

RTV 4800

Course Syllabus

Instructor Information

Name: Benjamin Vollmer, PhD

College: College of Journalism

Department: Department of Media Production, Management, and Technology

Contact/Email: bvollmer@ufl.edu

Class Hours and Location: Tuesday (1:55 - 4:55 PM), WEIM 3020

Office Hours: Tuesday (After Class) / Monday 2-4 PM EST OR by appointment via Zoom

Contact Tip: Make sure to give me 48 hours during the weekday to respond to emails! Usually I'm much faster than that, but my response speed can depend on several factors.

Course Description and Contents

UF Guidelines

For all necessary information regarding UF guidelines, please [see the following link!](#)

Description

This course offers a new-wave approach to fundamental concepts and characteristics in an evolving media industry. You will be given an overview of practical and theoretical concepts, such as analytics, content distribution, media kits, and media placement. A big part of this course will be acquiring experience with hands-on projects. We will aim to replicate experiences that you will encounter in the professional workforce, as well as growing your network to best suit you beyond graduation.

Course Tip: A big part of this course will be taking ideas you have and turning them into something practical. You will identify something you are passionate about, and then develop projects around that area of interest.

Contents

1. Audience Analytics and Analysis
 - a. You will conduct consumer research on entertainment/media company consumers
 - b. You will identify what these consumers are looking for and what they are avoiding
2. Media Brand Audit and Media Sales Project (in-class, group brainstorm)
 - a. Evaluate brand identity and audience fit
 - b. Audit existing media presence
 - c. Develop a strategic media placement plan (sponsorships, partnerships, etc)
 - d. Pitch a media sales strategy based on analytics and insights
3. Content Distribution and Programming Analysis for Social Media (final project)
 - i. Study how content moves across traditional, digital, and social platforms
 - ii. Focus on visibility
 - iii. Platform specific strategies
 - iv. Brand integration and consistency
 - v. Propose a cross-platform distribution plan
4. Case Analysis
 - a. Understanding and Deconstructing Business Models
 - b. Connect Audience Trends to Strategies
 - c. Use Case Data to Support Claims
 - d. Craft a Clear and Persuasive Pitch
5. Examinations
 - a. Brief, written examination that will assess knowledge of media distribution and content strategies
 - b. Brief, written examination that will assess understanding of brand consistency, development, and resourcefulness

Course Tip: Class examinations will be open note! If the first exam goes well, students will have the opportunity to make the second exam take home.

Philosophy and Expectations

It's not just enough to be creative, you have to be able to focus that creativity into tangible projects. In this course, students are encouraged to fully engage with the dynamic world of emerging media. This means students will develop deep understandings of social media, live streaming, traditional platforms like television and radio, as well as distribution plans. Adhering to university policies, regular attendance is vital for active participation and collaborative learning. Meeting deadlines is crucial for maintaining the course's momentum and ensuring a cohesive learning experience. Assignments should be completed as specified, reflecting each student's

creativity and understanding of the course material. Active involvement in discussions, teamwork for group discussions, and participation in weekly critiques are vital, as they serve as key opportunities for students to explore and expand their storytelling skills in new media contexts.

My role as your instructor will be to provide thorough and critical feedback, both verbally in class and directly through your assignments. Adapting and progressing this feedback is a vital portion of the class. If students are learning and progressing, then they will succeed in this class. It is expected that students will respond professionally and gracefully to this feedback.

Course Rules

Attendance and Late Work

There will not be many course rules to abide by, but in the interest of consistency and clarity, students will be asked to do the following:

1. If you cannot come to class, please make sure to contact me **ahead of time** to let me know. This will involve an excused absence in compliance with [UF's attendance policies](#).
2. Late work is accepted, but will come with the following penalties assuming the late work is not excused:
 - a. 10% off if submitted within 48 hours late
 - b. 25% off if submitted within a week late
 - c. 50% off if submitted any time after a week late
3. Please check the Canvas page for updates several times a week. Updates and course notes will be sent through Canvas and students are expected to be aware of this.
4. If you have questions about an assignment or something related to the course, you must ask **before** the respective work is due.
5. Students will respect each other in class. This includes being patient and having meaningful discussions with others. This class is meant to be inclusive and based in having a sense of community between classmates.
6. Students are expected to actively participate in the class.

Class Tip: If you are typically a little more quiet in class, participation can be achieved in a variety of ways. Thorough feedback, being in class on time, actively listening to your classmates, and providing strong ideas through your work.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here](#) to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with me so that we can discuss your needs as early as possible. I'd like to make this process as easy as possible, so do not feel badly about approaching me should you need to.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online, [here](#).. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students [here](#).

Materials & Resources

While there are no mandatory readings in this class, students will be expected to have access to mobile technology of some kind (an emphasis on iOS and Android platforms). This includes the ability to download and use applications. We will be assessing platform brands, both on social media and in content distribution. **You will not have to pay anything to be productive and successful in this course.** Here are some resources you can familiarize yourself with (none are mandatory):

- [Softr](#), an app-design website that doesn't require coding ability to function
- [Bubble](#), another app-design website that doesn't require coding ability to function
- [YouTube](#), for watching tutorials or analyzing web content
- [Google Drive](#), for organizing your created work

Class Tip: If you ever need help tracking something down, ask me or send me an email!

