

Journalists' Toolkit 1

JOU 6344 | Fall 2012 | Section 1F02 | 1098 Weimer Hall
Tuesdays 1:55–4:55 p.m. (periods 7, 8 and 9)

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WEBSITE: <http://jtoolkit.wordpress.com/>

Course Description

This course prepares the student to work as a journalist in today's newsrooms, where the online and digital platforms are at least as important as the traditional print or broadcast platforms. *It is not a Web design course.* (If you want to learn how to make Web pages, please see the syllabus for MMC 5015.) The prerequisite is reporting experience. If you have completed our boot camp course, that is sufficient. The emphasis is on gathering assets in the field and then using those assets to tell a true story.

Course Objectives

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

- Gather information and assets (sound and image) for use in online and other digital journalism.
- Edit and produce audio, photographs, and other digital assets for use in journalism storytelling.
- Conduct productive interviews for audio, video, and text formats.
- Identify and discuss best practices for producing digital journalism stories.
- Use appropriate tools (software, hardware) for multimedia journalism reporting and production.
- Explain and critique current storytelling practices in journalism.

Equipment

All students are expected to have their own basic digital audio, photo and video equipment, as well as a MacBook Pro with necessary software installed.

Required Books

Kern, J. (2008). *Sound Reporting: The NPR Guide to Audio Journalism and Production*. University of Chicago Press.

Kobré, K. (2008). *Photojournalism: The Professionals' Approach* (6th ed.). Burlington, MA: Focal Press.

Yau, N. (2011). *Visualize This: The FlowingData Guide to Design, Visualization, and Statistics*. Indianapolis: Wiley.

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* (see Course Requirements, below). 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. Students are not permitted to use a computer during class unless instructed to do so.

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. No work for "extra credit" is accepted.

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 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

Please make sure to check the course website at least once a week. If you rely only on a printed copy, you may miss a change in the schedule.

- > WEBSITE: <http://jtoolkit.wordpress.com/>

Audio

Audio assignments are graded on both the quality of the content and the quality of the sound. Editing errors (such as cutting off a person's sentence or breath before it is completed, or failure to insert a pause where one is necessary, or dead silence instead of room noise) will decrease the assignment grade. Ethical breaches are unacceptable.

- Edited audio interview 1 (33%)
- Edited audio interview 2 (33%)
- Audio in audio and photo story (34%)

Photojournalism

Photojournalism assignments are graded on both the quality of the content and the quality of the image. You will be coached on how to improve, and you are expected to submit new work if your first submission is poor. Ethical breaches are unacceptable.

- Photo 1 (33%)
- Photo 2 (33%)
- Photos *and captions* in audio and photo story (34%)

Data Journalism

Data journalism assignments are graded on accuracy and professionalism. You will basically be following instructions to achieve a publishable outcome. Thus, your attention to detail and doing it the right way will determine your grade.

- Data 1: Scraping and graph (50%)
- Data 2: Map and Google Fusion Tables (50%)

Blog and Your Personal Brand

Various blog posts are assigned throughout the semester. Each one will be marked on a scale of 100. Marks above 80 are awarded for following all instructions and writing in a clear, correct and interesting manner. In addition to the grades for blog posts, your blog overall will be evaluated for its success in representing you as a competent professional in the journalism field.

- Blog posts (50%)
- Personal brand / how your blog represents you (50%)

Project

You have a lot of leeway for your project. The main point is for you to create something new (using the skills covered in this course) that you can be proud of, that you can show to professionals who might offer you a job.

- It must be journalism (not necessarily hard news).
- It must be new, and NOT something you are also getting a grade on in another class.
- It must be fully in the realm of **Toolkit 1**, meaning: digital, Web or mobile, *not* TV, *not* text (e.g. articles), *not* radio.

The project is 20 percent of your grade for the course. Therefore, it needs to be something in which it looks like you invested care, attention, background work, planning, etc. The project probably requires about five weeks of work to receive a B+ or higher.

Note: It's not that you can't use any text or any audio. It's that you can't rely on those to tell *the bulk of the story*. In particular, you cannot produce a long text. Separated short blurbs are good. What you need to think about is *a whole surrounding collection* of items — maybe tweets collected in a Storify? A timeline history? Many small pieces, loosely joined — and arranged in a smart way that makes the whole greater than the sum of the parts. You can use all kinds of Web tools to do this.

