

# ADVANCED EDITING ~ JOU4202

## THURSDAY (PERIOD 11, 6:15 – 7:05 PM) ~ WEIM 2300

### SPRING 2015 ~ UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

#### Instructor / Contact

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Email Policy: The email should be as specific as possible and it should include your full name. You should also note that I check my email once in the morning and once in the evening Monday through Friday.

Be Concise: I should also note that I do not read emails of more than half a screen long. If you have that much to say, then let's have a face-to-face conversation.

[Schedule and Office Hours](#)

About Moi: <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/faculty/facultydetail.asp?id=rrodgers#home>

#### Textbooks / Resources

- [When Words Collide: A Media Writer's Guide to Grammar and Style](#) by Lauren Kessler & Duncan McDonald. You are required to bring it to your INC shift.
- **AP Stylebook:** You are required to bring it to your INC shift. May I suggest, however, that you think about subscribing to the online version at <http://www.apstylebook.com/> With this you can get email updates and quickly keyword search for answers.
- To remain consistent, the dictionary we will use in this class is the same as the AP Stylebook cites as the second reference to the stylebook: [Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition](#). See [AP's Note on Dictionaries](#)

#### Other Required Materials in the Cloud

- **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*.)
- Set up a [WordPress](#) blog using the [The Able Theme](#). Send me the url for your blog. Your blog's name should be your last name followed by your first name (Rodgers, Ronald). Be sure to activate the link. You will be using this to post weekly diaries – e.g. Diary Week 2 and so on – and for other class activities.
- Also, file a first post with (1) a bio, (2) some indication of your future plans career-wise, (3) your research interests as a grad student (4) a mugshot with this post.
  - Here is an excellent WordPress worksheet from UF Journalism Prof. Mindy McAdams on the basics of setting up a blog: [http://www.jtoolkit.com/blogging/wp\\_tips.html](http://www.jtoolkit.com/blogging/wp_tips.html)
- Go to [my Twitter](#) (ronroddgers) and follow me. I post items about research and communications daily.
- Log in to Sakai at <http://lss.at.ufl.edu> If you are unfamiliar with Sakai or if you have any questions, check out the [e-Learning FAQs](#). If you encounter a problem while using e-Learning, you should immediately contact the Help Desk to get assistance.

#### On Language, Writing, and Vocabulary

- **Bookmark:**
  - OneLook Dictionary Search: <http://www.onelook.com/>
  - Dictionaries and Thesauri: <http://www.refseek.com/directory/dictionaries.html>
  - Synonym Finder: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>
  - Optional paid site: Visual Thesaurus: <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>
  - Common Errors in English: <http://public.wsu.edu/%7Ebrians/errors/errors.html>
- **Subscribe:** Word of the Day: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

## Course Objectives

This course's goal is to build on the foundation from your reporting, fact-finding and basic-editing classes to help you reach a higher level as you continue the lifelong process of becoming a careful, precise, creative, innovative and collaborative editor who understands the many problems of doing journalism that face editors daily.

## Overview of Class

JOU 4202 students will work on deadline in a kind of assistant city editor/news desk editor/news producer/assigning editor capacity reflective of the kind of work editors are now doing in the professional world. General description of Class

- Responsibilities will include – but are not limited to – working with and coaching other students with story ideas, participating in story-budget meetings, reporting and writing stories, rewriting stories, collaborating with journalists across platforms, helping hone stories into publishable form, and ensuring headlines and cutlines are written to style and are correct.
- Students will help produce content for all three WUFT News platforms — online, radio and television. This is a pivotal position in the INC, and students who have fulfilled this role in the past are among the best prepared of their peers to compete for jobs in the professional, multimedia world. Daily responsibilities of this advanced newsroom experience include:
  - Approve, decline or better develop multiple story pitches per day. Help conceive and manage long-term projects.
  - Help copy edit online articles and broadcast scripts from journalism and telecommunication students.
  - Communicate with student managers for television and radio programs, alerting them to which web-first stories are also available as broadcast pieces.
  - Demonstrate capability to handle breaking news situations and tools, including effective and responsible usage of Twitter and liveblogging.
  - Hour-to-hour monitoring of news wires, the station's news inbox and social traffic.
  - Handle phone calls and other assorted questions from students and staff in a deadline-driven environment.
  - Post multimedia assets such as photo, audio and video to WUFT.org as part of text-driven stories.
- You will also before the end of your shift (1) ensure JOU4201 students have filled out their Self Assessments and (2) then make notations on those assessments if you disagree or if the student failed to note some accomplishment during their shift.