Assessment and Grades

Assessment Philosophy

Students will be assessed by their ability to meet rubric standards (on a per assignment basis) as well as improve their skills, respective to feedback, as the course continues. This course will

assume a flexible grading style that encourages effort and participation, a willingness to follow instructions, and the aforementioned improvement.

This class will focus on a handful of projects due about quarterly throughout the semester. These assignments will often include two separate segments - one for class teamwork and brainstorming, and another for individual assessments. This course design should reward students who want to better themselves and their creative abilities.

Grade Breakdown

Please observe [UF's grading policy](#), which will be aligned with how grades are documented in this course.

- [Course Work / Case Work \(50%\)](#)
 - This includes assignments such as your audience analytics and content distribution projects, primarily the work you will be doing in class
 - Grades on your course work will focus on your ability to listen and react to feedback. Improvement is the key to success in this course!
 - The largest part of this grade will be a case study competition toward the end of the semester.
- [Final Project \(25%\)](#)
 - This is a collection and presentation of your work over the course of the semester. It will be what you take out into the professional world as evidence of your creativity and work - a portfolio of sorts.
 - The final pitch will be a detailed document of a brand and its programming analysis
- [Examinations \(12.5%\)](#)
 - There will be two examinations across the semester, one as a mid-term and one as a final exam. These examinations are open note - you are encouraged and expected to use any available resources you have, this includes brainstorming with your classmates. That being said, original work is the primary objective and outcome of these examinations: it should be your ideas, written in your voice.
 - These exams will be a brief 2-3 pages, double-spaced.
- [Attendance and Participation \(12.5%\)](#)

Brief Project Overview

While creative and critical coursework will be detailed on a bi-weekly basis, it will be good to have a head start on some of the cumulative projects that will be built toward throughout the course.

Coursework and Projects

These projects will be shorter and involve a brief, in-class brainstorming. They will be due about every other week (as seen on the schedule below) and a part of larger projects. These assignments will come alongside a rubric, but the important thing to note is that you'll be creating *original* work. You will be brainstorming alongside classmates, which means that the expectation is for strong participation and individual efforts. While you will often be working in groups, your work will be assessed individually.

Examinations

These exams will be more reflective and serve as an opportunity to express what you've learned over the course of the semester. They will be evaluated based on the uniqueness of your ideas and the quality of your writing.

Final Project

For your final individual project, you will deliver a strategic pitch analyzing the distribution and programming of entertainment content across both traditional and digital platforms. This includes assessing how content can be effectively positioned on platforms like television, streaming services, and social media to reach and engage target audiences. You will evaluate brand alignment, audience behavior, and platform strengths to propose a cross-platform distribution plan. The pitch should be clear, creative, and data-informed: demonstrating your ability to think strategically about content, branding, and audience engagement in today's media environment.

You will develop a new brand from scratch for this project.

Case Study Presentation

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to do a short, five-minute presentation on a case study that will be selected from an array of Harvard Business cases and integrate real-world data or trends to strengthen your argument toward stakeholders. A focus on clarity, business logic, and compelling storytelling should be used to support your proposed model.

Schedule

It should be noted that this course schedule is FLEXIBLE and likely will change as the semester progresses. This should serve as an outline, however, for what we are working on in the class and when you are prepared to turn things in.

 = Assignment Due

 = Important Class Note

 = In-Class Activity

WEEK	DATE	CLASS NOTES
ONE	JAN 13th	Syllabus Overview Class Introductions
TWO	JAN 20st	Entertainment Media Audience Analysis Share: Brands
THREE	JAN 27th	Research tools and databases Share: Bad Brands
FOUR	FEB 3rd	Due: Group Case Study Brainstorm: Group Case Study
FIVE	FEB 10th	Audience Analysis on Social Media
SIX	FEB 17th	Content Distribution Usage Rights
SEVEN	FEB 24th	Brainstorm: Brand Fits in Media Media Fit Target Audience
EIGHT	MAR 3rd	Due: Exam #1
NINE	MAR 10th	Brainstorm: Content Distribution Advanced Analytics
TEN	MAR 17th	SPRING BREAK
ELEVEN	MAR 24th	Due: Branding and Media Sales Kickoff Discussing the rest of the semester
TWELVE	MAR 31st	Picking a Brand

		Brainstorm: Brand Concepts Due: Brand Concept and Abbv Pitch
THIRTEEN	APR 7th	Share: Your Pitch Concept Group Work and Case Study
FOURTEEN	APR 14th	CATCH UP DAY Due: Group Casework
FIFTEEN	APR 21st	Due: Final Project Final Class Case Presentations
SIXTEEN	APR 28th	No Class - Exam Days Due: Exam #2 Individual Meetings if Necessary

Other Notes

Honesty Policy

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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult the instructor of this course. Plagiarism will absolutely not be tolerated.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited.

Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student.

Other Resources

[**U Matter, We Care:**](#) If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care 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 services as well as 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 UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

[**UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:**](#) For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.