Class attendance and participation

Points will be subtracted if you miss more than one (1) class meeting, are chronically late, leave class early, or show inattention. Participation is expected; points will be subtracted if you do not contribute.

There will be a discussion of the reading during each class meeting. If your comments or questions demonstrate that you read and thought about the reading before coming to class that day, these points will be awarded to you.

Grades and Grading Policies

Audio	20 points
Photojournalism	20 points
Data journalism	10 points
Blog and your personal brand	20 points
Project	20 points
Class attendance and participation	10 points
TOTAL	100 points

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

UF Policies about Student Grades

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

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Please note that many important details (including assignment details) are on the website (<http://jtoolkit.wordpress.com/>) and do not appear herein.

Week 1 | Aug. 28

Introduction to the course, road map, first assignments.

BRING AUDIO RECORDER and HEADPHONES to class! We will be using them.

Also bring your MACBOOK. You will need to use it too.

Week 2 | Sept. 4

Audio

READ Kern, Chapter 18, "Beyond Radio" (plus optional readings on the online syllabus)

DUE Blog post 1

DUE Edited audio interview 1

Week 3 | Sept. 11

Audio

READ Kern, Chapters 1, 2, and pp. 211–223 in Chapter 12 (plus optional readings on the online syllabus)

DUE Blog post 2

DUE Pitch (document) for interview 2

Week 4 | Sept. 18

Professor McAdams will be at the Online News Association conference. Class does not meet.

READ Kern, Chapter 13 (read this **before** you edit audio interview 2)

DUE Edited audio interview 2

Week 5 | Sept. 25

Photojournalism: People

BRING your CAMERA and USB cable or card reader to class! You will be using them.

Camera BATTERIES must be fully charged, or bring extras. MEMORY CARD must have 2 GB free.

Bring your MacBook also.

READ Kobre, p. vi and Chapter 1 (including all photo captions and all boxed text)

READ Kobre, Chapter 15

DUE Blog post 3

Week 6 | Oct. 2

Photojournalism: Editing

BRING your MacBook to class with Photoshop loaded, activated, and ready to go

READ Kobre, Chapter 7 (including all photo captions and all boxed text)

DUE Photo 1

Week 7 | Oct. 9

Photojournalism: Stories

READ Kobre, Chapter 11 (including all photo captions and all boxed text)

Week 8 | Oct. 16

Data journalism: Introduction

BRING your MacBook to class

READ Yau, Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2

DUE Photo 2 (simple photo story)

Week 9 | Oct. 23

Data journalism: Scraping

BRING your MacBook to class with Excel loaded, activated, and ready to go

READ Yau, Chapter 3

DUE Blog post 4

Week 10 | Oct. 30

Data journalism: Fusion Tables

BRING your MacBook to class; if you do not have a Google (Gmail) account, create one

READ Yau, Chapter 8 (maps)

DUE Data 1

Week 11 | Nov. 6

Audio and photo story

READ Kern, Chapter 5

READ Kobre, Chapter 10 (including all photo captions and all boxed text)

DUE Project pitch (document)

DUE Data 2

Week 12 | Nov. 13

Audio and photo story

READ Kern, Chapter 6

READ Kobre, Chapter 12 (including all photo captions and all boxed text)

Week 13 | Nov. 20

On-the-spot video interviews (vox pop)

BRING your CAMERA and USB cable or card reader to class! We will be using them.

Bring your MacBook too.

Camera BATTERIES must be fully charged, or bring extras. MEMORY CARD must have 2 GB free.

READ Kobre, Chapter 13 (including all photo captions and all boxed text).

DUE Audio and photo story

Week 14 | Nov. 27

Project work

Week 15 | Dec. 4

Project work

Finals week deadline: Dec. 11

DUE Project

UF Dates (Fall 2012)

Classes begin Aug. 22

Drop/Add Aug. 22–28

Classes end Dec. 5

Final exams Dec. 8–14

Sept. 3 Labor Day

Nov. 9–10 Homecoming

Nov. 12 Veterans Day

Nov. 21–24 Thanksgiving