## Your Role in This Class

You should come into this class with the following skills, and then I and your supervisors in the INC expect to see an upward improvement of each of these during the semester.

- Exceptional news judgment
- Solid knowledge of AP Style and grammar
- Positive, innovative attitude
- Able to multitask when needed
- Strong interpersonal skills (i.e. not shy)
- The ability to collaborate with journalists working in all platforms.

**Please Note:** The Innovation News Center is a working, professional newsroom. You will be expected to treat it as if it were a job. That means you cannot skip a work shift as if it were a class. If you are going to be absent for any reason, you must trade with a classmate to take that shift. In addition, business-casual attire, appropriate for a professional newsroom, is required. That means no jeans or shorts.

## Your Professor's Role in This Class

As much as humanly possible given my many other time commitments, I will try to occasionally sit down with you during your shifts and work with you. But, for the most part, you are going to be on your own working with whoever is in charge of the news desk at the time and collaborating and working with other students – especially

those JOU4201 students assigned to shifts Monday through Friday. This will require self-discipline on your part. But certainly, if I am not physically present I will try to maintain a virtual presence. Ask if you have any questions about how to proceed. I have email and Twitter on my smart phone, so I should be available even if I am not near my computer.

### **Other Instructors and Their Roles in This Class**

Unlike previous classes you are familiar with, your work will also be overseen by other instructors in the INC newsroom, including Professors Matt Sheehan and Gary Green and one or more adjuncts or teaching assistants who all have experience in online news.

### **Course Management Issues**

**Accommodation for disabilities:** Please let me know immediately if you have any kind of problem or disability that would hinder your work in this course. I will do my best to help you. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with 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](#), 352-392-8565 (877-983-3326 Toll Free).

**Class attendance:** Class attendance is required. More than one unexcused absence will result in a minimum deduction of one-half letter grade from your overall grade. Arriving or leaving early will be considered an absence. Excused absences include documented medical excuses and religious observances (with advanced notice). Please contact me before class. University-approved absences must be documented (in advance, if for an approved university activity) according to official university policy. Obtaining written verification for an excused absence is your responsibility, as is arranging to complete any missed work.

**Late assignments:** No assignment can be late under any circumstances. Work turned in late will not be accepted unless you have a legitimate and documented excuse.

**Common courtesy: For heaven's sake, turn off your cell phone!** Please also observe other rules of common courtesy, such as not speaking to your classmates (or yourself) when others are making a presentation, not falling asleep in class, not scrolling the Web, etc.

**Be Good:** And I have to say this as part of our contract: You need to conduct yourself in a courteous manner both in and out of class when it comes to dealing with fellow students or your instructor. That means any rude, obstructive or aggressive behavior will not be tolerated, and manifestations of same will mean your ouster from the class. I have a zero-tolerance policy on this. Here is a link to the [UF Counseling and Wellness Center](#). The Center is located at [3190 Radio Road](#) and the phone number for Appointments & After-Hour Assistance is 352-392-1575.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:** Begin by listening to this: [Who Makes Stuff Up, And Why They Do It — Here is a roundup of articles on plagiarism](#) For the communications professional, there hardly exists a graver crime than plagiarizing another writer's work. We acknowledge other people's work by "[standing on the shoulders of giants](#)," as Newton put it. If you think this class, this university, this nation is "a culture of cut and paste," as two international students described to me their country, think again. In short, it is YOUR responsibility to make certain you understand what constitutes plagiarism and to ensure that you give proper credit any time you draw on someone else's writing.

- You are required to read both the UF [Academic Honesty](#) policy and the Journalism Department's [Academic Honesty](#) document, which was written by Prof. Dave Carlson. I will work under the assumption that you have done so.
- **Do not rely on what you think you've learned before.** Prof. Mindy McAdams has put together an excellent guide: <http://www.macloo.com/cheat/index.htm>.
- If you're still not certain you understand what's acceptable and what isn't, check out this oft-cited website: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>
- **If you have questions, ASK ME!** There's no penalty for asking questions, but the penalties for plagiarism are severe, including **dismissal from the program**.

- **Treat Internet sources like any other book, journal article or other print source.** Make CERTAIN you copy down citation information when you copy material from a website, EVEN if you're paraphrasing.
- **DO NOT turn in to me ANY work you previously have submitted to another instructor or that you plan to submit for any other class at UF or any other institution.** If you want to write on a topic you have worked on before, that might be acceptable IF you discuss it with me and get permission IN ADVANCE.

