



JOU4201 (18950): WRUF-ESPN 3 Experience

Spring 2026

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Instructors: Shemar Woods

Director of Sports Journalism & Communication: Eric Esterline

Place: FLG 0220

Day and Time: Fridays, Period 4 (10:40 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays (10a-11a), Wednesdays (10a-11a)

PREREQUISITES:

In order to qualify for JOU 4201, students must seek approval to join the course through the instructor.

Overview and Objectives

JOU4201 is designed to offer training in sports news gathering, writing, interviewing and reporting. Special emphasis is placed on improving writing skills, basic news production, and actual multimedia reporting assignments. Students receive practical experience in the field.

Course Learning Objectives

Objectives and goals of the experience include:

- (1) writing sports stories acceptable for on-air and station website use under deadline pressure
- (2) ability to record audio via phone or in-person, and edit audio
- (3) ability to write “sound stories”
- (4) an understanding of the variety of sources used
- (5) an opportunity, and an expectation that work produced in the newsroom can and will be used on the air and web
- (6) a better understanding of sports news and current events and how to engage audience via social media
- (7) an understanding of websites for research, as well as to produce content for station website
- (8) ability to produce multimedia web projects and audio story projects for the WRUF website

Experience 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	Points Per Component	% of Total Grade
Game/Event Attendance (10 events attended)	160 pts	32%
Content and Quality of Content Produced (10 pieces of content)	230 pts	46%
Social Media Activity	10 pts	2%
Author Pages (Photo + Bio)	10 pts	2%
2 Article Reviews (25 points each)	50 pts	10%
This Week in Gators Sports (OT)	15 pts	3%
Quizzes (12 total)	25 pts	5%
Total	500 pts	100%

Assignment Descriptions

GAME/EVENT ATTENDANCE (160 POINTS)

You will be assigned a Gator or other beat to cover during the semester with your reporting team. You are required to attend and cover the team OR regularly create content around your beat. You should utilize the ESPN Gainesville content calendar to plan and track the events you will be covering with your reporting team. Students will also be asked to have regular meetings with the editor(s) of WRUF to discuss their beat coverage, pitch stories and discuss coverage with the group in general.

CONTENT PRODUCED AND QUALITY OF CONTENT PRODUCED (230 POINTS)

You are required to produce 10 separate pieces of content during the semester. This can be a variety of content that includes game previews, recaps, features, live-tweeting, etc. You can work with your reporting team together on these pieces, but you must play a role in creating the content to get credit for it. You should track your content on the Intro to ESPN Gainesville content calendar. For your 10 separate pieces of content, you will be graded on the quality of the content and your growth over the semester. Each piece submitted will have a rubric attached to it that will explain the criteria you need to take into consideration.

SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY (10 POINTS)

Students are expected to actively promote journalism produced by WRUF through their professional social media platforms. This includes regularly sharing their own published stories as well as amplifying the work of their peers. Students should approach social media as an extension of the newsroom, emphasizing professionalism, accuracy and thoughtful engagement. This activity is designed to help students develop responsible social media habits, understand audience engagement strategies, and contribute to the visibility and reach of WRUF journalism while building their own professional presence.

AUTHOR PAGES (PHOTO + BIO) (10 POINTS)

Students are responsible for creating a professional author page on WRUF.com. This includes uploading a current, professional headshot and writing or updating a concise biography within WordPress. Author pages should accurately reflect each student's role, interests, and involvement in Sports@CJC and WRUF coverage, and will serve as a public-facing portfolio component throughout the semester. This assignment is designed to introduce students to industry expectations around personal branding, accuracy and professionalism.

ARTICLE REVIEWS (50 POINTS)

Students will participate in two in-person evaluation sessions with a faculty member each semester. During these sessions, students will receive detailed, individualized feedback on articles they have written for the WRUF website. These evaluations will focus on reporting accuracy, writing quality, story structure, and adherence to journalistic standards. Each evaluation is worth 25 points, for a total of 50 points across the semester. This assignment is designed to provide constructive guidance and help students grow as digital sports journalists through hands-on learning and mentorship.

