

Mike Foley

Master Lecturer

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OFFICE HOURS: **Tuesday and Thursday after lecture and Friday 11-noon.** In addition, I am usually in the office Monday-Friday. I have the lecture on Tuesday and Thursday and labs on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 12:50 to 3:50. Otherwise, I am free. Best idea is to email me and set up an appointment. If you are in the neighborhood, stop in. Unless I am busy, I welcome students.

OBJECTIVES: To provide instruction in news gathering and writing with an eye toward readability and to instill habits of accuracy and responsibility in handling the news. In other words, we will work on your reporting and writing skills.

READING: Required: *How I Got That Story*, Foley, 2004. ("Readings" in Files folder on this site.

AP Stylebook, (Your news-writing bible), current edition. You also can use the online version. Note: a one-page summary of AP style is in the "Files" section.

A daily **news report**. An online version will do.

Recommended: *Inside Reporting*, Harrower, Any Edition,

When Words Collide, Kessler-McDonald.

A good **dictionary**—AP recommends Merriam-Webster.

AP STYLE IN BRIEF: Also in the Files section is a page of highlights of AP style. You might find it useful.

LECTURE: It's scheduled for Tuesday and Thursday from 11:45 a.m.-12:35 p.m. Who knows? You may hear something that will help your reporting and writing. Test dates are listed in the course calendar (below). Makeup tests will be given if circumstances warrant.

GRADING: Your course grade is 25% lecture and 75% lab. Three exams and 12 pop quizzes will make up the lecture grade. An A indicates *superior* performance; B, highly competent, above-average work; C, average; D, below average; E, unsatisfactory. Final grades are calculated by each lab section, following the scale of 90-100, A; 80-89, B; etc. Grade inflation is not part of this course. (I don't give minus grades.)

SCHEDULE CHANGES: I will try to stick with the course outline, but changes are possible and will be announced.

You are encouraged to read ahead. The more you can absorb early in the course, the better your work will be. Since you are expected to start reporting and writing stories right away, this can be especially helpful. Sections on news gathering, interviewing, leads, story organization, grammar/punctuation and features will be particularly helpful.

CAUTION: JOU 3101 is a *professional course*. The rules probably are different than those of other courses. You must not only do the work, but you must demonstrate that you *can* do the work acceptably within a limited time. Grades on stories can be lowered as the result of students misrepresenting themselves or otherwise being unprofessional while working on story assignments. **Do NOT tell sources you are working for the Alligator or any other publication—unless you are.**

Be sure to tell sources your story may be published. There shouldn't be any surprises.

Lab grades are based upon the quality of your reporting, writing and editing. You are evaluated for your work. This means you have to use your time efficiently. Your efforts are rewarded for results, just as they are on the job.

Sources: One of the best ways to ensure your stories are fair, accurate and complete is to gather information from a variety of sources. In selecting potential sources for your stories, keep in mind that we live in a diverse, multicultural world. You should make every effort to have your stories reflect that. Talk to a variety of people from different backgrounds, educational levels, etc. to get the complete story.

Students enrolled in this course should not be used as sources in your stories unless they are ***involved directly*** in the story. Relatives, friends, roommates, sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, etc. can pose a conflict-of-interest threat when used as sources.

Do your own reporting and writing. Plagiarism—including using material from news releases, information gathered from the internet without attribution and AI material—will result in serious and harsh consequences. Lab instructors will provide procedures for documenting and attributing background for stories. (BTW, copying stuff word-for-word—even *with* attribution— also can be a problem.) You can find the college’s official ethical standards on the CJC website. If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, **PLEASE ASK.**

Special note: Reporters tell the stories of a community and all individuals who make up a given community. We serve, help and inform everyone. To best carry out these ideals, we must exhibit respect, inclusiveness and an understanding for all people. These expectations during field work will also be carried into this classroom. Our differences will serve as a strength that we embrace as we discuss relevant story ideas, developing contacts within a community or even storytelling techniques. Exposure to different perspectives, values, ideals and experiences will make us all better, more compassionate and understanding journalists. We all learn best and maximize our outcomes when we feel comfortable. Please let me know what I can do to make sure you feel respected and welcomed in this space.

REPORTING Calendar

Spring 2025

Weeks

1- 4 Jan. -Feb. Reporting Overview

Course introduction

AP Style
News writing
Reporting overview
Ledes
Inverted Pyramid
Story ideas

Reading:

Foley: French and Poore stories and interviews Harrower: Chapters 2 and 3

Syllabus: AP Style Commas

AP Stylebook: Learn to love it.

TEST 1—Feb. 5 (all material to date)

Feb. -March Gathering facts & Telling a story

Ledes
Story structure
Organizing
News gathering
Interviewing
AP Style

Reading:

Foley: Talcott and Smith stories and interviews

Harrower: Chapters 4 and 5

AP Stylebook: It's time you knew this stuff.

Syllabus: All except Healy and Benham stories

TEST 2—March 5 (all material from week 6 on)

Weeks

March -April More reporting, better writing & legal stuff

Speeches, meetings, news conferences

The Writing Process

Feature Writing

Rewriting

Obituaries

Libel & Ethics

Readings:

Foley: Healy and Benham stories and interviews

Harrower: Chapters 6-8

AP Stylebook: Learn it now, or try again next semester.

Syllabus: All

TEST 3—April 21 (All material from Week 11 on)

(It's over. Go home.)

Good luck, and be careful out there.

Warning: Boring UF stuff follows.

Lectures and materials in this class are the property of the University/faculty member. Lectures may not be used for commercial purposes. Students found in violation may be subject to discipline under the University's Student Conduct Code.

The **University of Florida Honor Code** reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The 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 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."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs.

Students requesting **classroom accommodation** must register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean will provide documentation to the student who must provide documentation to the instructor when requestin