

JOU4950 (12664) APPLIED JOURNALISM

Section 3G04 • Spring 2026

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Meets Thursdays • Jan 15 – Apr 16

10:40 to 11:30 a.m. • Period 4

All Classes Held in Weimer Hall, Room G030

Exceptions:

Class Will Meet on Zoom: Jan 22 and Apr 16

No Class: Mar 19 (Spring Break Week)

INSTRUCTORS

Professor Joanna Hernandez, MPA

Senior Lecturer

Director of Community & Culture

jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu

Office Hours

In-Person @ Weimer 3046 / or on Zoom

2 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesdays | 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Thursdays

And By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a capstone course. You are expected to produce professional-caliber journalism work that showcases the skills you acquired here at CJC. You'll get feedback to improve and strengthen your work and writing in new, creative ways.

Our goal is to get you to produce publishable stories, and we have a relationship with WUFT, where local journalism is published.

This Spring 2026 semester, you will produce two multimedia digital stories for publication on WUFT's Untold Florida platform. These [story ideas were solicited](#) from the station's audience, and you will get a list of topics we are compiling for this class. And from this list, you'll pick two ideas to build out and pitch to us.

You will be working in teams of two that the professor creates. If you want to work alone on individual projects, let us know.

A panel comprised of journalists and journalism educators will provide you with feedback on your pitches. Your instructors will formalize the two story assignments and guide you through the semester.

We are excited to work with you as you produce professional-caliber, publishable acts of journalism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students receive refreshers in reporting, multimedia skills and production.
- Students use best practices in written, visual and audio storytelling.
- Students collaborate with journalists of different strengths than their own.
- Students display their journalistic acumen.

COURSE GOALS

- Students think critically, creatively and independently.
- Students conduct research, evaluate information using journalistic methods.
- Students write clearly in journalistic styles appropriate for their audiences.

COURSE OUTCOMES: MULTIPLATFORM FINAL PROJECT

1. Students produce publishable multiplatform digital stories.
2. Each project is a journalistic resource produced for an external audience.
3. Students determine timelines within the context of syllabus deadlines.

EXPECTATIONS: TWO PUBLISHABLE MULTIPLATFORM STORIES

Requirements include:

1. **Pitch:** Each team will record a PowerPoint presentation that responds to assignment prompts and covers each story's pitch — each team will receive feedback to their pitches during the second week of class.
2. **Two Stories:** Submit two deeply reported, written stories; each story needs to be between 500 and 800 words and includes hyperlinks, evidence of research and originally reported interviews.
3. **Multimedia Components:** For each story, include:
 - Two audio sound bites no longer than a minute each OR a 90-second audio wrap;
 - Multiple (more than three) photos with captions;
 - At least one educational component utilizing maps, data visualization and/or informational graphics;
 - Quotes from at least three sources who are real live people.
4. **Semester Recap:** PowerPoint presentation that responds to assignment prompts and highlights your semester's work — each team will record this presentation and receive feedback on the final day of class.
5. **If your story has not** been published by the time the Final PowerPoint Presentation is due, it needs to be presented on an Adobe Express webpage.

COURSE TEXT, READINGS and RESOURCES

Web readings and handouts will be posted on Canvas by the instructors.

THE POINT

Please subscribe to The Point. <https://www.wuft.org/the-point>

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

All JOU 4950 students can checkout cellphone-reporting gear from the G020 Equipment Room. There are five kits set aside for this class. *Let the professor know* if you want to check it out. OTHERWISE, student need to own basic digital audio, photo, video equipment and a laptop with necessary software installed. Specific are here: <https://www.jou.ufl.edu/current-students/current-undergraduate/current-academics/equipment/>

HOW-TO-REACH-ME TIP

Write "JOU 4950" in the Subject line. Why? Because this will help me find your communications more easily.

UF GRADING POLICIES

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/#gradingpoliciestext>

JOU4950 GRADING SCALE

Excellent. Strong in every category, especially newsworthiness. Copy/media is usually publishable with little or no editing.

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

Good. Many strong points. Copy/media is usually publishable with minor editing and revision.

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

Average. Some strong points. Copy/media needs additional reporting/rewriting.

C+ = 77-79

C = 74 -76

Unacceptable work. Weak news value. Not grammatical English. Copy contains major factual, structural, writing or usage flaws. Copy/media fails to meet even minimum standards for the assignment.

C- = 70-73

D+ = 67-69

D = 64 - 66

D- = 60 - 63

E = 59 and below

GRADING BREAKDOWN

5% - Attendance | Zoom takes attendance when we meet online. When the class meets in person, please make sure that the professor knows that you are present. For more on the Attendance Policy, click [here](#).

10% - Weekly Learning Journal | Answer the prompt and reflect on lectures, readings and life in general. Create on Adobe Express. *Do not submit on Canva, PDFs, on a Word Doc or as a text – points will be deducted.*

10% - Class and Homework Assignments | You must complete and submit assignments on time. If you know you are going to be absent, hand in your work ahead of time. Notify the professor prior to deadline if you think you will miss deadline; notifying her afterwards results in five points deducted for every day late; seven or more days late results in a zero. Think you deserve a better grade? Let the professor know within seven days of receiving the grade; after that, grades are permanent. No exceptions.

