
RTV 3305

Investigative Reporting: TV & Radio

SPRING 2014

Tuesday 10:40am – 1:40pm

Instructor: Kortni Alston

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About Me. www.about.me/kortnialston

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Office: G-031

Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00-5:00, other times
by appointment

Course Objective

Students will explore investigative reporting techniques; practice obtaining and using public information for broadcast news stories; learn how to produce both in-depth investigative stories and use those skills to improve daily news reporting skills; discuss the practice of investigative reporting and its role in society; and produce in-depth news stories for TV and radio. In addition, students will build competencies in personal brand management to leverage their stories for career advancement.

Goals

- Discuss the characteristics that are used to develop a solid investigative news story.
- Identify computer assisted reporting resources and be able to utilize resources for newsgathering.
- Participate in class discussion as an informed journalist and collegial group member.
- Prepare to apply for journalism positions. Create an online journalism portfolio that includes your biography, resume, and clips of news stories.

Readings

Required Reading

Investigative Reporting: From Premise to Publication

Author: Marcy Burstiner

ISBN-13: 978-1890871918

Recommended Reading

Never Eat Lunch Alone: And Other Secrets to Success, One Relationship at a Time

Author: Keith Ferrazzi

ISBN-13: 978-0385512053

Materials

- You will be provided an SD card for newsgathering. These cards will be issued in class.
- You must create a channel on a user-generated platform (example: YouTube or Vimeo are preferred for this course).

Assignments

Two Investigative News Stories:

You can work in either radio or TV format.

Each story MUST include:

- A news peg! The story must be timely and have news value.
- At least ONE audio or visual element that came from a public record or public access (ie: audio or video from inside courtroom, public meeting, evidence, first appearance ... Mugs, 911 calls, surveillance video, etc.)
- Sound from at least THREE people. ONE of those people should be your HUMAN ELEMENT. Every story should have a human element. We need to hear from the people your story affects. If it doesn't affect anyone, you'll want to reconsider the idea. Viewer benefit is essential to a good broadcast news story.
- At least TWO pieces of natural sound (aka NAT pops) for TV stories. At least THREE nat pops for radio stories. At least ONE standup. (This does not apply to radio stories).
- BALANCE. Always make sure you are representing both (or more) sides of a story. An unfair or biased story will likely earn you a failing grade – no matter how well written, well shot or well edited. We are here to be critical but objective.

- Projects must be uploaded to user generated content platform (ex: YouTube, Vimeo or Sound Cloud)
- **Once uploaded to user-generated content, stories must be downloaded to the closed Facebook group.**
- Stories cannot be more than 2:30 each UNLESS you do a "look live" intro AND tag in a TV story. In that case, you can give me 3:00 AND I'll tack on five points for the added effort. (Please note: Anchor intros do not count as look lives.)
- Extra credit is given to stories that are recommended as the best stories to the news directors of WUFT television and radio stations.

Two Pitch Sheets:

On scheduled Pitch Days, students will submit three story ideas in writing (1 page typed for each story, 12 point font, Times New Roman, 1-inch margins). These pitch sheets will be graded separately from the projects. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

Personal Brand Management Portfolio Includes:

1. Develop/revise resume
2. Develop Cover letter
3. Develop of biography

4. **Identify a job announcement for a reporting, producing, or media related position.**
5. **Social Media Audit: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter accounts**
6. **The creation of LinkedIn.com account**
7. **Resume Reel: The creation of User-Generated Channel (YouTube, Vimeo, and/or Sound Cloud)**
8. **Online Portfolio**
9. **Creation of Personal Board of Directors**

Attendance and Participation

In the news business, it is extremely important to be on time and to complete all work by deadline. The same goes for this class.

Students are allowed ONE "freebee" absence and ONE late arrival to class with no explanation. That's it. Any other absences or tardiness will be considered unexcused. Please save your freebees for emergencies.

Each unexcused absence will cost you 10 points off your Participation grade. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. If you walk in after roll has been called, you will lose 5 points on Participation for unexcused tardiness. You are also expected to stay in class until the end. I will mark you absent if you leave early

If you use a "freebee" absence, any assignments due that day must be turned in ON TIME or ahead of time during office hours. All late work (excused or unexcused) will result in 10 points off the assignment grade per day that it is late (including weekends), **BUT I will not accept late Pitch Sheets. You must be in class to receive credit for story pitches.**

NOTE: "On time" means no later than the time class starts the day the assignment is due.

Technical difficulties or equipment failure are NOT excuses. In other words, guard your work with your life. Back everything up! I will not grant extensions for carelessness.

A source backing out on a story or failing to meet you for an interview is NOT an excuse either. Make sure you plan ahead and always have a backup plan.

If you become so ill that you cannot come to class or work on an assignment, you must provide an excuse note from a doctor – not just a note that says you went to the doctor.

If you miss a quiz with a freebee or excused absence, you must make up the quiz during office hours the next class day or receive a 0 on that quiz. It is your responsibility to remind the instructor that you missed a quiz and need to make it up.

