

The Journalist's AI Toolkit

JOU4930 - Spring 2026 - 1/12/26 - 4/22/26

3 Credit Hours

Class Meeting Times

Tuesday - 9:35AM - 10:25 AM

Thursday - 9:35AM - 11:30AM

Instructor: Kristen B. Reed

Kristen.Reed@ufl.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Tuesdays from 10:25 AM - 11:30 AM ET

Communication:

Use the open forum in Campus to ask questions that could benefit the group.

Requesting a private meeting: Send an email so we can coordinate.

Student Expectations

Office Hours If you have questions, you are expected to attend virtual office hours or set up a private appointment with me (send your request via email to Kristen.Reed@ufl.edu).

Announcements You are responsible for reading all announcements posted in the course each time you log in.

Email You are responsible for reading all your course emails and responding promptly (within 48 hours).

Instructor Communications

Email Policy Except for weekends, holidays, and University breaks, the instructor will typically respond to emails within 48 hours. For course-related questions, please post on the Canvas FAQ discussion board. If you have questions of a personal nature, please email me directly.

Assignment Feedback Policy I will provide feedback/grades on submitted assignments

within two weeks of the due date. Some assignments may require a longer review period, which I will communicate to you if necessary.

Course Description

This hands-on, online course equips journalism students with practical AI skills. The course balances technical skills with professional development, teaching students to use AI for research organization, communication management, and portfolio building. A final newsroom simulation project challenges students to apply their knowledge in realistic scenarios, preparing them to adapt as AI tools and the journalism industry continue evolving rapidly.

Recommended Reading

Article: *These women tried to warn us about AI \ Today the risks of artificial intelligence are clear — but the warning signs have been there all along*

Author: Lorena O'Neil

Link: <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/women-warnings-ai-danger-risk-before-chatgpt-1234804367/>

eBook: *The journalist's toolbox : a guide to digital reporting and AI*

Author: Mike Reilley

Permalink: https://ufl-flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01FALSC_UFL/1e2g8es/alma99384927612406597

Library Resources

[Library Support](#) - Help with library resources

[Ask a Librarian](#) – Chat with librarians online.

CJC Librarian - April Hines, Phone: 352-273-2728, Email: aprhine@uflib.ufl.edu.

Course Summary

Unit 1: Foundations (weeks 1-4) is an intensive introduction to AI tools journalists use daily, focusing on exploration and practical skill-building through prompt writing, sourcing and discovery, and content creation.

Unit 1 Outcome:

By the end of Unit 1, you will have developed a comprehensive, personalized toolkit of AI applications with documented use cases relevant to journalism practice. This toolkit serves as your professional reference guide throughout the course.

Unit 2: Industry Applications (weeks 5-9) features case studies from newsrooms around the world. Guest lecturers from within the industry will share how they are applying AI—what worked, what didn't, and what they're doing currently based on what they learned. This unit concludes with an introduction to the integrative project that students will complete in the final weeks of the course.

Unit 2 Outcome:

By the end of Week 9, you will have produced a research report analyzing AI implementations across three news organizations. This report demonstrates your ability to critically evaluate real-world AI applications in journalism, synthesize insights from industry professionals, and develop evidence-based recommendations for ethical and effective AI adoption.

Introduction to Unit 3 Integrative Project: During Week 9, you'll also receive the introduction to your newsroom simulation project. Your Unit 2 research will inform the AI tools and strategies you choose for your simulated beat coverage in Weeks 13-16

Unit 3: Professional Systems (weeks 10-12) focuses on AI use in newsrooms outside the context of reporting and content creation. Students will learn how professionals are using AI to optimize their time, streamline their workflows, build efficiencies, manage source lists, maintain records, and advance their professional development.

Unit 3 Outcome:

By the end of Week 12, you will have developed a professional systems portfolio

demonstrating AI-enhanced workflow management, communication strategies, and career development planning.

Unit 4: Integrative Project – Newsroom Simulation (weeks 13-16) is where students will apply what they've learned throughout the course to create a body of work that demonstrates their understanding of real-world applications and their posture towards resilience as the tools and industry change.

Unit 4 Outcome:

By the end of Week 16, you will have completed a comprehensive newsroom simulation demonstrating your ability to synthesize AI tools, journalistic practices, and professional workflows in realistic reporting scenarios. This capstone project demonstrates your readiness to enter modern newsrooms as an AI-literate journalist who can leverage technology strategically while maintaining editorial integrity and professional standards.

The instructor reserves the right to adjust this syllabus as necessary.

