

JOU 4201, Editing

Spring 2014, all sections / In the Innovation News Center (Weimer 2300) and CSE E222

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Course Description

This is a newsroom experience course that produces and edits journalism in the Innovation News Center (Weimer 2300). Half the semester is spent editing as a web producer. The other half is spent producing material for other Web producers to edit.

The INC is a professional newsroom for WUFT and WRUF stations and websites. These are not campus stations. They are professional news outlets serving adults in north central Florida. So for this class, think and act like a professional journalist. In other words, treat this like a job. If you do, you will get better clips, you will better prepare yourself for a job – and you'll get a better grade.

Because this is a real newsroom, your work day will vary. One minute you could be editing a story for WUFT.org, and the next you could be running out the door to chase breaking news. One minute you could be turning in a story, and the next you could be explaining it on live TV.

Course Outcomes

By the end of the semester, students will:

- Produce at least five enterprise, multimedia stories publishable for a general adult audience on WUFT.org.
- Function effectively as a web producer in a live newsroom (tighten flabby writing, check facts, question assertions, find omissions, ensure fairness and write compelling headlines).
- Correctly interpret and report numbers (average, percentage, area, volume, per capita, basic probability, risk, etc.).

Course Intranet

Most details about how to function in the INC – from finding stories to writing headlines – are on the WUFT News [intranet](#). (The username is *newsroom* and the password is *newsroom*.)

Required Equipment

All you need is a smartphone with recommended apps (see the WUFT News [intranet](#) for details) or a point-and-shoot camera and an audio recorder.

Required Textbooks

None.

Because you have no textbook expense, consider joining [Zipcar](#) if you don't already have a vehicle so you can get off campus to pursue a story. Zipcar is a car-sharing program that has several vehicles on campus you can rent by the hour for a price that includes gasoline and insurance. UF students can join Zipcar for \$25 (that's half-price), which includes \$35 in driving credit.

Calculator

You can use a nonprogrammable calculator for the numeracy classes and test in lecture. Examples include solar calculators, \$5 calculators and scientific calculators such as the TI-30. Bottom line: If the calculator is just a calculator and it displays only one row of numbers, it's acceptable.

Unacceptable are any devices that can store data. Forbidden are programmable calculators with a multi-line display, such as the TI-84. So, too, is any kind of cellphone, smartphone, tablet, music player or e-reader. In other words, your iPhone is not allowed.

Student Roles

The class requires every student to fill two roles: Web producer and content creator.

1. **Web producers** work in the INC during the section for which they registered. They also come to lecture during periods E1 and E2 on Monday nights. The only homework Web producers have is to view the instructional material on the WUFT News [intranet](#) during their first week in the INC. Each student must work seven INC shifts.
2. **Content creators** neither come to the INC nor lecture. Instead, they spend their time creating a story that is due by email by the start of the section time for which they registered. (UF policy calls for 3 hours of homework for each 1 hour in class, or a total of 12 hours per week. Content creators can spend all 12 hours on their stories.) Each student must produce six stories; only the top five will count toward the grade.

Class Rotation

Each section will be split in half by random assignment to be in the Orange or Blue groups.

1. Those in the Orange Group will start the semester as Web producers.
2. Those in the Blue Group will start the semester as content creators.
3. The week before spring break, the two groups will switch roles.

To see which group you are in (Orange or Blue), check the Sakai website for the course on Friday, Jan. 3. Students enrolled as of that date will be split by random assignment, by section.

Overall Schedule

Week of	Web Producers					Story Creators				
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri
Jan. 6	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1					
Jan. 13	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1
Jan. 20	(open)	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2
Jan. 27	INC 3	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3
Feb. 3	INC 4	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4
Feb. 10	INC 5	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5
Feb. 17	INC 6*	INC 7	INC 7	INC 7	INC 7	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6
Feb. 24	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1					
March 3	(open)	(open)	(open)	(open)	(open)	<i>Spring break</i>				
March 10	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1
March 17	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2
March 24	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3
March 31	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4
April 7	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5
April 14	INC 7	INC 7	INC 7	INC 7	INC 7	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6
April 21	(open)	(open)	(open)	(open)	(open)					
April 28	(open)	(open)	(open)	(open)	(open)					

Example

Let’s say you signed up for the section that meets Thursday mornings, periods 2 through 6.