**CAVEAT:** Sometimes a class such as this will deal with controversial topics, so be warned that words that may be considered offensive or ideological may be spoken in the context of the subjects we are discussing. As a teacher, I have no political or social agenda, so do not try to answer in a way you believe might comport with what I want to hear or read. Feel free to advocate any position as long as you remain respectful of others' opinions, and always be able to defend your point of view. There is nothing I dislike more than unevidenced assertions.

**Grading: Anything below 700 is not a passing score**

Grades	
A	1,000 – 900
B+	899 – 870
B	869 – 830
B-	829 – 800
C+	799 – 770
C	769 – 700

Your final grade is based on (1) the work listed below and (2) on the admittedly subjective conclusions the instructor and, in this class, those on the news desk draw from observing your performance. Some of the metrics of that subjective judgment are your attendance, preparation, demeanor, your willingness to work with and collaborate with others, your participation in class or online discussions and your ability to follow instructions and your contributions to our endeavors in whatever form that may take. Failures in this area can lead to a minus 1 to 100 points.

Here is a link to UF grading policies: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**Note:** Failure to set up a WordPress blog and send me the url per instructions and failure to set up a Twitter account (and to follow my Twitter account) – all by deadline – can lead to my subtracting up to 10 percent of your total score at the end of the semester.

**Class Evaluations**

“Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online 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>.

**What You Can Expect During This Semester**

**No Late Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted and will receive a zero as a grade. Keep in mind that your blog posts have a time stamp when posted.

**1. Weekly Diary**

*Here I will be evaluating your development as a critical thinking, creative and collaborative editor.* To enable me to do so, you will keep a diary of your week’s work in the INC on weekly blog posts on your blog. You will slug (title) this **Diary Week 1** and so on. Think deeply about your work as an editor. This is pretty free form – but it has to have substance each week. I will make note on comments to your blog posts if you are being too superficial. For example:

- Discuss the things you are proud of such as good headlines, cutlines, or editing jobs. (Indeed, as editors you should be gathering together some good headlines and some before-and-after examples of your

editing with annotations about what you did as an editor of a particular story. And this could be from story inception to publication – especially publication across multiple platforms.)

- Tell me about any errors you caught and how you caught them.
- Tell me what you learned that week and the kinds of things you need to learn to be a good editor.
- Discuss the skills you have discovered that you need to master to do a better job.
- Discuss such issues related to online journalism as SEO and analytics – or anything else that arises.
- Discuss the issues of your collaboration and working with fellow journalists.
- And – especially – discuss any story pitches you were involved in from their inception through fleshing them out with the reporter to publication.

*(I should note that former INC staffers have used these thought-through diaries as prep for later job interviews. Rather than speaking about working in a newsroom in a vacuum, they were able to speak from many points regarding the numerous issues involved in digital, cross-platform journalism.)*

**Deadline: By 11:30 p.m. the day of your shift.**  
**100 points each**  
**Average X 3 (300 maximum)**

### 1.1 Links to Your Work

Here I will be evaluating your line editing. To enable me to do so, at the bottom of your diary under the title Links to Work list links – with headline – to work you had any hand in. **Include just one activated link to a story of some substance you had a hand in — not brief packages.** Add notes after the link to give some context about the reporting and writing of the story – and also what your role in the story was. Discuss any problems or concerns you had with the story. Here, I will be looking at your basic editing skills such as your headline writing, your outline writing, and your mastery of such things as concision, fact-checking, grammar, punctuation, spelling, word usage, style (in this case, AP) and numeracy issues. (**Note:** I will use the Twitter hash tag **#ufeds** to highlight common problems, so, once noted, I do not want to see them coming up again.)

Because good editors are not just proofreaders, I will also be looking for your mastery of the higher-order editing skills such as:

- Completeness
- Consistency
- Objectivity (are we being fair?)
- Ethics, taste, sensitivity and law.
- Your ability to make critical news judgments.
- Your ability to spot holes in stories and your efforts to fill them.

**Deadline: By 11:30 p.m. the day of your shift.**  
**100 points each**  
**Average X 3 (300 maximum)**

### 2. Other Instructors' Assessments

Here the other instructors/supervisors in the INC will be evaluating your work during the semester, and their assessments will become part of your final grade in consultation with me. There will be a mid-term assessment and a final assessment. The rubric we are using for the INF lab portion of your editing grade this semester consists of:

- 50 points — Newsroom shifts
  - You showed up on time and dressed accordingly and when expected for assigned shifts and in the case of breaking news.
- 50 points — Editors' Evaluation, to include:
  - 20 points content
  - 15 points improvement
  - 10 points self-directed
  - 5 points industriousness

**Total points: A maximum of 100 points for each assessment.**  
**Total 200 maximum**

### 3. Extra Credit

You may also have the opportunity for extra credit points, **10 per shift**, for shifts worked at times that school is not in session or in any other exigent circumstance.