Grading Structure

- **Participation & Weekly Activities (15%)**
 - Weekly discussion posts responding to prompts and peer feedback on classmates' work (minimum 2 per week)
- **Unit Assignments (45%)**
 - Unit 1: AI Tools Portfolio (20%)
 - Unit 2: Global Newsroom Analysis (15%)
 - Unit 3: Professional Systems Toolkit (10%) -
- **Integrative Project - Newsroom Simulation (30%)**
- **Final Presentation (15%)**

Grade Percentages

A 92.5-100%	B 82.5-86.4%	C 72.5-76.4%	D 62.5-66.4%
A- 89.5-92.4%	B- 79.5-82.4%	C- 69.5-72.4%	D- 59.5-62.4%
B+ 86.5-89.4%	C+ 76.5-79.4%	D+ 66.5-69.4%	E 0 – 59.4%

Course Goals

- 1. Evaluate and implement diverse AI tools** for research, fact-checking, data analysis, and content creation while critically assessing their accuracy, limitations, and ethical implications in journalism practice (*aligns with Content SLO 1, Critical Thinking SLOs 1, 2, 3*)
- 2. Apply ethical frameworks and transparency principles** when using AI technologies in reporting, including proper disclosure practices, verification methods, and adherence to press freedom laws and professional standards (*aligns with Critical Thinking SLO 3, Communication SLO 1*)
- 3. Design and optimize professional workflow systems** using multiple AI-powered tools to manage research, organize sources, streamline communication, and produce clear journalism content that serves diverse audiences (*aligns with Critical Thinking SLO 2, Communication SLO 1*)
- 4. Demonstrate adaptive resilience and critical judgment** by analyzing real-world newsroom AI implementations, troubleshooting tool limitations, and preparing for rapid technological change through hands-on application in simulated reporting environments (*aligns with all program outcomes*)

Student Learning Objectives

By the end of Unit 1, students will be able to:

1. Execute effective prompt engineering strategies across at least three different AI tools to generate background research, source lists, and interview questions.
2. Implement AI-powered verification workflows using tools to validate information and identify credible sources for a news story
3. Produce multi-platform content by utilizing AI transcription, translation, editing assistants, and optimization tools while maintaining editorial voice and accuracy standards

By the end of Unit 2, students will be able to:

1. Apply lessons from newsroom case studies by selecting appropriate AI tools and strategies from real-world examples to solve specific reporting challenges

2. Critique AI implementation decisions from global newsrooms by evaluating their ethical frameworks, transparency practices, and outcomes to determine best practices for different reporting contexts
3. Develop an AI disclosure statement for a specific journalism use case that includes rationale for tool selection, human oversight procedures, and ethical safeguards based on industry standards

By the end of Unit 3, students will be able to:

1. Construct an integrated workflow system using at least four AI tools
2. Execute professional communication strategies by using AI assistants to draft correspondence, manage deadlines, and track story angles
3. Organize a professional documentation system using AI tools to categorize content, create handoff materials, and build institutional knowledge systems that demonstrate career development

By the end of Unit 4, students will be able to:

1. Synthesize AI tools and journalistic practices to produce a cohesive body of work that demonstrates strategic tool selection, ethical decision-making, and professional workflow management
2. Adapt reporting strategies in response to changing circumstances by troubleshooting tool limitations, pivoting, and implementing alternative workflows when initial approaches prove ineffective
3. Defend editorial and ethical decisions in a final presentation by articulating how AI tools were used, what challenges arose, and how human judgment guided the reporting process

Academic Integrity and the use of AI in this course

Generative AI is a tool you will use in this course. In fact, nearly every assignment will require it. Since the purpose of this course is to learn how to use various AI tools and to build resilience as those tools change, and because you are college students learning to become brilliant writers, you are not permitted to use AI to write your assignments for you. Each written assignment must be student-generated. For clarity, this will be indicated within each assignment.

Sourcing When you use AI, you should acknowledge the tool or service used, as well as the original sources of information when available.

Use the following format:

Name of AI tool. Creator/Owner [AI service]. URL

Used to: (short description of what service the tool provided you)

For example:

Claude. Anthropic [Claude Sonnet 4.5] <https://claude.ai>

Used to: Workshop language to use for email in source email to medical professional.

Gemini. Google [2.5 Flash] <https://gemini.google.com/app>

Used to: Generate table from source data

University Academic Policies and Resources

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

Technical Issues

Visit the helpdesk website (<https://it.ufl.edu/helpdesk/>), call [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or e-mail helpdesk@ufl.edu

Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care:* If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, call 352-294- 2273, or visit the website to refer or report a concern, and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis and non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the Student Health Care Center website.
- *University Police Department:* Visit the UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services:* For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.