer that has internet access. Your computer should also have enough memory to be able to run the Adobe Creative Cloud programs.

For issues with technical difficulties for eLearning, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk. The phone number is (352) 392-HELP. Any requests for makeups due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You **MUST** email your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a makeup.



This class focuses on reasons journalism is an important industry in American society. This class will cover the principles that separate journalism from other information fields. Find out the tools journalists use to help them track down facts and how they verify these facts. You will also learn about how news is funded and why storytelling can help us learn more about the world we live in. You will have weekly assignments due, including a weekly news quiz. Most weeks, you will either have to comment on the readings or take a reading quiz. You will have some discussion posts due throughout the semester. You will also have three hands-on assignments in which you will use Adobe Express to create content. Your final project will be to create a poster outlining your educational and career goals. This class also has a midterm and a final exam. **To do well in this class, you should log into Canvas several times a week. Consult the Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus and enter those dates on your calendar. Read the announcements each Monday to stay informed. Reach out if you have any questions. I'm here to help!**

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, you will be able to...

1. Explain how and why journalism matters today to a self-governing society.
2. Explain the core principles of journalism and how they differ from the fields that value advocacy.
3. Describe enterprise and exclusive content worth paying for.
4. Explain and compare evolving, journalism-adjacent fields and careers.
5. Identify correct punctuation and grammar rules and the characteristics of clear, concise writing.

Grading Policies (Meet all deadlines)

Deadlines are important in journalism. To help you get into the habit of meeting deadlines, discussion posts, Perusall comments, news quizzes and reading quizzes must be submitted by the deadline to count. For the final post assignment, you can turn it in up to one day late. A 10% late penalty will apply if you turn it in one day past the deadline. If you submit it after this extra 24-hour window, then your assignment will not be graded. Please do not wait until the last minute to start or submit your assignment because learning the Adobe software takes time.

If you have a legitimate excuse as to why your assignment is late or missing, please submit your documentation to the Dean of Students Office. If you have a grading concern when you receive feedback, you must submit this request within 1 week of receiving your grade on the assignment. Requests after one week will not be accepted.

Makeup assignments or extended deadlines will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Reach out to me directly **BEFORE THE POSTED DEADLINE** if you have an unexpected situation that arises that you want me to consider. I do understand that things happen, but it is important to meet deadlines both in college and in the real world.

All deadlines in the class are set for 11:55 p.m. Please note that the time is NOT 11:59 p.m. Don't miss the deadline or wait until the last minute because the assignments will close.

Class Assignments

- **Perusall comments:** You will access the textbook and other readings through Perusall, another platform that you'll access through Canvas. There will be some assignments that require you to leave comments and replies on the readings and videos.
- **Reading quizzes:** You are expected to keep up with the weekly readings from the textbook along with other readings that are provided. Some weeks, you will have a reading quiz in Perusall.
- **News quizzes:** This class focuses on the news media, and I want you to become a savvy news consumer. You are expected to stay current on news from the Independent Alligator and WUFT as well as major national and international news. If you read major publications, such as the New York Times and the Washington Post, then you will be informed and will do well on the quizzes.
- **Discussion posts:** You will interact with your peers on the Canvas discussion board. You will be expected to thoroughly answer the prompts and provide meaningful responses to classmates. Most of these will be written posts, but one post will be a video in which you give your predictions for the future of news.
- **Story ideas:** Students will be assigned to work in teams to brainstorm story ideas relating to the UF campus that would include coverage of marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- **Social media post:** You will use Adobe Express to create a social media post using visuals and words that demonstrates what you have learned about advertising or public relations. You will share this on the discussion board.
- **Timeline:** You will identify five key events in the evolution of American media. You will use Adobe Express to create a timeline using visuals and words that highlights these events. You will share this on the discussion board.
- **Midterm:** During Week 8, you will complete a midterm that will be proctored through Honorlock.
- **Writing Mechanics Unit quizzes:** You will take three graded quizzes over punctuation, grammar and writing rules. These three quizzes will be proctored through Honorlock.
- **Career goals poster:** You will create a poster using Adobe Express that highlights your educational and career goals. The intention is to have you reflect on your goals and what you need to do while you are in college to set yourself up for success.
- **Final exam:** During finals week, you will complete an exam that will be proctored through Honorlock.

This looks like a long list, but the workload is manageable. I think you will find that some of these assignments are engaging and fun!

Course Website

<https://elearning.ufl.edu>

Syllabus Disclaimer

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. Some opportunities may arise to enhance learning objectives. If that happens, then I will communicate changes via class announcements.