#### 4. LinkedIn Profile

A completed [LinkedIn](#) profile. Not a partial or rough draft — but a completed profile. Then connect with me because I like to keep track of former students and what they are doing. I am at: [www.linkedin.com/pub/ronald-roddgers/6/a62/182/](http://www.linkedin.com/pub/ronald-roddgers/6/a62/182/)

**Deadline: Friday by 11:30 p.m. Week 14**  
**Total points: 50**

#### 5. A Final Portfolio

You will submit as a portfolio a digital collection of the editing/writing work you were most proud of during the semester. This should be on a separate blog or website. Post screenshots of your work because links too often die. This is something you want to show to not just me but also future potential employers. Include some explanation of your work so I understand the part you played in it. Read this helpful advice: [Minimum Viable Personal Branding for Writers and Journalists](#)

**Deadline: Sunday by 11:30 p.m. Week 14**  
**Total points: 100**

#### 6. Final Summing-Up Essay

Finally, you will submit as a blog post a final essay slugged Final Essay describing your experience in the INC this semester. Length is not that important, but this should have substance reflecting your deep thinking about ALL the dimensions of your experience during the semester. **Outline and organize it with subheads.** At the very least you should:

- Discuss the things you liked, the things you did not like, and the things you would like to see changed and your suggestions about how they should be changed. It is easy to be critical, but much more difficult to offer solutions. It is best when the two are combined.
- Discuss the things you are proud of and the things you think you could have done better.
- Talk about what you have learned and discuss the skills you have discovered that you need to still master to do a better job.
- Discuss your in-class and out-of-class preparation during earlier semesters for this class.
- Discuss the issues of your collaboration and working with fellow journalists.
- Identify your strengths and weaknesses – a question you will often hear in job interviews.

**Deadline: Friday by 11:30 p.m. Week 14**  
**Total points: 50**

**Maximum Total 1,000 points**

#### Grading Rubric for Editing

##### Here are the sorts of things that can affect your grade on exercises:

1. Misspelled words: 5 points for each mistake. No complaints, please. Open a dictionary or relevant reference. **Automatic zero for a misspelled name.**
2. Missing words and spaces: 5 points off for each missing word or space between words. Words and spaces go missing when you write or edit too fast and don't double-check your work. If you write "I happy you're here" or "I amhappy you're here," you lose 5 points.
3. Repeated or extra words: 5 points each time; e.g. "This is a a tough grading standard."
4. Punctuation errors: 5 points off for each error. If you need to review how to use periods, commas, semicolons, etc., study your grammar book, relevant Web sites and the guide at the back of your AP Stylebook.
5. Grammar errors: 5 points off for grammar mistakes, such as subject-verb disagreement. Again, consult the same texts, sites or your peers.
6. Capitalization: 5 points off for each mistake in the basics of capitalization.
7. Numbers: 5 points off for each mistake in basic numbers style.
8. Style: 5 points off for each mistake that violates the AP style – use it from Day 1.
9. Writing: 5 points lost for flabby writing, extreme awkwardness or bad sentence structure (e.g., run-on sentence, sentence fragment, nonparallel construction, clause-ridden writing). Begin to learn how to edit **LINE BY LINE.**
10. Factual errors: 30 points for each mistake in fact. This is why reference books and Google search exist.
11. Beyond commas and conjunctions: Allowing a story to exceed legal guidelines (such as libeling a

person); to step across ethical boundaries; to ignore matters of taste and/or sensibility; and/or to be insensitive to gender and diversity could mean 10 to 30 points off depending on to what degree I feel (note that this is subjective) you should be aware of these kinds of issues of writing and editing.

### **ONE KEY RULE TO LIVE BY**

Never ever make assumptions about anything in anything you edit based on your or another's reporting. (Yes, sources or source material will mislead you — either intentionally or unintentionally.) Therefore:

- Do not change something because you assume your change is correct. You must *know* it is correct.
- If you run across something you do not think is right, fact-check it.
- If you believe it needs corrected and it cannot be fact-checked for whatever reason, do not allow it to be published.
- Ask the right questions of the right people regarding your concerns.
- Be diplomatic but be assertive if you think something is incorrect and should not be published.