

JOU4201 Editing Lab
Spring 2013 – [Academic Dates](#)
Sections 1C76; 1C77, 1C78; 1C84; 1C86; 1C90; 1C93; 1C95; 1C97; 1C98.
Integrated News Facility (INF)

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Link to syllabus: <http://bit.ly/inflab>

Please Read: [In This Digital Age, ALL Journalists Are Editors](#)

Office Hours

I am available to you this semester – and beyond – to talk about this class, to talk about journalism and communications, to talk about your career, or to just talk. My office hours are listed on my schedule: [Link to my schedule](#). Or just stop by – my door is pretty much always open, and if I am in and I am free, we can talk.

A Note about Office Hours: As much as humanly possible, I will be available during my office hours either in my office or in the INF. If you come by during office hours and I'm not around, I'm likely to be back soon. If you cannot meet with me during my office hours, please make an appointment. If you make an appointment and then can't keep it, please contact me.

A Note about email, Facebook page and Twitter: I will respond within 24 hours Monday through Friday. I check my email, FB and Twitter at least once in the morning and once in the evening.

Your Role in This Class

First, please understand we are trying something new this semester and we are going to do our best to give you a quality experience. This is an exciting time for both students and faculty as the College more fully enters the digital arena. This class will utilize the INF for the lab component of instruction. And breaking with tradition, this class consists of 10 five-hour sections capped at two and three students only and the sections are distributed two a day – one in the morning and one in the afternoon – Monday through Friday. The co-instructors for these sections are Matt Sheehan and Ron Rodgers, aided by one or more grad students. Students enrolled in these sections still must attend the accompanying lecture on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Here is link to that syllabus: <http://bit.ly/editlecture>

While you are spread out over five days and 10 sections, I will try to find times when we can come together to discuss your work in the INF – possibly at the end of an abbreviated lecture on Tuesday or Thursday. You will also be asked to maintain a virtual discussion through a FB page I have created for this class – **Dr. & The Editors** – at <http://www.facebook.com/ufeds>

It is our plan that the JOU 4201 students will work with the JOU 4202 Advanced Editing students in a reporter/editor capacity reflective of the kind of work editors are now doing in the professional world. This will involve such things as collaborating with students and faculty from the Telecommunications Department, working with other students, reporting stories, writing stories based on scripts and recordings, helping hone stories into publishable form, and ensuring headlines and cutlines are written to style and are correct – ALL ON DEADLINE.

Please Note: The Integrated News Facility is a working, professional newsroom. You will be expected to treat it as if it were a job. That means you cannot skip a work shift as if it were a class. If you are going to be absent for any reason, you must trade with a classmate to take that shift. In addition, business-casual attire, appropriate for a professional newsroom, is required. That means no jeans or shorts.

Your Professor's Role in This Class

Finally, this is a whole new experience for your professor as well. As much as humanly possible given my many other time commitments, I will try to occasionally sit down with you during your shifts. But, for the most part, you are going to be on your own working with whoever is in charge of the news desk at the time and collaborating and working with other students – especially those JOU 4201 students assigned to shifts Monday through Friday. This will require self-discipline on your part. But certainly, if I am not physically present I will try to maintain a virtual presence. Ask if you have any questions about how to proceed. [More about moi if you are interested.](#)

Other Instructors and Their Roles in This Class

Unlike previous classes you are familiar with, your work will also be overseen by other instructors in the INF newsroom, including Prof. Matt Sheehan and one or more graduate teaching assistants who all have experience in online news.

Course Objective

This course's goal is to build on the foundation from your reporting and fact-finding classes to help you become a careful, precise and collaborative editor who understands the many problems of doing journalism that face editors daily. Your experience in the INF and our discussions will involve exploring such things as:

- Understanding the roles of editors and how the contemporary newsroom works.
- Thinking critically and making news judgments.
- Expanding your Web-based skills sets and knowledge, both for fact-checking and keeping up to date on the discourse surrounding the problems and issues of journalism.
- Developing the ability to make informed news judgments when considering stories, graphics, photos and cutlines.
- Hone your ability at writing headlines and cutlines.
- An intense revisiting of editing's first-order – the nuts and bolts of grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, and headline writing.