PRINCIPLES OF JOURNALISM

Grading

Class assignments:

Persuall comments: 115 points
Reading quizzes: 40 points
News quizzes: 130 points
Discussion posts: 45 points
Story ideas: 10 points
Social media post: 30 points
Timeline: 30 points
Midterm: 100 points
Punctuation quiz: 30 points
Grammar quiz: 40 points
Writing quiz: 30 point
Career goals poster: 50 points
Final: 100 points
Total points: 750 points

Grading Scale

A: 94-100%
A-: 90-93%
B+: 87-89%
B: 84-86%
B-: 80-83%
C+: 77-79%
C: 70-76%
D+: 67-69%
D: 60-66%
F: 59% and below

Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point: 89.49 rounds down to 89 (B+) while 89.5 rounds up to 90 (A). I only look at the tenth spot for rounding.

UF Grading Policy

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
See page 3 in this syllabus for more grading info.

See the Course Schedule on the last page for deadlines.

Class Attendance

You are expected to log in several times a week to Canvas and to read all class announcements. You will not do well in the course if you don't participate fully. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. **To succeed in the class, please check announcements every Monday.**

Quiz Policy

The orientation quiz does not count towards your final average, but it must be completed at a score of 100% before the rest of the course will open. There are also a number of graded PlayPosit quizzes embedded in the module lectures. All quizzes may be taken multiple times.

Feedback Policy

I strive to return all grades within 7-14 days, but there may be occasional delays in grading. Please note that it is unethical and in direct violation of the UF Student Honor Code to request an unjustifiable grade adjustment (UF Student Honor Code: "Conspiracy to Commit Academic Dishonesty").

Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>) 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 procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Seek Help If Needed

College is stressful. Please take care of yourselves. You have counseling help available to you, and I hope you will use it if needed. Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575.

Honor Code

When you enrolled at the University of Florida, you agreed to the following honor code:

"We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity."

On all work submitted for credit, 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 behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor for this class.

The Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code states that:

"A Student must not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing or patch-writing.

- Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the faculty to whom it is submitted.
- Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
- Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author."

Review UF's academic honesty guidelines at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Cheating, Plagiarism & AI

While students are encouraged to study together, you can't take quizzes together. **There have been instances of college cheating taking place over Group Me and text chats. Some people cheat by getting material from Quizlet, Course Hero and other online sites. None of this is allowed. Cheating is not tolerated, so please be honest. Do your own work. You must follow Honorlock rules, too.**

Students are further expected to observe intellectual property rights and to comply with copyright laws. **Do not take any class material, including videos and transcripts, and upload it to study websites, including Quizlet, Course Hero, etc.** Also, you should not plagiarize the words, designs, concepts or ideas of others.

Again, you must do all of your own work. **Do not use AI** for your assignments. You must submit your own ideas.

Etiquette and Netiquette

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and chats. UF has provided a netiquette guide: <https://ufonline.ufl.edu/resources/computer-requirements/>

Materials/Supply Fees

Please consult the course schedule at ONE.UF for more information on specific supplies and fees for the course.

Prerequisite Knowledge and Skills

This is a beginning class, so you aren't expected to have prior knowledge about design or any of the Adobe programs. If you enjoy what you learn, then you can take more advanced classes in each of the areas we cover.

Minimum Technology Requirements

The University of Florida expects students entering an online program to acquire computer hardware and software appropriate to their degree program. A student's computer configuration should include webcam, microphone, broadband access, and Microsoft office suite. Individual colleges may have additional requirements or recommendations, which students should review before starting their program. More information on technical requirements is available at the UF Online website: <https://ufonline.ufl.edu/resources/computer-requirements/>

Minimum Technical Skills

You will need a basic understanding of operating a computer and a willingness to learn the Adobe software.

Privacy: Online Recordings

This is an asynchronous course, but if there are any live meetings, then students who participate with their camera engaged or use a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who unmute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the “chat” feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

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 educational 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 any 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 presentations 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 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 Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, August 5th, 2021, Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Tips for Success

You will do well in this course if you log into Canvas several times a week to read class announcements, watch videos and work on the assignments. Meet all deadlines and do your own work. Study for the mid-term and final. Seek help when you are confused. I’m here to support you!

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. I appreciate you taking the time to give feedback and will send out an announcement with the evaluations are open. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at the GatorEvals results page.

Technical Resources

[UF Licensed Software](#) Students can access software programs like Office 365 and Adobe at free or reduced rates.

[UF All Access](#) The University of Florida’s digital course materials program. Selected courses are available through UF All Access to provide students with the lowest prices on their eBooks and courseware products.

[UF Apps](#) Provides access to software applications from any computing device--laptops, tablets, desktops, and smartphones—from any location, at any time.

[VPN](#) The Gatorlink VPN service provides secure remote access to the University of Florida network and makes it appear as if your computer were physically attached to the campus network. By using the Gatorlink VPN client, you may access resources on the UF network that are not typically available over an Internet path.

