

JOU 4201: News Center Practicum (*née Editing*)

Lecture: Monday E1-E2 in FLG 0220

Spring 2015 (all sections)

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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 on developing the skills toward the editing role of a Web producer. The other half is spent producing material tailored to our media outlets' audiences, which is another role of many Web producers in the industry.

The INC is a professional newsroom for WUFT and WRUF stations and websites. These are not just 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. It also prepares you for working in a professional workplace: office politics, communicating your ideas, garnering attention and interacting with management, etc. So even if a journalism industry job is not your destination, you'll gain valuable work experience.

Because this is a real newsroom, your workday 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:

- 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).
- Produce at least five enterprise, multimedia stories publishable for a general adult audience on WUFT.org.
- 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 \(http://www.wuft.org/newsroom\)](http://www.wuft.org/newsroom). (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 Textbook

Strunk, William, and E. B. White. *The elements of style*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999. ISBN 978-0205309023

Because you have minimal 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 Web content creator.

1. **Web producers** work in the INC during the lab section for which they registered on the weeks where they have an INC shift. They attend lab when their group is scheduled with an "INC" session in the schedule below.

2. **Content creators** do not attend the INC lab the weeks they have a story due (per the schedule below). 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 credit hour in class, or a total of 9 hours per week. Content creators can spend all 9 hours for homework, plus the six hours open for their lab on their stories to develop, report and write 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 PINE or PALM groups.

1. Those in the PINE Group will spend the first lab of the semester as Web producers.
2. Those in the PALM Group will start the semester as content creators.
3. We will alternate weeks during the semester between Web producer and content creator roles. e.g. if the PINE Group is producing the week of Jan. 19, you will be content creators the following week when the PALM group will be serving as Web producers.

To see which group you are in (Palm or Pine), check the Canvas website for the course on Friday, Jan. 9. Students enrolled as of that date will be split by random assignment, by section. Shifts start Jan. 20.

Week Of	PALM GROUP					PINE GROUP				
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
Jan. 5	NO LABS					NO LABS				
Jan. 12	NO LABS					NO LABS				
Jan. 19	(OPEN)	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	(OPEN)	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1
Jan. 26	Story 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	INC 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1	Story 1
Feb. 2	INC 1	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 2	Story 1	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2
Feb. 9	Story 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	INC 2	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3
Feb. 16	INC 2	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	Story 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3
Feb. 23	Story 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	INC 3	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4
March 2	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)
March 9	INC 3	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	Story 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4
March 16	Story 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	INC 4	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5
March 23	INC 4	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	Story 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5
March 30	Story 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	INC 5	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6
April 6	INC 5	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	Story 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6
April 13	Story 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6	INC 6				
April 20	INC 6	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)		(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)
April 27	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)		(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	(OPEN)	

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.

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 Gary Green at ggreen@wuft.org.

Lecture Schedule

Date	What We're Covering	Where?
Jan. 5	<i>NO CLASS (courses start on Jan. 6)</i>	
Jan. 12	Course Introduction & Pitching	FLG 0220
Jan. 19	<i>NO CLASS – MLK Holiday</i>	
Jan. 26	More on the Pitch and Editing	FLG 0220
Feb. 2	Workshop	INC
Feb. 9	Intrapreneurship & Navigating Work Environments	FLG 0220
Feb. 16	Multimedia Storytelling	FLG 0220
Feb. 23	Workshop	INC
March 2	<i>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</i>	
March 9	Numeracy 1&2: Percent and average	FLG 0220
March 16	Numeracy 3&4: Comparisons and abuse	FLG 0220
March 23	Numeracy 5&6: Probability and polling	FLG 0220
March 30	Numeracy Test	FLG 0220
April 6	Workshop	INC
April 13	Extending the Newsroom Experience	FLG 0220
April 20	Course Wrap	Everyone

Assignments and Grading

Story creator performance (see section below for details) 40%
 Web producer performance (see section below for details) 40%
 Numeracy test (see schedule above) 15%
 Lecture & Newsroom Intranet Quizzes 5%

Periodically, upon the start of lecture, there will be unannounced quizzes on topics covered during lecture, the syllabus or the best practices of the INC operations that are highlighted or covered on the [INC Intranet](#). You may not make up a quiz if you are absent or tardy. The remaining quizzes will be completed on Canvas during the first weeks of class, as outlined on Canvas.

Grades will be posted on the course website on Canvas.

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-	93-90%	B-	82-80%	C-	72-70%	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.

CAUTION: This is a professional course. The rules probably are different than those of other courses. You must not only do the work, but you must demonstrate that you can do the work acceptably within a limited time. Missed deadlines result in automatic failure of the assignment/project. Errors in proper nouns or facts result in automatic failure of the assignment/project. Stories with conflicts of interest of the reporter shall also result in automatic failure. Grades on stories can be lowered (e.g. to zero) as the result of students misrepresenting themselves or otherwise being unprofessional while working on story assignments. Do NOT tell sources you are working for the Alligator or any other publication. Students often find sources are more willing to talk if the students are dressed appropriately.

Sources: One of the best ways to ensure your stories are fair accurate and complete is to gather information from a variety of 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 a complete story.

Students enrolled in this course should not be used as sources in your stories unless they are involved directly in the story. Friends, roommates, relatives, sorority sisters, fraternity brothers, etc. usually pose a conflict-of-interest threat when used as sources.

Do your own reporting and writing. Plagiarism—including using material from news releases and information gathered from the Internet without attribution—will result in serious and harsh consequences. Should that be discovered, you will fail the course and be recommended for expulsion from the University. You can find the college's official ethical standards at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/demic/jou/honesty/>. If you have even the smallest doubt or are confused about this or anything else in the course, PLEASE ASK.

Lectures and materials in this class are the property of the University/faculty member. Lectures may not be taped without permission from the lecturer and may not be used for any commercial purpose. Students found in violation may be subject to discipline under the University's Student Conduct Code.

The **University of Florida Honor Code** was voted on and passed by the Student Body in the Fall 1995 semester. The Honor Code reads as follows:

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." (*In this course, everything you complete has an implied acceptance of the honor code.*)

For more information about academic honesty, contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 Peabody Hall, 392-1261.

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

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

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 *just* the UF campus or student life.

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

Publishable Stories

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's breaking news desk.
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 publishable 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	50

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sourcing: Full range of views; affected people interviewed 	
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/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
- AP Style errors that impede readability -10
- Fewer than three named sources -100
- 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.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Web Producer

You will work six shifts in the INC. All six 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 upload a self-assessment 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	Write social media-friendly, NPR-style headlines no	20

and Captions	more than 10 words that emphasize how and why. Captions complement headline and lead.	
Mechanics	Use software and WordPress tools effectively.	10

You will need to upload an electronic self-assessment to each INC shift “assignment” in Canvas. You may find the electronic form in the “Files” tab of the course Canvas site.