If you are assigned to the Orange Group, you will begin the semester as a Web producer. Your first INC shift would be the week of Jan. 6 – so that would be 8:30 a.m. sharp on Jan. 9. You also will attend the Monday night lecture starting Jan. 6. Your last shift in the INC will be the week of Feb. 17, or on Feb. 20. You will then shift to story-creator mode. Your first story will be due by email at 8:30 a.m. sharp (the start time of your section) the week of March 10, or on Thursday, March 13.

Those in the Blue Group will begin the semester as content creators. You won’t come to lecture or to the INC. Instead, you will work on stories, the first of which will be due at 8:30 a.m. sharp (the start time of your section) on Thursday, Jan. 16. Your INC shifts begin on Feb. 27.

Extra Credit Shifts

The dates marked in green are open dates in which either no one is scheduled or UF is on a holiday but the INC is open and we need volunteer Web producers.

Those in the two Monday sections who are also in the Orange Group will miss an INC shift on Jan. 20 because no classes are held in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Therefore, those students get first crack at one of the open dates to work their seventh shift – if they inform TA [Greenberry Taylor](#) of their choice by Jan. 15.

After Jan. 15, any student can sign up for a shift on one of the green dates as extra credit worth up to 3 percentage points, as long as space is available. Because of the size of the class, no student can sign up for more than 1 extra-credit shift. Sign up by contacting TA [Greenberry Taylor](#).

Lecture Schedule (CSE Room E222)

Date	Who comes?	Orange Group	Blue Group
Jan. 6	Orange Group	Editing practice	
Jan. 13	Orange Group	Numeracy 1&2: Percent and average	
Jan. 20	<i>Campus closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day</i>		
Jan. 27	Orange Group	Numeracy 3&4: Comparisons and abuse	
Feb. 3	Orange Group	Numeracy 5&6: Probability and polling	
Feb. 10	Orange Group	Math exam	
Feb. 17	No lecture		
Feb. 24	Blue Group		Editing practice
March 3	<i>Campus closed for spring break</i>		
March 10	Blue Group		Numeracy 1&2: Percent and average
March 17	Blue Group		Numeracy 3&4: Comparisons and abuse
March 24	Blue Group		Numeracy 5&6: Probability and polling
March 31	Blue Group		Math exam
April 7	No lecture		
April 14	No lecture		
April 21	No lecture		

Assignments and Grading

Story creator performance (see section below for details) 40%
 Web producer performance (see section below for details) 40%
 Numeracy exam (see schedule above) 20%
 (Grades will be posted on the course website on Sakai)

Grading Scale

	Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent
		B+	89-87%	C+	79-77%	D+	69-67%
A	100-93%	B	86-83%	C	76-73%	D	66-63%
A-	92-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-80%	D-	62-60%

The minimum score to pass this course is a C, or 72.5. Scores are rounded to the nearest whole point: 89.4 rounds down to 89 (B+) while 89.5 rounds up to 90 (A-). More details on the university’s grading policy can be found in the undergraduate catalog [online](#).

Attendance

Course requirements for class attendance, make-up exams, assignments and other work are consistent with UF [policy](#). A make-up for the numeracy exam can be accommodated if and only if (a) the absence is covered by UF policy, (b) you call me at least 30 minutes before class begins, and (c) you promptly provide written documentation for the absence.

INC attendance is mandatory. See the Web Producer section for more detail.

Deadlines

Successful journalists meet deadlines. As a wise person once said, there’s no such thing as being on time; you’re either early or you’re late. Be early for your INC shift and when turning in a story.

Academic Integrity

University of Florida students pledge to abide by an [honor code](#) that prohibits academic dishonesty such as fabrication, plagiarism and cheating. You have an affirmative obligation to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. You also must report to appropriate personnel any condition that facilitates academic misconduct. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me.

When I discover cheating, my default policy is to fail all involved for the entire course and report the details to the Dean of Students Office.

Students with Disabilities

If you would benefit from disability-related accommodations, contact 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.

Help With Coping

The UF [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) is a terrific, free resource for any student who could use help managing stress or coping with life. The center, at 3190 Radio Road on campus, is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. To make an appointment or receive after-hours assistance, call 352-392-1575.