[Canvas Quickstart Guide](#) This short guide will get you started with using Canvas.

[Training and Safety](#) UFIT offers free software and other technical training sessions for students, teachers, and staff.

[Safe Computing Practices](#) Learn how to protect your computer from threats regardless of brand, model, and operating system.

[Zoom](#) is an easy-to-use video conferencing service available to all UF students, faculty, and staff that allows for meetings of up to 100 participants.

More Resources for Online Students

Available at the [Distance Learning website](#). These include:

- Counseling and wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Should you have any complaints with your experience in this course please visit <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaints> to submit a complaint.

Health and Wellness

If you or someone you know is in distress, please visit the [U Matter, We Care](#) website or call 352-392-1575 to refer or report a concern. A team member will reach out.

Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services and non-crisis services.

Visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#) or call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information on finding the care you need.

For safety and support, visit the [University Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

For immediate medical care, call 352-733-0111 or go to the UF Health/Shands Emergency Room and Trauma Center at 1515 SW Archer Road.

For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including wellness coaching for academic success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

COVID-19

In response to COVID-19, UF has established practices to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

[UF COVID Information](#)

[UF Guidance on Health and Wellness](#)

Academic Resources

[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. [Distance student resources](#) are also available.

[Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment, 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

[Student Complaints and Grievances](#) Information is available in the Student Honor Code and Conduct Code.

[University Registrar](#) Find information on records, data, and enrollment.

[Academic Deadlines and Calendar](#) Consult for all important upcoming events.

[UF Online Resources](#) Access to many services to help you achieve your goals.

Accessibility and Privacy Policies

For information about the privacy policies of the tools used in this course, see the links below:

Adobe

[Adobe Privacy Policy](#)

[Adobe Accessibility](#)

Instructure (Canvas)

[Instructure Privacy Policy](#)

[Instructure Accessibility](#)

Microsoft

[Microsoft Privacy Policy](#)

[Microsoft Accessibility](#)

PlayPosit

[PlayPosit Privacy Policy](#)

[PlayPosit Accessibility](#)

Perusall

[Perusall Privacy Policy](#)

[Perusall Accessibility](#)

Sonic Foundry (Mediasite Streaming Video Player)

[Sonic Foundry Privacy Policy](#)

[Sonic Foundry Accessibility](#) (PDF)

YouTube (Google)

[YouTube \(Google\) Privacy Policy](#)

[YouTube \(Google\) Accessibility](#)

Zoom

[Zoom Privacy Policy](#)

[Zoom Accessibility](#)

Spring 2026 Course Schedule

Week	Modules	What's Due
Week 1 Jan. 12	Orientation	Orientation quiz Introduce yourself in discussion post 11:55 p.m. Jan. 13/16
Week 2 Jan. 19	Modules 1	Perusall annotations, Perusall quiz, news quiz 11:55 p.m. Jan. 20/23
Week 3 Jan. 26	Modules 2	Perusall quiz, discussion post, news quiz 11:55 p.m. Jan. 27/30
Week 4 Feb. 2	Modules 3	Perusall annotations, news quiz 11:55 p.m. Feb. 3/6
Week 5 Feb. 9	Modules 4	Perusall annotations, Perusall quiz, story ideas, news quiz 11:55 p.m. Feb. 10/13
Week 6 Feb. 16	Modules 5	News quiz, punctuation quiz, discussion post 11:55 p.m. Feb. 17/20
Week 7 Feb. 23	Module 6	News quiz, grammar quiz, discussion post 11:55 p.m. Feb. 24/27
Week 8 March 2	Module 7	Perusall reading quiz, writing quiz, news quiz 11:55 p.m. March 6
Week 9 March 9	Module 8	Midterm by 11:55 p.m. March 13
Week 10 March 16	<i>Spring break</i> <i>Have a good time!</i>	
Week 11 March 23	Module 9	Perusall annotations, discussion post, news quiz 11:55 p.m. March 24/27
Week 12 March 30	Module 10	Perusall annotations, Perusall quiz, news quiz 11:55 p.m. March 31/April 3

Course Schedule, continued

Week	Modules	What's Due
Week 12 April 6	Module 11	Discussion post, news quiz 11:55 p.m. April 7/10
Week 13 April 13	Module 12	Perusall annotations, Perusall quiz, news quiz 11:55 p.m. April 14/17
Week 14 April 20	Module 13 *NOTE THE DEADLINES	Quiz, discussion post, news quiz 11:55 p.m. April 21/22
Week 15 April 27	Module 14 FINAL EXAM	Final exam 11:55 p.m. April 30
	<i>Congrats on finishing!!!</i>	Keep reading credible news