Perfect attendance (no freebee or tardiness) automatically earns you a 100% in Participation.

Also, you are expected to actively participate in class discussions. Disruptive behavior or failure to participate in class discussions will negatively affect your Participation grade.

We will have a few Newsroom Meetings throughout the semester. Please come to class prepared to talk about your story progress on those days. Performance in these meetings will also be included in your Participation grade.

Remember: In a newsroom, missing deadline (a.k.a. “slot”), attending a newsroom meeting unprepared or arriving late to an interview is enough to get you fired.

Laptops and Cell Phones:

During lectures you must turn off all laptops and cell phones; unless you are advised to use them during class discussions.

Grades:

10% for Participation
10% for Pitch Sheet 1
10% for Pitch Sheet 2
10% for Pitch Sheet 3
15% for Investigative Story 1
15% for Investigative Story 2
15% for Investigative Story 3
15% for Online Portfolio

Course Grading Scale:

A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
F	Below 60

The good news: Any final course grades with decimal points will be rounded UP to the next nearest whole number. For example, even a 92.1 will round up to a 93.

Plagiarism

You are not permitted to “recycle” any work from another class in this class. In other words, all work submitted should be produced by YOU specifically for RTV 3305. See the College’s Honor Code for details.

(<http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/>) You may recruit someone to help you shoot a standup for your projects, but ALL other video in your packages must be shot by YOU. Stock video is discouraged. If you plan to use any in your story, please clear it with me ahead of time.

Equipment Checkout:

There are a few television production units assigned to RTV 3305. You are allowed a one-day checkout, with the equipment due back by 9:00 a.m. the following day. On Friday, equipment can be checked out until 9:00

a.m. Monday. Steve Kippert is the contact person for equipment checkout.

There is a 24-hour wait to reserve equipment again after you bring it back. (For example, if you bring back equipment on a Monday and want to reserve it again you have to wait until Tuesday to reserve it.) For special projects and needs, it may be possible to allow additional time if you send me an e-mail in enough time that I can alert our equipment manager, Steve Kippert.

A hard copy of the WUFT Equipment Policy will be distributed to students in class. ***Any equipment checkout violations will result in 10 points off the student's project grade per violation.***

Please be advised that the equipment is the property of the University of Florida. The equipment must only be used for this course and all content that is produced (ex: pkg, b-roll, sot, etc.) may not be sold or given to any other broadcast or media outlet without permission. Any story shot for this class with University equipment belongs to the University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications.

Students with physical or learning disabilities must register with the Dean of Students Office. I will be happy to accommodate any special needs.

Tentative Course Calendar

Week 1:

Tuesday, January 6	Introduction to the course/Personal Brand Management 101 Characteristics of Investigative Reporting? Who is Investigative Reporting?
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Week 2:

Tuesday, January 13	Watch All the President's Men in class (138 min) Activity/Class Discussion
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Week 3:

Tuesday, January 20	Explanation of Investigative Story 1 and Pitch Sheets Chapter 2: Finding the Story Chapter 3: Setting Up the Investigation
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Week 4:

Tuesday, January 27

Chapter 14: Pitching Your Story
Personal Management Part 1

Week 5:

Tuesday, February 3

**Pitch Sheet 1 Due
Pitch Day**

Students will pitch their Investigative Story 1 ideas (must have 3) in a Newsroom Meeting format for topic approval.

**PLEASE NOTE: STUDENTS MUST BE IN CLASS TO RECEIVE A GRADE FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT.
DO NOT MISS CLASS ON PITCH DAYS.**

Week 6:

Tuesday, February 10

Chapter 4: Requesting Public Record
Navigating the Net: Crime and Court Records
Personal Brand Management Part 2

Week 7:

Tuesday, February 17

Chapter 5: Game Plan
Personal Brand Management
Chapter 6: The Interview Process

Week 8:

Tuesday, February 24

Research Day – NO CLASS MEETING

Week 9:
Tuesday, March 3

SPRING BREAK NO CLASS

Week 10:
Tuesday, March 10

Investigative Stories are Due/ Story 1 Screening
Attendance is Mandatory

Week 11:
Tuesday, March 17

Pitch Sheet 2 Due
Pitch Day

Students will pitch their Investigative Story 2 ideas (must have 3) in a Newsroom Meeting format for topic approval

PLEASE NOTE: STUDENTS MUST BE IN CLASS TO RECEIVE A GRADE FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT. DO NOT MISS CLASS. I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE WORK.

Week 12:
Tuesday, March 24

Chapter 7: Analyzing the BIG story
Chapter 8: Documenting the Story
Chapter 9: Finding and Using Data
Watch good reporting & Class Discussion

Week 13:
Tuesday, March 31

Personal Brand Management
Resume and cover letters are due
Board of Directors Exercise

Week 14:
Tuesday, April 7

Research Day – NO CLASS MEETING

Week 15:
Tuesday, April 14

Investigative Story 2 Due
Story 2 Screening
Attendance is Mandatory

Week 16:
Tuesday, April 21

Portfolio Brand Management Due
Attendance is Mandatory
Last Day of Class