The UF Police can be reached at 392-1111 or, in an emergency, by dialing 911.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online [evaluations](#). You will be notified by email when the evaluations are open, near the end of the semester. Summary [results](#) are available to you and the general public.

STORY CREATOR

You will find (that's what *enterprise* means; we don't give you assignments) and produce six stories. The best five stories will count toward your grade. To score points for this course, each story:

- Must be published on WUFT.org.
- Cannot involve the UF campus.

A story that fails to meet both of those criteria is worth zero points.

Publishable Stories

Hard news, features, profiles and investigations work for WUFT News as long as they are:

1. **Local.** This means distinctly local people doing distinctly local things in North Central Florida. For example, a story about what people think about a new TV show is not local while a story about a local person who appeared on the show would be.
2. **Timely but not breaking.** Thus, a story about places to see live theater in Gainesville is not timely while a story about a new remodeling project at the Hippodrome would be. Breaking news, such as a fire at Best Buy, is handled within the INC.
3. **Aimed at adults.** Your audience is a middle-aged adult, not students. See the WUFT News [intranet](#) for information about our audience.
4. **Interesting.** Produce stories likely to generate online clicks or social media links. Write about the city council if it considers whether to allow liquor sales on Sunday. Ignore it if it considers routine changes in the liquor-license policy. In other words, skip boring stuff.
5. **Original.** Stories must be exclusive to WUFT News and original to this class. You cannot update a story you submitted for a previous class. If you follow up on a story from another news organization, take a different approach while explicitly crediting the original report.
6. **Multimedia.** Each story must be accompanied by:
 - A photograph, whether taken by you or supplied by a source.
 - A broadcast-quality audio or video clip of 30 to 60 seconds.

Story Approval

As soon as possible, consult with the WUFT News assignment desk about your story idea by sending an email to wuftnews@gmail.com that answers these five questions:

1. What is the main idea of the story?
2. Where did you get the idea for the story?
3. Why would people in North Central Florida care?
4. Whom, specifically, will you interview?
5. What picture and audio or video do you plan to get?

Use the feedback you will get from the assignment desk to shape your story or pursue another.

A couple of days before your story is due, update the assignment desk through the same [email](#) address so the desk editors know how you're doing and what to expect.

Story Length

A story is about 500 to 750 well-chosen words. The word count is less important than is the quality of the story. In other words, a tightly written story of 500 words will receive a better grade than a 750-word story padded with fluff and redundant writing.

Deadline

Submit your story as a Word document to wuftnews@gmail.com. Each story is due no later than the exact time your section starts: either 8:30 a.m. or 12:50 p.m. sharp. If the story arrives a minute late, it's late – and a late story counts as a zero. No extensions are granted.

Therefore, plan ahead so that an illness or family emergency will not keep you from your work obligations. The course allows you to drop the low score out of six stories to allow for unforeseen last-minute problems that keep you from making deadline.

Be Professional

When you are pursuing a story for WUFT News, adopt the persona of a professional journalist.

- Be early for interviews or appointments.
- Dress appropriate to the story, which is usually business casual attire.
- Identify yourself as a reporter for WUFT News.
- Represent WUFT News to the outside world as a professional journalist would.

Sources

Each story for this class must have at least three named sources. You'll find important standards for sources on the WUFT News [intranet](#).

At the top of your story, list a telephone number for each source quoted in your story so Web producers can fact-check quotations.

Multimedia Standards

The WUFT News [intranet](#):

- Details the criteria for good photos and for audio or video files.
- Offers advice and links for tips on how to take better photos and capture audio/video.
- Suggests good apps for Android and Apple smartphones.

At the top of your story, include:

- A photo caption that identifies the people in the picture and names the photographer.
- The name of the person speaking in your audio file or video file.

Keep in mind:

- You don't have to take the photograph if the source has a good picture he/she is willing to let you publish and has the legal authority for you to use it.
- You can use the INC sound booths to record audio from a telephone interview. Instructions are on the WUFT News [intranet](#).

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using material without attribution. The solution is attribution, not paraphrasing. Attribute sources (“according to a press release”) and ideas (“reported last week in the Chiefland Citizen”). When in doubt, attribute. Plagiarism can result in a failing grade for the course.