15% - AP Style Quiz | You'll have 10 days to take this open-book quiz on your own time. It opens on **Mar 1** at midnight and closes 11:59 p.m. on **Mar 10**.

Absolutely no extensions will be granted.

15% - Pitch Presentation | You'll submit your recorded pitch during the first week of class – it's due by Jan 26. Your pitch will be for both stories you'll be working on this semester, and your pitch will be reviewed by a panel. The panelists will give you live feedback during the second week of class on Jan 29 – you are required to attend this class that is happening on Zoom. You'll get 20 points deducted from your Pitch Presentation grade for not attending.

15% First Story - Multiplatform Digital Package

The first story package is due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb 23. Contents of the package include a deeply reported 500 to 800 word story, audio, photos and at least one educational component. Draft due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb 16.

15% Second Story - Multiplatform Digital Package

The second story package is due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Apr 6. Contents of the package include a deeply reported 500 to 800 word story, audio, photos and at least one educational component. Draft due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Mar 30.

15% - Project Presentation Your team will create a PowerPoint presentation that highlights your semester's work. You will receive instructions that contain prompts to include in your presentation. Each team will record their presentation. Feedback from the panel will be provided on Apr 16, the last day of class. This class will be on Zoom and everyone is required to attend – 10 points deducted from your final grade for not attending.

JOU 4950 SPRING 2026 COURSE SCHEDULE

– *This course schedule could change – it's at the instructors' discretion.* –

* Astericks signify assignment due date

Week 1 | Jan 15 [Weimer G030]**Pre-Reporting** – Teams Assigned

* Recorded Pitch-2 Stories | Due 9 a.m. Tuesday, Jan 20

* Learning Journal | Due 11:59 p.m. Tuesday, Jan 20

Week 2 | Jan 22 [Zoom]**Pitch Feedback**

Stories Assigned

* First Story Due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb 23
(Draft due week before, 9 a.m. Monday, Feb 16)

* Second Story Due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Apr 6
(Draft due week before, 9 a.m. Monday, Mar 30)

* Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Jan 26

Week 3 | Jan 29 [Weimer G030]**Research Review**

* Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Feb 2

Week 4 | Feb 5 [Weimer G030]**Sourcing**

* Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Feb 9

Week 5 | Feb 12 [Weimer G030]**The Interview**

* Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Feb 16

* First Story, First Draft | Due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb 16

Week 6 | Feb 19 [Weimer G030]**Workshop First Story: Peer Edits**

* Peer Edit Comments | Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Feb 20

* Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Feb 23

* 1st Multimedia Digital Package | Due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb 23

Week 7 | Feb 26 [Weimer G030]

Rewriting for Consistent Tone & Style

*Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Mar 2

Week 8 | Mar 5 [Zoom]

Research Review Part II

*Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Mar 9

Week 9 | Mar 12 [Weimer G030]

On the Record? Off the Record?

No Learning Journal | Enjoy Spring Break

Week 10 | Mar 19

No Class – Spring Break Week

*Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Mar 23

Week 11 | Mar 26 [Weimer G030]

Grammar, Punctuation and Quotes

*Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Mar 30

*Second Story, First Draft | Due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Mar 30

Week 12 | Apr 2 [Weimer G030]

Turning a Challenge Into Success

*Peer Edit Comments | Due 11:59 p.m. Friday, Apr 3

*Learning Journal | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Apr 6

*Second Multiplatform Package | Due 11:59 p.m. Monday, Apr 6

Week 13 | Apr 9 [Weimer G030]

Create Traffic with Multimedia

*Project Presentation | Due 9 a.m. Monday, Apr 13

Week 14 | Apr 16 [Zoom]

Project Presentation Feedback

ADDITIONAL GRADING PENALTIES

Spelling, grammar, punctuation and style errors will get 5 points deducted for every error.

Fact errors: You'll get 10 points deducted for every fact error, including misspelling a name. Some errors can result in failure of the assignment/project.

Misrepresentation: Grades can be lowered to zero if students misrepresent themselves or act unprofessionally while committing the act of journalism.

Factual math: The professor does not "round up." An 89.99 is still a B+; it takes a full 90 earned points to receive an A-.

We are all human. If you think a mistake in a grade has been made, or you do not understand something about your grade, please see the professor within one week of receiving your grade. No grade changes will be considered after this time.

YOUR CONDUCT AS A STUDENT

UF Student Honor Code

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

ZOOM PROFESSIONALISM

- Please maintain professional conduct when our class meets online.
- Have your camera on during Zoom sessions. Ten points deducted if not.
- Use virtual backgrounds to protect the privacy of your environment or surroundings.
- Some Zoom lectures might be recorded.

WHEN YOU ARE FEELING SICK, USE YOUR BEST JUDGMENT

- If you are experiencing any illness symptoms, DON'T COME TO CLASS. And email both professors. REMEMBER: Absent or not, you still have to turn in the work that is due to get credit for doing the work.
- Check out [the university attendance and illness policies](#) for more information.

ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

<https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>

GATOR EVALUATIONS

It's appreciated when students provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluation. You will be notified by email and/or Canvas when the evaluations are open, typically in the last two or three weeks of the semester.