

# Professor Mike Foley    JOU 4111—Advanced Reporting Spring 2014

Office: Weimer 3047  
Office phone: 392-0410  
e-mail: [mfoley@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:mfoley@jou.ufl.edu)

Welcome to Advanced Reporting.

**GOALS:** To help you produce quality news and news feature stories for publication. To give you experience writing real stories, enhancing your news gathering and writing skills. To produce clips for your portfolio and as possible entries in the Hearst Journalism Awards Program.

**PREREQUISITES:** Successful completion—at least a C—of JOURNALISM 3101-Reporting. My or the department chair's permission.

**FORMAT:** The class is scheduled for three periods, but it usually won't last that long. **Much of the work will be in one-on-one consultations with me.** These should occur at the idea, writing and draft stages of stories. My office hours are posted, but as many of you know I am around a lot more than that. Call or e-mail to make sure I'm available.

**ATTENDANCE:** Class discussions will help you better understand the craft, mission and goals of reporting and writing. I plan to show up every week; you should, too. **If you miss more than one class without permission**—in advance—from me, you will be dropped and/or receive a failing grade. Emergencies happen, and I am an understanding person; so if there are problems, let's talk. (I don't like to take roll, but I'll force myself.

**IN GENERAL,** class discussions will focus on the story ideas, development and writing; current events, journalism issues, assigned readings and stories I will bring to class.

**READING:** “**Somebody Told Me, The Newspaper Stories of Rick Bragg.**” Vintage Books, a division of Random House, and “**America's Best Newspaper Writing,**” second edition, by Roy Peter Clark and Christopher Scanlan. I will assign, and we will discuss several of these stories over the course of the semester. A daily newspaper.

**INITIATIVE and HARD WORK** are absolutely necessary for success in this course. I am ready to work with you, but you have to produce the ideas, drafts and materials.

**PLAGIARISM, POSING, FACT ERRORS** and other ethical transgressions will be dealt with severely. If you have any questions, doubts, qualms, misgivings—ask me. (Also see UF stuff on page 3.)

**SOURCES:** In selecting potential sources for your stories, keep in mind that we live in a diverse, multicultural world. You should make every effort to have your stories reflect

that. Talk to a variety of people from different backgrounds, educational levels etc. to get the complete story.

**GRADING:** I won't *grade* stories in the traditional JOU 3101 sense. (Aren't you glad?) I will *edit* stories, make suggestions for improvement and return them so you can get them ready for publication. Over the course of semester, students must produce three stories. (This figure can be modified based on the scope and depth of the stories.) The goal is to get stories published or, at least, in publishable shape. You and I will work together to get them published when we agree they are ready and will appeal to an editor. In general, the grading will be as follows:

- Class discussion project (see next page): up to 15 percent
- Class participation: 10 percent
- Each story: up to 25 percent

To pass, **you must turn in three stories**. One must be **government-related** in some way. One must be a **personality profile** on an interesting person or a person who has had something interesting happen to him or her or a person who does something interesting. (Key word: *interesting*) The third story is a topic of your choice. You must get your topics approved **in advance** by me.

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Read the assignments and be prepared to discuss them in class. Fair warning: You will be called on to talk, so be ready to contribute. Your participation in the discussions is important and necessary if you want a good grade.

Given the **subjective nature** of the course and its content, individual cases could vary. (*Everyone* is an individual case.) Sloppy, unprofessional, last-minute and substandard stories will not be considered. I expect a good-faith effort. (C'mon. This is what you want to do with your life, right?)

### **DEADLINES:**

First story due: **Jan. 30**

Second story due: **Feb. 27**

Third story due: **April 3**

Deadlines for rewrites will be set after I edit your stories.

\*\*\*\*\***Last copy accepted: April 17**\*\*\*\*\*

**Note: If you miss a deadline without advance approval, your opportunity to turn in that story—and pass the course—is lost.**

## CLASS DISCUSSION PROJECT

Students will research, prepare and present to the class a report on an aspect of the newsgathering and/or writing process. Topics are up to you, but must be cleared in advance with me. Here are some general topics that could be covered, but the list is by no means complete. Surprise me. The project should involve a *specific aspect or issue* within the topic—not the entire topic.

Interviewing	Rewriting/polishing
Writing ledes	Inverted pyramid
Organizing stories	Anecdotal ledes
Writing endings	Foreign correspondence
Getting/choosing good quotes	Projects and/or series
Finding sources/getting to talk to them	Feature writing
Finding good stories	Sports writing
Writing description	Business writing
Writing narrative	A good editor
Covering a beat	A good internship
Writing on deadline	Entrepreneurial journalism

Students can gather and use material from talking to professional journalists, reading about the topic and even relating their own experiences. What I am looking for is some good advice for your fellow students and material to frame class discussions. You don't need to fill a class period. In fact, **15-20 minutes'** worth is about right. You should have enough material to share and lead a class discussion of techniques, skills and talents that good reporters use to get and write good stories.

You are welcome to stop by my office or e-mail me any time to talk about any aspect of the class.

### **Official UF stuff (Boring but important)**

The University of Florida Honor Code was passed by the Student Body in 1995.

Preamble: In adopting this Honor Code, the students of the University of Florida recognize that academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. A student-run Honor Court and faculty support are crucial to the success of the Honor Code. The quality of a University of Florida education is dependent upon the community acceptance and enforcement of the Honor Code.

The Honor Code: We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

"On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment."

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