

Advanced Reporting - JOU 4111 - Fall 2024

Instructor: Brandon Meyer

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Phone: 954-789-5389 / Office: Weimer 3326 (Third floor of the INC)

Class hours/location: Monday 4:05 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. / MCCA 2186

Office hours: By appointment (M-Th: 9:30-11:30) Drop in: (Tue: 1:00-3:00)

Overview

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to common newsroom assignments and enhance your reporting abilities which will enable you to tackle a variety of reporting assignments with depth, speed, accuracy and confidence.

The bulk of classroom time will be spent refreshing and reinforcing basic journalism concepts to include sourcing, fact finding, ethics and newsworthiness, story design, clarity and flow, perspective, security and objectivity. Class meetings that coincide with a deadline will be dedicated to in-class story presentations.

You will be required to pitch, report and write an in-depth story and a follow-up during the semester. I will serve as your editor. All stories must be pre-approved by me. It is your responsibility to keep me informed about how stories are progressing. Weekly update memos or meetings are expected. Memos should be submitted through Canvas or email, meetings should occur in person, by phone or by video.

The primary purpose of our interactions is to ensure that your story is moving forward in an expeditious manner at all times. In-depth reporting takes time. The slower you progress, the more difficult your job will be.

Grading

Assignment	Final Grade Percentage	Due Date
Attendance (15)	30%	Weekly
Quizzes (15)	30%	Weekly
Story 1	12.5%	October 11 @ Noon
Story 2	12.5%	November 22 @ Noon
Documents & Data (15)	15%	Weekly

Each story is worth 12.5% of your final grade. I require that the first story cover civil or criminal litigation, and the second story should be related to local or state politics or government.

The deadlines are generous. Late assignments will not be accepted. As long as you regularly communicate with me, this should not be an issue. I will guide you to a smooth and on-time landing.

Unexcused absences and tardiness are frowned upon. The lectures are important. I will deduct 2% from your final grade for each unexcused absence. The best way to avoid unexcused absences is to contact me in advance. I won't accept excuses for unexcused absences after-the-fact. Life happens, but I'm a reasonable person. e.g. If your car breaks down on the way to class, call me before class begins.

Grading Scale:

A = 94-100
A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89
B = 83-86
B- = 80-82
C+ = 75-79
C = 70-74
C- = 67-69
D+ = 63-66
D = 60-63
D- = 55-59
F = 54 or below

Materials

- Book: The AP Guide to News Writing (4th edition)
- Access to a computer during class. Bring a laptop.
- Google Docs, Sheets and Pinpoint. Have a Google account.
- Pen and paper
- Highlighters (A four-pack of assorted colors will suffice)

Honesty, Integrity

Don't plagiarize. Don't fabricate. Don't lie. Don't take sides. Don't mislead sources about your occupation or intent. Don't mislead sources about the substance of your story. Be professional. Be honest. Be forward. Be objective.

These are pretty standard rules you should be familiar with, but if you are approaching, or find yourself in, an ethical quandary, call me before doing the wrong thing.

Integrity and honesty violations will be dealt with in accordance with the student honor code and the student conduct code. Here's a link:

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

Fact Errors

They happen, but it's your responsibility to ensure they disappear during the draft stage. If you need help verifying facts, I'm a phone call away. It's also perfectly OK to ask classmates or friends for a fresh set of eyes. They can check your work. Confirm a statement or quote with a source if you are unsure the message or context is accurate. There are few things more humiliating than a correction.

Classroom Accommodations

If you are in need of academic accommodations, please provide me with an accommodation letter and a list of accommodations you require. An accommodation letter can be obtained from the Disability Resource Center.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/accommodation-letters/>

Diversity

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department of Journalism embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our journalism courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

I want to create a learning environment for you that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.) To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please do not hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.
- If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Prof. Joanna Hernandez is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.

- If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Office Hours

My office is Weimer 3326 and is located on the upper floor of the INC. I will usually be on-campus Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments are preferable, but you're free to drop by any time.

Mental Health

College can be a stressful and difficult experience. You are being challenged like never before. If you feel overwhelmed or just need someone to talk to, my door is always open and my phone is always on. I spent five years of my life in combat zones. I am familiar with the concept of stress. While I may not be able to relate to your particular situation, I promise you I can point you in the right direction.

It's OK to throw up your hands and ask for help.

It's important that you know that every member of the staff is equipped to assist you in a time of distress. If you prefer to talk to someone outside of the college, the Counseling and Wellness Center website has a plethora of services that you might find useful <https://counseling.ufl.edu/resources/>

You may also reach them by phone at 352-392-1575.

At a minimum, talk to somebody.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>

Artificial Intelligence

The use of any and all AI systems such as ChatGPT, Grok, Copilot, Claude and Gemini in the course of your work is prohibited. The industry is still figuring out if these systems have a place in the newsroom, and until there are standards, we will avoid their use. If you have a unique use case for AI in the course of your reporting, pitch it to me and an exception may be granted.

Prof. Meyer's Weekly Schedule: Fall 2024

Period	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	7:25-8:15					Off-Campus
2	8:30-9:20					
3	9:35-10:25	Office Hours (By Appointment)				
4	10:40-11:30	Office Hours (By Appointment)				
5	11:45-12:35	Lunch				
6	12:50-1:40	Fresh Take Florida	Office Hours (Drop-In)			
7	1:55-2:45				Breaking News	
8	3:00-3:50		Intro to Web Apps		Intro to Web Apps	
9	4:05-4:55	Advanced Reporting	Intro to Web Apps		Intro to Web Apps	
10	5:10-6:00	Advanced Reporting				
11	6:15-7:05					
12	7:20-8:10					
13	8:20-9:10					
14	9:20-10:10					
	Classrooms	Fresh Take Florida	WEIM 2052		Phone	(954) 789-5389
		Advanced Reporting	MCCA 2186		Email	brandon.meyer@ufl.edu
		Intro to Web Apps	WEIM 2056		Twitter	meyer0656
		Breaking News	WEIM 1090			