

## **JOU 4447C: APPLIED MAGAZINES**

**Instructor:** Cindy Spence, [cindyerspence@ufl.edu](mailto:cindyerspence@ufl.edu)/813-597-7128

**Time:** Tuesdays, 5:10 p.m. to 8:10 p.m.

**Office hours:** Tuesday noon-1 p.m. and Thursday noon-1 p.m. Also by appointment. Generally, I arrive early to class, and I'm happy to talk then.

Please use your UF email account to email me to ensure your message ends up in my inbox. You are welcome to text or call.

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### **Welcome to Atrium!**

Atrium aims to tell true Florida stories that are ***deeply reported*** and ***artfully told***. As the staff for the magazine this semester, you will focus on issues important or unique to the Sunshine State.

Atrium is named after the open space in Weimer Hall that allows the Florida sun to shine in. Similarly, we hope our namesake magazine will help illuminate the heart of our state.

This semester, we will work on Atrium's website and the print edition, which will publish in spring 2026. As a class, you will plan and produce the print and web editions.

This is **NOT** a lecture class. It is a **professional skills workshop**. You will function as a magazine **staff**; the classroom will serve as office space. That means you will have to work hard outside of class, communicate with each other not just on Tuesday nights but throughout the week and attend as many Atrium meetings (day and time TBD) as your schedule allows. You must be passionate about producing a narrative nonfiction print and digital magazine.

**Note: This class will take a great deal of time and energy. Please take that into account as you plan your semester. Deadlines are firm. Missing deadline likely means your story will not be published. Atrium staffers consistently win college journalism awards. That is not possible unless your story is published. Please take deadlines seriously.**

You will learn the ins and outs of producing a magazine: reporting and writing stories, shooting photos, editing and copy-editing, fact-checking, designing print and web pages and promoting Atrium on social media. Beyond writing, each of you will have a role to fulfill; you are a magazine staff.

You will be expected to produce engaging, accurate, high-quality work that is worthy of publication in an award-winning magazine. We will workshop the content and design but much of the quality control is up to you and your fellow staff members.

I am here to give you feedback on ways to improve, but I am **NOT** the editor of Atrium.

Work that does not rise to meet Atrium standards *will not be published*.

This is an advanced JOURNAL class and you will be challenged. You will have to work extremely hard to earn a high grade, but I hope you will enjoy the process and help your readers make a little more sense of the world.

**Here are a few things we will focus on during our semester together:**

- Idea generation and conceptualization
- How to refine, articulate and pitch your ideas
- The difference between a feature story and narrative nonfiction
- The difference between details and adjectives
- Magazine hierarchy
- Editing and copy editing
- Copy flow
- Fact-checking
- Visual storytelling
- Design and layout
- Setting deadlines
- Social media
- Marketing
- Ethical issues

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Textbooks**

You will need access to the Associated Press Style Manual.

The best creators consume the creative work of others. I'll recommend good content on occasion, but you can also find great work in magazines like The Atlantic, the New Yorker, Wired, National Geographic and plenty of others. Feel free to share examples of good work. Please familiarize yourself with past Atrium storytelling.

### **Prerequisites**

You must have taken Magazine and Feature Writing and received a C or higher to enroll in this class.

### **Minimum technology requirements**

The University of Florida expects students to acquire **computer hardware and software** appropriate to their degree program. For this class, you must have a smartphone or a recording device, **Microsoft Word** and Zoom capability. If you are taking on a visual role, you will need the

proper equipment and/or software. Atrium will not be able to supply such equipment or technology. **YOU MUST HAVE TECHNOLOGY THAT IS IN WORKING CONDITION.**

You will also be required to download Canvas and messaging apps such as Teams on your phone and turn on notifications. You will be added to the Atrium channels after the first day of class.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

### **Accuracy, fairness and style**

This is a journalism class. You must review your content and double-check every fact.

Your work must be grammatically correct and adhere to AP style. You will lose points for grammar and style errors.