Fabrication

Fabrication is making up stuff, such as quoting sources you didn’t interview or inventing sources. Any fabrication will result in a failing grade for the course.

Story Grading

As noted above, a story must be published on WUFT News in order to score any points. Published stories will be graded according to the following 100-point rubric:

Category	Criteria	Points
Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interesting: Appeals to a significant share of the audience • Sharable: Likely to be spread through social media or email • Timely: Fresh, with a timely news peg • Scope: Covers who, what, when, where, why and how • Sourcing: Full range of views; affected people interviewed 	50
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length: Roughly 500 to 750 well-chosen words • Lead: 25 words max; either summarizes story or hooks reader • Concise: Gets right to the point; doesn’t waste words • Readable: Smooth flow; active verbs; short sentences; descriptive • Clarity: Precise language without jargon or euphemisms 	30
Photo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo: Fits story; visually interesting; well composed • Caption: All people named 	10
Audio or video	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall: A single person germane to the story edited to :30 to :60 • Sound: Broadcast-quality (if not, 0 points) • Video: Camera does not move; speaker composed and lit properly 	10

Deductions

- Fact error, such as a misspelled name -50
- Source contact information missing -10
- Fewer than three named sources -20
- AP Style errors that impede readability -10
- Sources have a personal connection to you -100

Seize the Day

This course enables you to create meaningful clips and expand your skill set into radio and TV. Creating great stories can advance your career. So give it your best.

WEB PRODUCER

You will work seven shifts in the INC. All seven shifts will count toward your grade.

Instruction

Video tutorials for how to do your job as a Web producer are on the WUFT News [intranet](#). View them on your own as soon as possible. Your grade presumes you've seen these tutorials.

Attendance

Because the INC is a working newsroom, attendance is mandatory. If you are going to miss an INC shift for any reason – illness, family emergency, military obligation, etc. – you must find a classmate to work your shift for you. (The best plan is to trade shifts so you return the favor.)

All students in this course must list contact information in a database kept on the WUFT News [intranet](#) so that you can find people to work for you. If you cannot find a classmate to work for you – or if that classmate fails to show up on your behalf – you will lose one-seventh of your grade for the Web producer portion of the course. (Note: You still have to work seven shifts yourself.)

Work Ethic

When you are in the INC, you are working a job. That means you are expected to:

- Arrive early (before either 8:30 a.m. or 12:50 p.m.) ready to work.
- Follow the INC business casual dress code on the WUFT News [intranet](#).
- Work efficiently. Get stuff done; don't dawdle.
- Focus on the job. Put away the cellphone and ignore Facebook.
- Be self-reliant. Use the WUFT News [intranet](#) to learn how to do your job.
- Display a positive attitude. Smile and be kind. Don't be a jerk.
- Show initiative. Help others, volunteer to chase a story and collaborate.

Web Producer Grading

At the end of each INC shift, you will hand in a self-assessment like the one on the following page that will be used along with observation to grade each shift. The 100-point grading rubric is:

Category	Explanation	Points
Editing	Make the story better by checking facts & verifying source. Find holes and improve clarity while retaining the author's voice. Help rather than hack.	50
Work ethic	Arrive on time. Business casual dress. Work efficiently. Give full attention to the job. Be self-reliant. Display positive attitude. Show initiative.	20
Headlines and captions	Write social media-friendly, NPR-style headlines no more than 10 words that emphasize how and why. Captions complement headline and lead.	20
Mechanics	Use software and WordPress tools effectively.	10

JOU 4201 INC Shift Self-Assessment (Supply evidence in space provided. If no evidence, no score.)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Tasks (such as stories edited) completed today:

Editing (40 points)

1. Improve copy while keeping author's voice _____
2. Consult author when appropriate _____
3. Check facts & call at least 1 source; ensure fairness _____
4. Correct mechanical errors _____
5. Tighten copy _____

Work ethic (20 points)

1. Arrive on time and in business casual attire _____
2. Efficient: get stuff done; don't dawdle _____
3. Give the job your full attention _____
4. Be self-reliant _____
5. Display a positive attitude _____
6. Show initiative _____

Headlines and captions (20 points)

Write social media -friendly headlines of up to 10 words. Headlines written:

