

# Multimedia Writing (JOU3109C) | Spring 2025 Syllabus

## Instructor

Jessica Marsh

## Email

**Primary:** Contact me through Canvas Conversations (Inbox).

**Secondary:** [jmarsh@ufl.edu](mailto:jmarsh@ufl.edu)

## Office Location

Meetings are held via Zoom.

Meeting Room:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/5340690596>

## Office Hours

Drop-in hours are Tuesdays 2 – 4 p.m. Eastern. If another student is in the Zoom meeting room, you will be placed in the waiting room and admitted once that student leaves.

No office hours will be held on UF-recognized holidays or weekends.

Office hours are subject to change with sufficient notice.

Contact me by email to schedule a meeting for a different time or date.

## Course Overview

Multimedia Writing introduces journalism and public relations writing and the use of multimedia tools in gathering and disseminating information.

## Course Format & Instructional Methods

This course is delivered online in an asynchronous format. In other words, we have no scheduled meeting time. The course will be managed through the eLearning platform Canvas. You can access the course by logging into eLearning at <http://elearning.ufl.edu>.

The course is designed to include a variety of approaches. Most modules include video lectures. Each module includes assigned readings and activities to be completed; such activities include practice writing assignments, quizzes, class discussions, and a major writing assignment for the module. The major writing assignment draws upon all you have learned and practiced within the module and preceding modules.

## Required Texts

- Rich, Carole (2016). *Writing and Reporting News: A Coaching Method* (8th edition). Boston, MA: Cengage Learning
- Associated Press (AP) Stylebook (newest edition)  
The AP Stylebook is published each year in the spring. Each edition includes new terms, changes in previous rules, and new guidelines for social media use. You may purchase the book in paperback or as an interactive e-book. To purchase the interactive e-book, go to: <http://www.apstylebook.com>.

As a UF student, you can access the AP Stylebook online for free through UF George A. Smathers Libraries. You can access the stylebook by following this [link](#) and selecting AP Stylebook Online. A limited number of people can access the online stylebook through the library at one time.

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Digital subscription to *The New York Times*. As a student at UF, you have access to a free digital subscription to *The New York Times*. To subscribe to *The New York Times*, follow the instructions below:

1. Go to <https://my.ufl.edu/ps/signon.html>
2. After signing in, select the Navigation Bar in the upper right corner (three stacked horizontal lines)
3. Select “Main Menu”
4. Select “Quick Links”
5. Select “NY Times”
6. Select “Subscribe Now” and follow the subscription instructions.
7. Verify email address and access NY Times.

## Course Goals & Objectives

This course was designed to encourage you to be proactive in your learning by requiring you to apply the concepts learned in each module to answering discussion posts that prompt critical thinking and completing assignments that develop and demonstrate your writing and communication skills. The ability to think critically, write, and communicate clearly will benefit you whether you choose a career path in communications or another field.

In this course you will learn:

- Terms and concepts used in the media industry.
- How to communicate clearly and accurately in a variety of media styles: hard-news stories, news feature stories, profile stories, news releases, photography, social media, and blogging.
- How to take photos that follow basic photojournalism rules and how to write captions.
- Best practices for creating a professional digital portfolio and résumé.
- What makes a story newsworthy and how to pitch newsworthy ideas.
- How to locate sources and conduct interviews for stories.
- To edit your work, using correct spelling/grammar and following AP Style.

## Course Relation to Student Learning Outcomes in the College of Journalism and Communications

Multimedia Writing provides you with the opportunity to develop and practice skills that are part of the core competencies of all majors in the college – conducting effective research, conducting interviews, writing in different media formats, developing a professional online brand, taking effective photographs, and demonstrating the ability to write with correct grammar and word use and using AP Style.

## Diversity Statement

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

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diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

I consider this class to be a place where you will be treated with respect. I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students 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 don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.
- If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.
- It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally, or for other students or student groups.

## POLICIES

### Contact Policy

The best way to contact me is through the Canvas email system. Monday through Thursday, I usually respond to emails within 48 hours. If you send an email to me on Friday or over the weekend, you may not receive a response until Monday.