Required Materials

The only required books to purchase are two you should have from previous journalism classes. The other is online and free:

- [When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style](#) by Lauren Kessler & Duncan McDonald. You are required to bring it to your INF shift.
- **AP Stylebook:** You are required to bring it to your INF shift. May I suggest, however, that you think about subscribing to the online version at <http://www.apstylebook.com/> With this you can get email updates and quickly keyword search for answers.
- To remain consistent, the dictionary we will use in this class is the same as the AP Stylebook cites as the second reference to the stylebook: [Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition](#). See [AP's Note on Dictionaries](#)

Other Materials in the Cloud

- Join the FB page for this class – *Dr. & The Editors* – at <http://www.facebook.com/ufeds> This page will be used for discussions about work in the INF among students from both JOU 4201 and 4202.
- **I am changing the instructions below: Now use the Sakai e-learning assignments for your Weekly Diaries and Links to work. See Sakai under assignment tab.**
- Here is an excellent WordPress worksheet from Prof. Mindy McAdams on the basics of setting up a blog: [v](#)
- **Log in to Sakai** at <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> If you are unfamiliar with Sakai or have any questions, check out the [e-Learning FAQs](#). If you encounter a problem while using e-Learning, you should immediately contact the Help Desk to get assistance.
- Set up your own [Twitter](#) account and send me the link. Hashtag for this class is #ufeds

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Deleted: Set up a [WordPress](#) blog for JOU 4202 Advanced Editing using the [Journalist v1.9](#) theme. Post the url for your blog as a comment to [this post](#). Be sure to activate the link. Your blog's name should be your last name followed by your first name. In settings require all comments to be moderated before they become public. **Deadline:** By end of first class.

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- Go to [my Twitter](#) (ronrodgers) and follow me. For notes on and links to editing readings and resources and about possible jobs or internships, review my tweets daily. And no, I will not in turn follow you.

Class Attendance, Participation and Demeanor

Class attendance is required. More than three absences may result in an incomplete for this course. For sure, after your first absence, every class or shift you miss means your grade drops a level. Arriving late or leaving early will be considered an absence.

Note: University-approved absences must be documented (in advance, if for an approved university activity) according to official university policy. Obtaining written verification for an excused absence is your responsibility.

Academic Integrity

University of Florida students live by an [honor code](#) that prohibits academic dishonesty such as cheating, engaging in unauthorized collaboration and plagiarism. Read it. Students have an affirmative obligation to know what those policies prohibit. If you are unsure, ask me in advance. I will proceed on the assumption you have read the code.

When I discover a violation of academic integrity, my default practice is to fail the student for the entire course and send the details of the case to the Dean of Students Office.

Accommodations

Please let me know immediately if you have any kind of problem or disability that would hinder your work in this course. I will do my best to help you. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) as early in the semester as possible. The center will provide documentation so appropriate accommodations can be made. The center is in Reid Hall, 392-8565.

Caveat

Sometimes a class such as this will deal with controversial topics, so be warned that words that may be considered offensive or ideological may be spoken in the context of the subjects we are discussing. As a teacher and former journalist, I am fairly apolitical and have no political or social agenda beyond my disdain for lies, propaganda, robotic talking points, misinformation and the distortion of the public sphere, so do not try to answer in a way you believe might comport with what I want to hear or read. Feel free to advocate any position as long as you remain respectful of others' opinions, and always be able to defend your view.

BE GOOD

And, finally, I have to say this as part of our contract: You need to conduct yourself in a courteous manner both in and out of class when it comes to dealing with fellow students or your instructor or anyone else that comes into contact with this class. That means any rude, obstructive or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated, and manifestations of same will mean your ouster from the class. I have a zero-tolerance policy on this. Here is a link to the UF Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/default.aspx> The Center is at 3190 Radio Road and the phone number for Appointments & After-Hour Assistance is (352) 392-1575.

Grading

(Anything below 700 is not a passing score.)

Grades	
A	1,000 – 900
B+	899 – 870
B	869 – 830
B-	829 – 800
C+	799 – 770
C	769 – 700

Your final grade is based on **(1)** the work listed below and **(2)** on the admittedly subjective conclusions the instructor and, in this class, those in charge of the news desk, draw from observing your performance. Some of the metrics of that subjective judgment are your attendance, preparation, demeanor, your willingness to work with and collaborate with others, your participation in class or online discussions and your ability to follow instructions and your contributions to our endeavors in whatever form that may take. Failures in this area can lead to a minus 1 to 100 points.

Note: Failure to set up a WordPress blog and send me the url per instructions and failure to set up a Twitter account (and to follow my Twitter account), and to connect to the class FB page (and then to participate in discussions) – all by Friday of the first week of class – can lead to my subtracting up to 10 percent of your total score at the end of the semester.

What You Can Expect During This Semester

No Late Assignments: The first thing I want to make clear is that late assignments will not be accepted and will receive a zero as a grade. Keep in mind that your blog posts have a time stamp when posted. I have too many students in three different classes to attempt to adjust for missed deadlines.

