

JOU 3101 -- News Reporting

Fall 2015

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Master Lecturer

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OFFICE HOURS: Formal (black-tie-optional) hours will be posted outside my office and on the college Web site (see “Faculty”). **WORD TO THE WISE:** It’s **not** a good idea to try to talk to me in the hour or so before class. I am scary if I’m not prepared.

OBJECTIVES: To provide instruction in news gathering and writing with an eye toward readability and to instill habits of accuracy and responsibility in handling the news. In other words, we will work on your reporting and writing skills. Prerequisites: A grade of C or better in JOU 3109C.

READING: Required: *How I Got That Story*, Foley, 2004. (In course pack with syllabus.)

AP Stylebook, (Your news-writing bible). 2014 or 2015 Edition.

A daily **newspaper**.

Strongly recommended: *Inside Reporting*, Harrower, Any Edition,

When Words Collide, Kessler-McDonald.

A good **dictionary**—AP recommends: Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition (Yes, a book.)

LECTURE: Attendance is expected. I’ll be there; so should you. The material will help you with your writing. Pay attention and take notes. Who knows? You may hear something that will help your reporting and writing. Test dates are listed in the course schedule. Pop quizzes on current events are not. (Note: **These quizzes are NOT EXTRA CREDIT.**) Makeup tests will be given only for **documented** catastrophes beyond your control. Quizzes cannot be made up.

GRADING: **Your course grade is 25 percent lecture and 75 percent lab.** Three tests and a dozen quizzes on current events will make up the lecture grade. An A indicates *superior* performance; B, highly competent, above-average work; C, average; D, below average; E, unsatisfactory. Final grades are calculated by each lab section, following the scale of 90-100, A; 80-89, B; etc. Grade inflation is not part of this course. (I don’t give minus grades in reporting.)

SCHEDULE CHANGES: I will try to stick with the course outline, but changes are possible and will be announced.

PERFORMANCE: Test results will be posted online. You may review your tests during my office hours.

You are encouraged to read ahead. The more you can absorb early in the course, the better your work will be. Since you are expected to start reporting and writing stories right away, this can be especially helpful. Sections on news gathering, interviewing, leads, story organization, grammar/punctuation and features will be particularly helpful.

CAUTION: JOU 3101 is a *professional* course. The rules probably are different than those of other courses. You must not only do the work, but you must demonstrate that you *can* do the work acceptably within a limited time. Grades on stories can be lowered as the result of students misrepresenting themselves or otherwise being unprofessional while working on story assignments. **Do NOT tell sources you are working for the Alligator or any other publication—unless you are.** Students often find sources are more willing to talk if the students are dressed appropriately.

Lab grades are based upon the quality of your reporting, writing and editing. Student coaches in our writing lab (Weimer 1088), in addition to your in-lab coaches and your lab teacher, will help you. You are evaluated for your work. This means you have to use your time efficiently. Your efforts are rewarded for results, just as they are on the job.

Sources: One of the best ways to ensure your stories are fair, accurate and complete is to gather information from a variety of sources. In selecting potential sources for your stories, keep in mind that we live in a diverse, multicultural world. You should make every effort to have your stories reflect that. Talk to a variety of people from different backgrounds, educational levels, etc. to get the complete story.

Students enrolled in this course should not be used as sources in your stories unless they are ***involved directly*** in the story. Relatives, friends, roommates, sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, etc. pose a conflict-of-interest threat when used as sources.

Do your own reporting and writing. Plagiarism—including using material from news releases and information gathered from the Internet without attribution—will result in serious and harsh consequences. Lab instructors will provide procedures for documenting and attributing background for stories. (BTW, copying stuff word-for-word—even *with* attribution—can also be a problem.) You can find the college's official ethical standards at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/acahttp://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/demic/jou/honesty/>. If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, **PLEASE ASK.**

Good luck, and be careful out there. Warning: Boring UF stuff follows.

Lectures and materials in this class are the property of the University/faculty member. Lectures may not be taped without permission from the lecturer and may not be used for any commercial purpose. Students found in violation may be subject to discipline under the University's Student Conduct Code. I use this type size because you are young, and your eyes are still strong.

The **University of Florida Honor Code** was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. 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."

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

Students requesting **classroom accommodation** must register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean will provide documentation to the student who must provide documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.