Keep emails brief and focused. Include relevant details and information. For example, if you are requesting a deadline extension, what is the name of the assignment? How many extra days do you need to complete the assignment? What is the reason for the extension request? (Illness, family emergency, etc.). Include in the subject line of the email words that indicate what the email is about. For example, Mod. 3 Hard-news Story Deadline Extension or Mod. 3 Hard-news Story Help.

**Office Hours.** Drop-in hours are Tuesdays 2 – 4 p.m. Eastern. If another student is in the Zoom meeting room, you will be placed in the waiting room and admitted once that student leaves. Contact me by email to schedule a meeting for a different time or date.

**Office Location.** Meetings are held via Zoom. Meeting Room: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/5340690596>

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I *strongly encourage* you to review assignments early in the week and reach out before Friday if you need clarification on assignment instructions, information found within readings/lectures, how your writing will be assessed, or the feedback I provide you.

## **Deadline Policy**

You are expected to submit all assignments on time through Canvas. Deadlines are given in Eastern Standard Time. However, if you do not reside in the Eastern Standard Time zone, you can adjust the time zone in Canvas to stay on top of dates and deadlines. See this [guide](#).

Late assignments are usually only accepted in cases of documented emergencies, family/pet emergencies, illness, grief and bereavement, and documented technical issues. All other requests to submit an assignment late are considered case-by-case. If granted an extension on an assignment, a 10-point deduction or 10 percent deduction (for assignments less than or greater than 100 points) may apply.

You **MUST** email me either before an assignment is due or no more than 24 hours after an assignment is due if you wish for more time to complete the assignment. If you do not contact me within 24 hours after the due date, you will receive a zero on the assignment.

Any request to make up an assignment due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from UF's e-learning Support Services or [UF's Computing Help Desk](#) when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem.

When requesting an extension, include the reason you need the extension, relevant documentation, how many extra days you need to complete the assignment, and the name of the assignment.

Assignments that I have approved for late submission will be assigned a new due date. You must complete the assignment by the new due date. If you do not complete the assignment by the new due date, you will receive a zero on the assignment.

You are responsible for checking to see whether your work has been submitted to Canvas. After you submit your work, information about your submission will appear. "I thought I had submitted the assignment," is not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline. You will receive a zero if you submit the wrong assignment, an illegible document, or a document in the wrong file format and don't fix the issue before the deadline.

## **Submitting Work & Receiving Feedback**

You will submit your assignments through Canvas, and I will provide feedback meant to encourage you and help you improve.

Depending on the assignment, you will see feedback in one or more of the following ways:

- An assignment comment.

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- Annotated comments in your document that can be read in DocViewer (but not on a mobile device).
- A completed rubric.
- Free-form comments within a rubric.
- An attached file in the assignment comment box.
- An announcement providing general feedback to the class regarding an assignment.

Read [“How do I view assignment comments from my instructor? \(Canvas\)”](#) for assistance with viewing feedback.

Read [“How do I view quiz comments from my instructor? \(Canvas\)”](#) for assistance with viewing feedback on quizzes.

Read [“How do I view quiz results as a student? \(Canvas\)”](#) for assistance with viewing feedback on quizzes.

You are future communications professionals, and I have very high standards for your work. You will likely have a lot of errors at first; it’s part of learning this style of writing. You are *strongly encouraged* to ask me any questions you might have or talk about any struggles you experience.

## Grading Policy

Your grade in the course is based on completing several activities within each module.

Instructions will accompany each assignment, quiz, and discussion board you need to complete. A rubric will be provided for each assignment (except quizzes); use the rubric as a checklist as you complete the assignment. Please ask questions if you need clarification on the assignment or how your work will be graded.

Accuracy is a key component in each writing assignment. Accuracy of facts and careful editing of your work are important qualities to set you apart from other writers. To help encourage careful editing of your work, points will be deducted from each written assignment for typographical and grammar errors. In Module 3 you will start to receive deductions for AP Style errors and fact errors. Examples of fact errors include incorrect information, misspelling a proper noun, and having an incorrect number. Each fact error is -20 points.

In working on your assignments, be sure to allocate time to carefully proofread your work.

