

JOU4202 Advanced Editing – Section 08EB  
Spring 2013 – [Academic Dates](#)  
Tuesday, Periods 7-9 (1:55-4:55 p.m.) in Integrated News Facility (INF)  
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Link to syllabus: <http://bit.ly/4202edit>

**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, students will be required to spend time in the newsroom in lieu of traditional lab sections and the corresponding outside-of-class homework. This new system will require some flexibility on the part of students enrolled in this class.

Students in this class will meet for no more than an hour each week at the first hour of the designated time to discuss their work in the INF. 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> Students will be asked to identify a five-hour shift during which they will work in the INF. It is also our plan that the JOU 4202 students will work in a kind of assistant city editor/news desk 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 and coaching other students from the 10 JOU 4201 editing sections with story ideas, reporting stories, writing stories based on scripts, 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 and work with you. 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. I have email, Twitter, and FB on my smart phone, so I should be available even if I am not near my computer. [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, fact-finding and basic-editing classes to help you reach a higher level as you continue the lifelong process of becoming 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.
- Understanding the straits, challenges and possible opportunities of contemporary journalism.
- Thinking innovatively.
- Thinking critically.
- Expanding your vocabulary, both in general and the jargon of journalism.
- Expanding your Web-based 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 cutlines and headlines – especially for online.
- An intense revisiting of editing's first-order – the nuts and bolts of grammar, punctuation, spelling, style, and headline writing
- Higher-order content-editing skills.

### **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 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.
- 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](#). Your blog's name should be your last name followed by your first name. Be sure to activate the link. In settings require all comments to be moderated before they become public. **Deadline:** By end of first class.
- Here is an excellent WordPress worksheet from Prof. Mindy McAdams on the basics of setting up a blog: [http://www.jtoolkit.com/blogging/wp\\_tips.html](http://www.jtoolkit.com/blogging/wp_tips.html)
- **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
- 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. 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 on 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.

**1. Weekly Diary:** *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 weekly blog posts on your blog. You will slug (title) this **Diary Week 1** and so on. 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 on comments to your blog posts 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 the Twitter hash tag **#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
- 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: 6 X the average score of all weekly assignments for a maximum of 600 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 points — Newsroom shifts
  - You showed up on time and when expected for assigned shifts and in the case of breaking news.
- 50 points — Editors' Evaluation, to include:
  - 20 points content
  - 15 points improvement
  - 10 points self-directed
  - 5 points industriousness

**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.

**4. Story Idea Pitch:** *Here, I will be evaluating whether you are thinking like an editor in thinking critically and making judgments about news.* To enable me to do so, in a separate post each week slugged **Story Idea Week 1** and so on, outline one fully fleshed-out story idea that you think would be good to write about and publish. Explain such things as what the idea is, why it is important and relevant, the sources a reporter would need to talk with, the kinds of questions that need to be answered and any other things you deem important. The following week below your new story idea for that week, fully discuss what happened with the story idea from the previous week once you proposed it to the powers-that-be in the INF.

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

**Total points: The average score of all for a maximum of 100 points**

**5. Resume and Cover Letter:** Your grade is based on how well you present yourself and on whether the resume and letter are flawlessly edited. Feel free to show me early drafts. I want a professional looking and well-edited copy of an updated **Resume**, a template **Cover Letter** that would accompany an application for a position at a media outlet, and a link to your completed LinkedIn account (<http://www.linkedin.com/>). Do your resume and letter on one Word document (not PDF), and when you complete it send it to me on an email attachment.

Check [this](#) out. Also check out Career Links at <http://intelligentediting.wordpress.com/career-links/>

**Due Monday by 11:30 p.m. Week 14  
Total points: 50**

**6. Your Online Portfolio:** Many students from their own efforts or as part of earlier classes have begun to develop an online presence. I would like you to finish this class with an online brand by creating a website and registering an Internet domain name (such as ronaldrogers.org). On this you will build an online portfolio that will include your resume online and links to work you have done in the INF or anywhere else you have worked that you are proud of and that you think reflects your abilities. This is something you ask potential employers to review. Here is a [link](#) to some examples of

online portfolios. Here are [some other examples](#). You might also find these helpful: [Weebly](#) & [3 Easy Tools for Building a Professional Website](#)

**Post your site url to your blog (slug Your Name-Online URL) by Monday before 11:30 p.m.**

**Week 14**

**Total points: 50**

**7. Final Summing-Up Essay:** Finally, you will submit as a blog post a final essay slugged Final Essay describing your experience in the INF this semester. Length is not that important, but this should have substance reflecting your deep thinking about ALL the dimensions of your experience during the semester. Outline and organize it with subheads. It should include at the very least discussion about the things you liked, the things you did not like, and the things you would like to see changed and your suggestions about how they should be changed. It is easy to be critical, but much more difficult to offer solutions. It is best when the two are combined. Again, at the very least, you will discuss the things you are proud of and the things you think you could have done better. Talk about what you have learned and discuss the skills you have discovered that you need to still master to do a better job. Discuss your in-class and out-of-class preparation during earlier semesters for this class. Discuss the issues of your collaboration and working with fellow journalists. Identify your strengths and weaknesses. And at the end, please talk about what you believe are the abilities one needs to be a good editor.

**Deadline: Friday by 11:30 p.m. Week 14**

**Total points: 100**

**Maximum Total 1,000 points**

### **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 it 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.