

Applied Online Journalism

JOU 4946 | Spring 2013 | Section 0781

Wednesday periods 3, 4, 5 (9:35 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.), G037 Weimer Hall

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Office phone: (352) 392-8456 (NOTE: E-mail is better. Much better.)
WEBSITE: Please use UF's e-Learning — <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

Course Description

This senior-level capstone course brings together skills that students have acquired in preceding journalism courses and requires students to apply those skills to actual newswork for digital and online platforms. Students will demonstrate that they are ready to work as journalism professionals and endeavor to fill any remaining gaps in their skill set.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify journalism stories that are well suited to enhanced treatment in digital and online media.
- Evaluate their own journalism stories (before and during reporting) for potential enhancements or non-text storytelling techniques.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of online story elements in professionally produced journalism stories.
- Use online data resources to supplement reporting and analysis of journalism stories.
- Specify enhancements and non-text storytelling techniques that will improve a particular story's value to the audience.
- Produce some common types of enhancements and interactive storytelling features.
- Evaluate tradeoffs (e.g., deadline vs. effort required) in production of non-traditional story elements for digital and online media.

Attendance and Attitude

Students are expected to show respect for one another and for the instructor. Attendance and arriving on time for class are necessary. *Lateness and absences will result in a lower final grade.* If you have been absent, you are responsible for finding out about any missed material by going to the instructor's office hours. These matters will not be handled via e-mail.

Mobile devices must be turned OFF during class. Do not check text messages, e-mail, Facebook, etc., during class, as your instructor considers this quite rude and therefore grounds for disciplinary action. Give your full and undivided attention to anyone who is speaking in class, including your fellow students.

When a computer is used during class, students use of social media and other sites not related to classwork is prohibited. When the instructor or another student is speaking to the class, all students are expected to give full attention to the speaker.

Equipment

All students are expected to have their own laptop computer (preferably a MacBook Pro) with necessary software installed. Students are also expected to own a good-quality digital audio recorder and a good-quality point-and-shoot camera (a DSLR is acceptable).

Required Books

No books are required for this course. Many readings from online sites will be assigned.

Course Deadlines and Makeup Work

Late assignments are not accepted. This means that an assignment submitted late is graded as a zero. Assignments are not accepted via e-mail unless requested by the instructor. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, advance notice and written documentation are required. Makeup work is permitted only in extreme circumstances and when written documentation is provided in a timely manner.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. It will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, to the Dean of this college, and to the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies—and *it will result in a failing grade* for the course.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Copying and pasting the code, words or images of others and presenting them as your own.
- Using any work done by another person and submitting it for a class assignment.
- Submitting work you did for another class.

UF Student Honor Code

> <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

Students with Disabilities

Students requesting accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodations.

UF Disability Resource Center

> <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Course Requirements

Assignments and deadlines will be posted online on UF's e-Learning site.

> WEBSITE: <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>

Project 1: Google map with Google Fusion Tables	10 points
Project 2: Student proposes	20 points
Project 3: Student proposes	20 points
Project 4: Student proposes	20 points
Weekly assignments (totaled and averaged)	20 points
Class attendance and participation	10 points
TOTAL = 100 points	

Project 1: Google map

Produce an online map of all schools in your assigned county, following instructions given in class. Later in the semester you will be required to add enhancements to this map as part of the weekly assignments.

Projects 2, 3 and 4

To allow students to exercise creativity and explore topics that are important in their assigned counties, each of these projects will be specified in a collaboration between the student and the instructor, with input from the class. Students will not be permitted to propose writing projects, or projects that consist predominantly of text. Students are advised to find inspiration for their project ideas in the online and digital work of award-winning journalism websites such as *The Texas Tribune* (texastribune.org). At least one project must fit the category of data journalism. All projects must be about K-12 education.

Weekly assignments

The assignment given in Week 1 (due Week 2) is an indication of the workload and expectations for these assignments. They will be graded on a 0-1-2 scale, which is almost like pass/fail but with a little margin for goodwill. So if it's fine, it's 2 points. If it's not acceptable, 0 points. On the edge, 1 point.

Class attendance and participation

Points will be subtracted if you miss more than one scheduled class meeting, are chronically late, leave early, or show inattention during lectures or discussions. Participation is expected; points will be subtracted if you do not contribute regularly to class discussions. Everyone starts with 10 points.

Grades and Grading Policies

92–100 percent	A	72–77 percent	C
90–91 percent	A–	70–71 percent	C–
88–89 percent	B+	68–69 percent	D+
82–87 percent	B	62–67 percent	D
80–81 percent	B–	60–61 percent	D–
78–79 percent	C+	59 percent or below	E

“Incomplete” grades

A grade of “I” will not be assigned in this course unless the student has documented extreme circumstances, such as a grave medical emergency. Assigned work must be completed *and submitted* on time. If it is not, then the grade for the assignment will be zero (0).

“Extra credit”

No work will be considered for so-called extra credit in this course.

UF Policies about Student Grades

> <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Schedule and Required Work

Please note that many important details will be posted online and do not appear herein.

Week 1 | Jan. 9

Introduction and expectations. What are stories? What is reporting? Assignment of counties.

Week 2 | Jan. 16

Discussion of assigned counties and the websites of school districts.

Discussion of the assigned video.

Introduction to Google Fusion Tables.

Week 3 | Jan. 23

Project 1 due: Google map of all schools.

Guest speaker: Ann Christiano, Professor, Public Relations, and Karel Endowed Chair in Public Interest Communications. Topic: Communication in the public interest.

Week 4 | Jan. 30

Project 2 discussions (proposals and ideas). By now you should have made some contacts within your school district and attended at least one public meeting, either school board or PTA.

Week 5 | Feb. 6

Project 2 updates (progress reports).

Guest speaker: David Miller, Ph.D., Professor of Research and Evaluation Methodology (REM), College of Education, UF. Topic: FCATs and standardized testing.

Week 6 | Feb. 13

Class will likely not meet this week. TBA.

Week 7 | Feb. 20

Guest speaker: Sarah Gonzalez, Miami-based education reporter for StateImpact Florida (<http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/>).

Week 8 | Feb. 27

Project 2 due.

Project 3 discussions (proposals and ideas).

Guest speaker: John O'Connor, Tampa-based education reporter for StateImpact Florida (<http://stateimpact.npr.org/florida/>).

Week 9 | March 6

Spring Break—no classes.

Week 10 | March 13

Project 3 updates (progress reports).

Guest speaker: TBA.

Week 11 | March 20

Project 3 working session.

Week 12 | March 27

Project 3 due.

Project 4 discussions (proposals and ideas).

Week 13 | April 3

Project 4 updates (progress reports).

Week 14 | April 10

Project 3 working session.

Week 15 | April 17

Project 3 working session.

Week 16 | April 24

Project 4 due.

Finals Week (May 1)

There is no final exam in this course.

NOTE: Details about each week's assignments, expectations, in-class events (such as guest speakers), etc., will be posted as links in e-Learning, in the **Resources** section. Every effort will be made to post only one document (one link) per week. Each week's document will remain online for the full semester.

In e-Learning, the **Resources** link appears on the left side, near the **Gradebook** link.