Your copy should be clean and polished well before design begins.

You are also expected to engage in storytelling that is fair, complete and based on information gathered from diverse sources.

Atrium stories should be deeply reported. Any story not deeply reported and multi-sourced will not be published. A story can be well-researched but poorly reported. Be sure to ask if you don't understand the distinction.

If you opt to do a story that requires travel, be sure you are able to line up the transportation. If transportation is an obstacle to getting a story done, the story will not be approved.

Please consider the visual components of your story. No story without proper visual components will be published.

### **Honesty and integrity**

The public depends on journalists for news and a deeper understanding of the world around them. As such, there is nothing more important than our honesty, fairness and transparency.

Plagiarism, fabrication and conflicts of interest will not be tolerated, and you will FAIL the class and lose credibility as a journalist.

Plagiarism is stealing someone else's ideas or work, including copy from the Internet. Fabrication is the use of invented information or the falsification of material. Conflicts of interest include writing about people you know or people who are close to others you may know. If you are unsure about whether you are facing a conflict of interest, please discuss with me.

You are expected to abide by the UF Honor Code, which you can read here:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

Also keep in mind that all content – written and visual – in this class belongs to Atrium magazine.

### **Deadlines**

Deadlines are crucial in this class as they are in the professional world. The instructor and editors will work with you to set deadlines for your content. No matter your role, you must meet your deadlines. Deadlines broken by one person inevitably affect someone else. **Be considerate** and make your deadlines.

### **Use of artificial intelligence**

We **do not** use AI to generate text or visuals for Atrium. This includes, but isn't limited to, Chat GPT and Photoshop AI. Atrium is about the beauty of the human experience. AI has no part in what we do creatively. You will fail the class if you use AI to generate content.

What we can do is use AI as a tool. This includes software like Otter.ai to help transcribe interviews and Grammarly to double-check text. Most search engines now employ AI, but be aware that AI is not always reliable. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR VERIFYING ANY INFORMATION YOU USE FOR YOUR STORIES.** Make sure to double and triple check transcriptions, text, etc. Nothing can replace a watchful human eye.

### **Participation and professionalism**

This class meets once a week and it also serves as our staff meeting time. You can't participate if you don't attend, so plan to be here. If you miss multiple classes, it is likely to affect your grade.

### **Communication**

This class doesn't work unless you communicate with me and your classmates. You must check in via email, text and other channels regularly for discussions and announcements.

If you are having problems with your tasks, you must contact the editor-in-chief or email me immediately.

As a member of this class and a staff member of Atrium, every communication should be respectful.

While working on stories for Atrium, you may be faced with questions you never thought about before. You may even be uncomfortable at times. This is good. It means you are learning and changing. I hope you will rely on me and your classmates to help you navigate the process.

## GRADING

The majority of your grade will be based on what you produce for Atrium this semester, i.e., your portfolio, and how you performed as a collaborative staff member of Atrium.

### Portfolio

Content: Did you produce good content for Atrium?

This can be a narrative, a photo essay, designs, illustrations, web content, social content. Please note that some content is quicker and easier to produce and other content takes longer. If you produce something by week 4, for example, you will need to pitch in on other aspects of the magazine, so be ready to contribute to the magazine as a whole.

Deadlines: Did you meet all deadlines connected to the content you produced or assignments you took on? **Late work will not be published.**

Participation: You can't participate in classes you don't attend.

Peer collaboration: Did you work with your peers in a collaborative fashion?

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	% Equivalency
A	93-100%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67%-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
E, I, NG, S-U, WF	0-59%

## UF POLICIES

Please familiarize yourself with UF academic policies and resources. You are responsible for knowing this information: <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

## **GETTING HELP**

### **Technical difficulties:**

For issues with technical difficulties for Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
- (352) 392-HELP (4357)
- Walk-in: HUB 132

Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues should be accompanied by the ticket number received from the Help Desk when the problem