THIS WEEK IN GATORS SPORTS (15 POINTS)

Students are required to make a minimum of three (3) on-air or on-camera appearances on This Week in Gators Sports or This Week in Gators Sports (OT) during the semester.

This assignment is designed to provide students with hands-on experience in live sports analysis and broadcast delivery, while strengthening their ability to communicate clearly and confidently in a professional media environment. During each appearance, students will be expected to analyze and update viewers and listeners on the latest developments within their assigned beat, including recent games, trends, key storylines, and upcoming events. Emphasis will be placed on preparation, accuracy, clarity, and strong on-air presence.

BEAT QUIZZES (25 POINTS)

Students will be tested on their understanding of current events and the teams and sports they are assigned to cover. These quizzes will test both program knowledge (history, structure, postseason format, venues and key context) and coverage awareness (stat usage, framing, and sport-specific reporting priorities). The goal of these quizzes is to ensure students are adequately prepared to cover their beats accurately and responsibly before and during live coverage. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of each class.

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	= B-
76.5-79.4	= C+	72.5-76.4	= C	69.5-72.4	= C-
66.5-69.4	= D+	62.5-66.4	= D	59.5-62.4	= D-
0-59.4	= F				

Policies

<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

Attendance Policy

Students are assigned one shift per week and must attend each week unless the student has a university-approved absence. If a student is missing a shift because of an illness, the student **MUST** provide a doctor's note for the absence to be excused. Any unexcused absence can result in the student being dismissed from the experience and failing the experience.

Plagiarism and Citing Sources

Plagiarism includes using someone else's words, sources, or stories—whether published, broadcast, or online—without proper attribution or when such material dominates your own work. Misrepresenting your presence at an event, inventing sources, or submitting work that was not entirely your own are all forms of academic and journalistic dishonesty. Reusing assignments across classes without permission or submitting edited or graded work from one course to another, also violates academic integrity. Using copyrighted material like images, music, or videos without permission or credit constitutes a copyright violation and is considered plagiarism. Ultimately, honesty, originality, and transparency are essential in all aspects of journalistic and academic work.

Use of generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Students are prohibited from using AI tools to generate, write or substantially edit social posts. Posts must be your original work. Using AI to generate content is considered plagiarism and subject to the university's academic integrity policies. Students may use AI tools for idea brainstorming, research or to verify facts and data. If using AI to brainstorm, you must confirm the accuracy of names, places, organizations, events and other facts before pitching it. If in doubt about any use of AI for coursework, please consult your instructor.

The Consequences

All acts of suspected plagiarism or academic dishonesty will be reported to the INC Director and /or journalism chair, and the Dean of the CJC, and may be referred to the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution Center.

An act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty may result in failure on the assignment, failure of the class, as well as other possible sanctions outlined in the Faculty Senate Policy on Academic Misconduct.

Academic Integrity

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 Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. For more information visit the Honor Code web page at

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/> or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

Sponsored Content

Marketers and publishers are using innovative methods to create, format, and deliver digital advertising. One form is “native advertising,” or “sponsored content,” which is content that bears a similarity to news, feature articles, product reviews, entertainment, and other material that surrounds it online. Sometimes, different outside entities will offer reporters, broadcasters and authors monetary compensation for including this sponsored content or native advertising in their reporting.

ESPN Gainesville and the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications and the Department of Media Properties **are NOT in this business**.

If you, as a student, are ever approached via email, text, phone call, direct message, etc. by an outside entity about linking to or providing information to our audience in a manner that is described above or something similar, you should not engage with this outside entity or cooperate with them. Please refer them to a manager, director, or instructor when/if this happens.

If any willful violation of this policy occurs with any content a student is producing for the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications and the Department of Media Properties, you **WILL** be removed from the immersion experience, course, or program, **you will fail the experience and/or course** and other consequences could result.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, 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 feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on a minimum of 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last three weeks of the semester, but announcements will be made giving specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the evaluation website URL above.

Course Grading

Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points as articulated in the link that follows. <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

U Matter, We Care

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. 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 so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but

not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.