**If you have specific questions or concerns about a grade on an assignment, discussion post, quiz, etc., you must email me within seven days of the assignment being returned to discuss the grade.**

## Notification Policy

I will communicate regularly with the class and with you individually as needed. It is important that you log into Canvas daily to check for new announcements, check the Canvas Inbox, and review the feedback I

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have provided on your work. You may set up alerts to forward messages directly to your UF email address. To adjust your notification settings in Canvas, [follow these guidelines](#).

## Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty Policy

Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated. Any attempt to represent the work, ideas, or writing of someone else as your own is considered plagiarism and will result in failure of the assignment, and potentially of the course. This includes using writing generated by AI Systems such as ChatGPT. Willful and blatant incidents of plagiarism will be reported to your department chair AND the university's Dean of Students.

All work submitted for this class must be your original work. You may not reuse assignments created for other purposes, including other courses, and you may not use work created by someone else. When you use information (including images) from any source, you **MUST** cite the content appropriately.

To recap, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Using any work done by another person or automated system, such as an AI text generator, and submitting it for a class assignment, quiz, discussion post, etc.
- Submitting work you did for another class or course.
- Copying and pasting text written by another person or automated system without the use of quotation marks AND complete attribution, including a URL (online) or page number (print).
- Paraphrasing text written by others, such that it constitutes de facto plagiarism (e.g. word substitutions).
- Sharing answers to quizzes online or with anyone.
- Submitting the same work you submitted in a previous semester of JOU3109C Multimedia Writing without my approval

If I suspect that you have used an AI system to generate text used in an assignment, you will be subject to a proctored written exam or a recorded oral exam. If you are unable to adequately answer questions related to the selected material of the course that is in question, a violation of the [UF Student Honor Code](#) will be assumed and you will fail the assignment. The incident will be reported to your department chair and the university's Dean of Students. Refusal to submit to a recorded oral exam or written proctored exam will be taken as an admission of the violation.

If you have any questions regarding this policy, ask me! "But I didn't know..." is not an excuse.

## Course Technology Policy

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You will need access to a computer with reliable Internet. You will need access to Microsoft Word (or other word-processing software that can generate a .doc or .docx file) and PowerPoint for the Photo Essay assignment. Check to see whether you have access to Microsoft Word and PowerPoint for free through UF Apps (<https://info.apps.ufl.edu/>)

You will need access to a digital camera, such as the camera on a cellphone for the Photo Essay assignment. You will need a way to transfer those photos to your computer, such as [GatorCloud](#) (OneDrive, Google Drive, or Dropbox).

For the live reporting assignment, you will need to download the mobile application X onto your cellphone to write and make live posts.

For the extra credit assignment in which you submit a soundbite, you will need access to audio editing software on your phone or computer that allows you to take excerpts from the interviews you recorded.

You can borrow technology and equipment from the George A. Smathers Libraries:  
<https://uflib.ufl.edu/find/tech-tools/>

## **Netiquette: Communication Courtesy Policy**

All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions, and chats. This includes corresponding with your classmates as well as with me.

## **University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities**

If you are requesting [accommodation](#) for disabilities, you must first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#). The DRC will provide documentation to you which you must then provide to me when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation before submitting assignments or taking quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive; therefore, you should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which you are seeking accommodations.

## **Course Evaluation Process**

You are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available [here](#). You will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email you receive from GatorEvals, in your Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

## **GETTING HELP**

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For issues with technical difficulties for E-Learning in Canvas, please contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) and E-learning Support Services at: Email: [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu) (or) [learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:learning-support@ufl.edu); Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357). Remember to get a ticket number if your technical problem is the reason you are requesting an extension on an assignment.

Consult the [Canvas Student Guide](#) on how to navigate and use Canvas as a student.

Other resources are available at [UF Online](#) and [UF Distance Learning](#).

## ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

### Grading Scale

<b>A</b>	100% to 95%	<b>B -</b>	< 83% to 80%	<b>D+</b>	< 70% to 67%
<b>A -</b>	< 95% to 90%	<b>C+</b>	< 80% to 77%	<b>D</b>	< 67% to 63%
<b>B+</b>	< 90% to 87%	<b>C</b>	< 77% to 73%	<b>D -</b>	< 63% to 60%
<b>B</b>	< 87% to 83%	<b>C -</b>	< 73% to 70%	<b>E</b>	< 60% to 0%

Information about UF's Grades and Grade Points can be found in the undergraduate catalog under the section [Grades and Grading Policies](#).

