

## Course description:

This course will teach you the importance of multimedia reporting and how to add audio and visual content to your stories. We will also discuss the importance of multimedia content in news organizations and ways to present it.

## Course objectives:

We want you to be well-rounded journalists by the time you leave UF. The goal of this course is to prepare you to do more than write a story when on assignment. We want you to use your judgment as a journalist to know when an audio clip, photo/photo gallery or video is needed to complement a story.

## Projects:

There will be four projects in this course: audio, photography, video and mobile reporting. Each project will have a rubric and will be graded based on those requirements. Projects can be submitted to, and published by, WUFT.org, the Alligator or other established media for up to 10 points of extra credit per assignment. This does not include a blog ran by your friend, so when in doubt about whether an outlet counts, email the instructor.

The projects will be graded as either publishable or not publishable based on the rubric. You will be provided feedback if your project is not publishable. If your project is graded not publishable, you have the opportunity to replace that grade by doing a second story within exactly two weeks of receiving your original grade. The final project will not have the option of a replacement grade. You will turn in your projects by uploading them to Sakai. Each will be turned in with text portions that will be explained with each assignment and will be solely for a completion grade.

## Class structure:

This is an online class. Class time will be at your leisure, which could be good or bad. It means you should set up an alarm on your phone calendar or make sure you schedule time to stay current with the materials. You will receive reminders on due dates in advance, and they are included in this syllabus.

**Instructor:** Michael Stone  
**Email:** [mjs3v@ufl.edu](mailto:mjs3v@ufl.edu)  
**Twitter:** @Michael\_\_Stone (two underscores)

**Office hours:** Tuesday, 1:30-3:30 p.m.  
Room G035 in Weimer Hall (take the Weimer stairs to the bottom floor, turn left, and keep walking until you see a sign saying G035). Appointments are also welcome.

## Evaluation

**Three projects (20 each):** 60 points  
**Final project:** 40 points  
**Publication:** Up to +10 per project

## Missed assignments and late work:

Submissions to Sakai can be made up to and including 11:59 p.m. on the due date. Projects can still be turned in a day late but no later than 11:59 p.m. the day after the original due date—in other words, 24 hours extra. That day grace period comes with an automatic five-point deduction.

If a deadline extension is needed because of an illness, injury, accident, etc., it may be awarded if official documentation is provided to the instructor. To be fair to all students, there are no exceptions concerning documentation. If at all possible, the instructor needs to be notified before the deadline is missed and why. It is also recommended that you contact the Division of Student Affairs when missing class because of an illness or other reason. The office provides courtesy emails to all of your instructors about your absence and can be reached at 352-392-1261. Upon returning, an office visit is required so you can provide documentation to your instructor and arrange a new deadline.

## Grading scale:

A	90-100	C+	77-79	D	60-66
B+	87-89	C	70-76	E	59 and below
B	80-86	D+	67-69	*scores of .5 or more will be rounded up	

## Schedule:

### Weeks 1 - 2 (Jan. 6 – Jan. 17) - Introduction to Multimedia

This section will outline the basics of multimedia reporting and why news organizations are moving quickly to be proficient in audio, photo and video production. You will brainstorm about which stories from your reporting class you will use for the four projects.

### Weeks 3 - 5 (Jan. 20 – Feb. 7) - Audio

We will focus on audio recording with natural sound to tell a story. These audio bites will be complimentary to your articles. We will learn how to edit sound, the practices of gathering good audio and how audio can tell a story.

**\*Project I due on Feb. 10**

### Weeks 6 - 8 (Feb. 10 – Feb. 28) - Photography

You'll perfect the rule of thirds, focal point, filling the frame and more. Photography is a powerful tool to tell a story. We'll discuss how photojournalism is becoming increasingly valuable in journalism.

**\*Project II due on Feb. 28 (Spring Break is Week 9)**

### Weeks 10 - 12 (March 10 – March 28) - Video storytelling

We will continue to stretch our eyes for good storytelling with video. You will learn how to edit a basic interview with B-roll and publish it to the Web.

**\*Project III due on March 31**

### Weeks 13 - 15 (March 31 - April 21) - Mobile journalism

This section will incorporate all previous sections into your final project—taking a story and adding audio, photo and video to compliment it for online publication.