Here I will be evaluating your development as a critical thinking, collaborative editor. To enable me to do so, you will keep a diary of your week's work in the INF on **on that week's assignment in Sakai**. Think deeply about your work as an editor. This is pretty free form – but it has to have substance each week. I will make note if you are not meeting the mark. At the very least, you will discuss the things you are proud of and the things you think you could have done better. Tell me about errors you caught and how you caught them. Tell me what you learned that week and the kinds of things you need to learn to be a good editor. Discuss the skills you have discovered that you need to master to do a better job. Discuss such issues related to online journalism as SEO and analytics – or anything else that arises. Discuss the issues of your collaboration and working with fellow journalists. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. (Keep in mind this is a brand-new class, so it may come to me that there are other things you need to note that I have not yet identified. I will let you know.) In any case, give this some deep thought and don't be superficial.

1.1 Links to Your Work: *Here I will be evaluating your line editing.* To enable me to do so, at the bottom of your diary list links to all work you had any hand in. Add notes after each link to give some context about the reporting and writing of the story – and also what your role in the story was. Discuss any problems or concerns you had with these stories. Here, I will be looking at your basic editing skills such as your headline writing, your cutline writing, and your mastery of such things as concision, fact-checking, grammar, punctuation, spelling, word usage, style (in this case, AP) and numeracy issues. (**Note:** I will use both Twitter and #ufeds and the FB page to highlight common problems, so, once noted, I do not want to see them coming up again.) Because good editors are not just proofreaders, I will also be looking for your mastery of the higher-order editing skills such as:

- Completeness
- Consistency

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- Objectivity (are we being fair?)
- Ethics, taste, sensitivity and law.
- Your ability to make critical news judgments.
- Your ability to spot holes in stories and your efforts to fill them.

**Deadline: Each Friday by 11:30 p.m.
100 points each**

(Grading based on a combination of the quality of your diary and the editing rubric below)

Total points: 9 X the average score of all weekly assignments for a maximum of 900 points

2. Other Instructors' Assessments: Here Prof. Sheehan and the other instructors will be evaluating your work during the semester, and their assessments will become part of your final grade in consultation with me. The rubric we are using for the INF lab portion of your editing grade this semester consists of:

- 50 percent — Newsroom shifts (you showed up on time and when expected for assigned shifts and in the case of breaking news)
- 25 percent — Editor's assessment
- 15 points — Content (it's clean and we don't spot errors)
- 5 points — Self-directed (working independently, or did the editors have to guide you; questions are fine, but if we answer it once you don't ask again)
- 3 points — Demonstrated signs of improvement
- 2 points — Industrious /entrepreneurial / self-starting

Total points: A maximum of 100 points

3. Extra Credit: You may also have the opportunity for extra credit points, **10 per shift**, for shifts worked at times that school is not in session or in any other exigent circumstance.

Grading Rubric for Editing

Here are the sorts of things that can affect your grade on exercises:

1. Misspelled words: 5 points for each mistake. No complaints, please. Open a dictionary or relevant reference. **Automatic zero for a misspelled name.**
2. Missing words and spaces: 5 points off for each missing word or space between words. Words and spaces go missing when you write or edit too fast and don't double-check your work. If you write "I happy you're here" or I amhappy you're here," you lose 5 points.
3. Repeated or extra words: 5 points each time; e.g. "This is a a tough grading standard."
4. Punctuation errors: 5 points off for each error. If you need to review how to use periods, commas, semicolons, etc., study your grammar book, relevant Web sites and the guide at the back of your AP Stylebook.
5. Grammar errors: 5 points off for grammar mistakes, such as subject-verb disagreement. Again, consult the same texts, sites or your peers.
6. Capitalization: 5 points off for each mistake in the basics of capitalization.
7. Numbers: 5 points off for each mistake in basic numbers style.
8. Style: 5 points off for each mistake that violates the AP style — use your stylebook from Day 1.
9. Writing: 5 points lost for flabby writing, extreme awkwardness or bad sentence structure (e.g., run-on sentence, sentence fragment, nonparallel construction, clause-ridden writing). Begin to learn how to edit LINE BY LINE.
10. Factual errors: 30 points for each mistake in fact. This is why reference books and Google search exist.
11. Beyond commas and conjunctions: Allowing a story to exceed legal guidelines (such as libeling a person); to step across ethical boundaries; to ignore matters of taste and/or sensibility; and/or to be insensitive to gender and diversity could mean 10 to 30 points off depending on to what degree I feel (note that this is subjective) you should be aware of these kinds of issues of writing and editing.

ONE KEY RULE TO LIVE BY

Never ever make assumptions about anything in anything you edit based on your or another's reporting. (Yes, sources or source material will mislead you — either intentionally or unintentionally.) Therefore:

- Do not change something because you assume your change is correct. You must *know* it is correct.
- If you run across something you do not think is right, fact-check it.
- If you believe it needs corrected and it cannot be fact-checked for whatever reason, do not allow it to be published.
- Ask the right questions of the right people regarding your concerns.
- Be diplomatic but be assertive if you think something is incorrect and should not be published.