Write captions that complement headlines and leads. Details: _____

Mechanics (20 points)

Use KLZ, WordPress, etc., effectively and independently to manage files, categorize add tags, set featured images, find image if none provided and write excerpts as warranted. _____

Course To-Do List

First Week of the Semester

- Input your contact information on the WUFT News [intranet](#)
- Install the recommended multimedia apps on your smartphone or have a camera and recorder

As a Story Creator

- Read the WUFT News intranet pages about the audience and how to find an idea
- As soon as possible, [email](#) your pitch (answers to the five Q's, p. 6) to the Assignment Desk
- A couple of days before the story is due, [email](#) the Assignment Desk with an update

As a Web Producer

- Before starting work, view the tutorials on the WUFT News [intranet](#)
- If you work Mondays in the Orange group, [email](#) the TA to choose a seventh shift by Jan. 15
- Get a simple calculator by the first numeracy lecture

FAQs

About the Course

Q. I missed the first week of class, which is usually just an introduction anyway. How can I make that up?

A. Sorry, but the class begins when the semester begins – not a week later. You can work an extra-credit shift in the INC to make up part of what you missed.

Q. A class called “editing” should just be about editing. Why do I have to do stories, too?

A. No news organization today can afford to have people dedicated solely to editing. Every journalist today has to be a content creator, too. Thus, this is a newsroom experience course that replicates the actual experience you need to succeed in a real newsroom.

About INC Shifts

Q. Most of my labs are three hours. Why are you making us work a five-hour shift in the newsroom?

A. The UF standard is three hours of outside work for each hour in class. For a three-credit course, that's a total of 12 hours a week. Thus, five hours in the INC and two hours in a lecture are not too much. Also, this class does not have “labs.” Your section is a work shift in a real newsroom.

Q. Can I get more involved in radio and television?

A. Absolutely! Be sure to express your interest to one of the newsroom managers and explore opportunities to expand your skill set.

About Stories

Q. The WUFT News website has stories about the UF campus. Why can't I do a campus story?

A. Campus stories belong to our radio and TV students because they often have just an hour or two to produce a story. Also, employers are far more impressed by stories about “real” audiences.

Q. Can I grab an assignment from the front page of the WUFT News intranet, the Follow Sheet?

A. No. Those are solely for radio and TV students.

Q. Why can't you give assignments instead of requiring that I find my own story?

A. The only journalists who find work today are those who can generate their own ideas. Doing so for this class will make you more employable.

Q. What tips can you give me for finding stories?

A. First, read news. Finding a news story is tough when you don't know what's going on. Second, consult the "I need a story idea" page on the WUFT News [intranet](#). It offers examples of how students like you have found stories. Third, call one of the more than 300 sources on the [intranet](#) and solicit an idea. For example, you could call a school principal to see if a teacher has done something noteworthy recently.

Q. Can I run a story idea by someone?

A. Yes! In fact, you must do so, to the WUFT News Assignment Desk. That way, the desk can avoid duplication and help shape your story to give you a better chance of producing something that is publishable. The details and email address for how to do that are elsewhere in this syllabus.

Q. I don't know people off campus. What's North Central Florida like?

North Central Florida is diverse. It has busy cities and sleepy hamlets. It has high schools that produce national champion math teams and high schools where a third drop out. It has scenic beaches and homeless camps. It has people who fly peace flags and others who fly the Confederate flag. Thus, there is no "one" audience. Instead, we have lots of "audiences," plural.

Q. The third source didn't call me back in time. Can I turn in what I have and promise to do the rest later?

A. Stories are graded solely on what is submitted by deadline. There is no such thing as a partial story submission to meet the deadline. By the way, sources are routinely late in returning calls, which is another reason to work ahead.

Q. Can I update a story I wrote for another class?

A. No. The UF academic honesty policy says work must be original to each class.

Q. Can a story I wrote during my INC shift count toward my story quota?

A. No. Chasing news is a normal part of the INC.

Q. Let's cut to the chase. Why should I devote the energy to find great stories for WUFT News?

A. To get a better job. Your stories for WUFT News will live forever online. When a person doing hiring researches your application, that person will find your published work for WUFT News and judge you accordingly. The person doing the hiring doesn't care about your grades. He or she cares only about what you've produced. So produce good stuff.