**\*Project IV due on April 21**

## Advice:

As we all know, technology can crash when least expected and wanted, so anticipate this by continuously saving projects and giving yourself more than enough time to turn them in. The excuse “I could not turn in my project on time because it would not save/upload” will not be accepted. Also, read the checklist provided with each project to make sure you handed in everything and named your materials correctly. If you have questions about anything, visit me during office hours.

## Class policies:

Please be respectful of your classmates’ work. We might be looking at it as examples, and while it is important we point out how to improve reporting, it is even more important to do it in a respectful and constructive way. It is much easier to make a comment online than in person.

## Resources:

### Use Your Smartphone

Although you can use a camera, an audio recording device and a video camera, you can use a smartphone to do all three.

The best smartphone is an iPhone because it has more and better apps for journalists.

- **Audio:** A good app to capture audio is [Voice Record Pro](#) (\$3 for ad-free version).
- **Video:** A terrific video app is [Videolicious](#) because it lays in B-roll easily. A [Poynter demo](#) shows you how to use it. So long as you keep videos under 60 seconds and 10 clips, the app is free. Follow [these tips](#) for using your iPhone as a video camera.

Android phones have fewer apps available.

- **Audio:** A popular app for capturing audio in person is [Tape-A-Talk Pro](#) (\$3). A free app to capture audio during a phone interview is [vRecorder](#).
- **Video:** About the only video app option you have is [AndroVid Pro](#) (\$2), which can edit and string together clips but cannot handle B-roll.

## Technology training:

Technology in media and beyond evolves in the blink of an eye, so in your career, you'll have to evolve with it. As such, this class shouldn't be viewed as one that teaches specific pieces of equipment or editing programs. So if you want to use more advanced software, the beginning of the semester is the time. If you're unfamiliar with software but want to use it, take advantage of UF's [Lynda.com subscription](#). There, you'll find step-by-step tutorials on a wide array of programs, including basic ones that can still produce professional work and can be used in the course. Those are: Audacity or Garage Band for audio, iPhoto for photos, and iMovie for video. Some other resources include: Professor Mindy McAdams’ [tutorial](#) on the five-shot approach to video; instructions about the [rule of thirds](#) in composing pictures and video; Kodak's [tips](#) on how to take better pictures; and Vimeo’s training library to learn how to shoot better [video](#).

## **Multimedia standards:**

Here are the technical requirements for an A project for multimedia:

- Photo: Subject is well lit, in focus and dominates the frame; photo is well composed and cropped, using rule of thirds or a clear focal point; and scene is not altered, meaning, for example, that you did not add in objects with photo-editing tools that would change how you saw your subject with your own eyes.
- Audio: Hold the recording device close to the speaker so that the voice is clear and crisp; any background sound either enhances recording or is not distracting.
- Video: All of the photo and audio requirements, plus camera is held still and records unrehearsed action suitable to the story being told; A-roll is interview of subject; B-roll shots vary (wide, medium and tight), are about 5 seconds each, and either match interview or do not distract from the words.

## **Photo captions:**

Your photos must be accompanied by a caption that names all identifiable people. Write a two-sentence caption, with the first sentence using a present-tense verb describing the action. The captions will be submitted through Sakai when you turn in your photos.

## **Fact errors:**

Making a fact error(s) on a project will result in a five-point deduction, or a 25 percent loss, for that project. This includes, but is not limited to, wrong facts and statistics, misspellings of proper names, and misquotes. Please proofread and fact-check your information.

## **Academic dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty of any kind will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs, and it will result in a failing grade for the course. Academic dishonesty includes using others' work without permission and proper credit. This includes copying and using text, artwork, design, video, photographs, music, sound and visuals, etc., you find online or elsewhere. You must gain formal permission to use third-party material from the author/publisher and properly credit the material in assignments. And you must attribute information you find online and in print.

If you use someone else's words, image(s), artwork or video, permission must be obtained in writing (i.e. email) from an author/publisher and submitted to the professor along with your project. You must abide by the university's honor code as well as the Department of Journalism's policy on academic honesty found at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/>.

## **Students with disabilities:**

Students requesting accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when making a request for accommodations. Please see the instructor within the first two weeks of class to request accommodations.

## **Grading policies:**

All information related to grading can be found in UF's undergraduate catalog:  
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

## **Evaluations:**

Students can provide feedback on the instructor and the course itself at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.