### Weighted Grading Groups

15% - Reading, Lecture and AP Style Quizzes

10% - Discussion Posts

60% - Assignments, Including Practice Writing Assignments

15% - Professional Portfolio, Résumé, and Blog

### Course Schedule

Refer to "Course Summary" in Canvas for the most up-to-date information on when assignments are due.

Module	Week(s)	Assignments
Orientation & Introduction	Jan. 13-18	Quiz: Syllabus DB: Introductions



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Module	Week(s)	Assignments
		Purchase required texts, subscribe to <i>New York Times</i>
Mod. 1: Storytelling and News Values	Jan. 19-25 Martin Luther King Jr. Day: Jan. 20	Quiz: Reading quiz DB: How do you get your news? AS: Distinguishing between factual statements and opinion statements
Mod. 2: Story Organization and The Basic News Story (Pt. 1)	Jan. 26 – Feb. 1	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz Quiz: AP Style (Part 1) DB: Practice planning a story AS: Identifying qualities of news and focus of a story
Mod. 3: Story Organization and The Basic News Story (Pt. 2)	Feb. 2-8	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz AS: Practice writing a hard-news story AS: Write a hard-news story
Mod. 4: Writing Leads (Pt. 1)	Feb. 9-15	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz AS: Identifying soft leads and nut graphs DB: Practice writing a soft lead
Mod. 5: Writing Leads (Pt. 2)	Feb. 16-22	Quiz: AP Style (Part 2) AS: Practice writing a news feature story AS: Write a news feature story
Mod. 6: Interviewing Techniques and Writing a Profile Story	Feb. 23 – March 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Profile Story of Classmate Due March 8</li> </ul>	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz DB: Writing open-ended questions AS: Personal profile focus AS: Practice profile story workshop AS: Profile story of a classmate Extra Credit: Pitching story ideas
Mod. 7: Online Journalism and Writing for Social Media	March 2-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional Portfolio and Blog Setup Due March 14</li> <li>Live Reporting Through Social Media Due March 29</li> </ul>	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz DB: Blog pitch AS: Professional portfolio and blog setup DB: Live reporting event pitch AS: Live reporting through social media

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Module	Week(s)	Assignments
Mod. 8: Storytelling Using Photography	March 9-14 Spring Break: March 15-22 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Photo Essay Due March 29</li> </ul>	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz DB: Practice writing captions DB: Photo essay pitch AS: Photo essay <i>Don't forget to post to your blog</i>
Mod. 9: Reporting and Writing Your Own Story	March 23-29 March 30 – April 5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra Credit EHST Story Published and Extra Credit Selecting Soundbites Due April 23</li> </ul>	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz <b>DB: EHST story pitch*</b> AS: EHST story Extra Credit: EHST story published Extra Credit: Selecting sound bites <i>Don't forget to post to your blog</i>
Mod. 10: Writing for Public Relations (Pt. 1)	April 6-12	Quiz: Reading and lecture quiz AS: Practice writing a news release AS: Writing a news release for an event <i>Don't forget to post to your blog</i>
Mod. 11: Writing for Public Relations (Pt. 2)	April 13-19	DB: Pitch Kickstarter product for news release AS: Kickstarter product news release AS: Creating a company's social media presence <i>Don't forget to post to your blog</i>
Mod. 12: Professional Portfolio	April 20-23	AS: Résumé AS: Professional portfolio and blog

**\* You must meet with me once from March 24 - 30 to discuss your EHST story pitch and story progress face-to-face. The meeting will take place over Zoom and last about 30 minutes.**

## Disclaimer

This syllabus and course schedule represent my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

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## Important Dates

Consult the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) for all dates and deadlines in Spring 2025, including drop/add.

Classes begin on Jan. 13

Classes end on April 23

Final grades are available on May 7

UF Recognized Holidays: Jan. 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day; March 15-22: Spring Break

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

### Health and Wellness

- U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care](#) website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center](#) website.
- University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department](#) website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies)
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center](#) website.
- GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell](#) website or call 352-273-4450.

### Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Contact [April Hines](#), College of Journalism and Communications librarian.
- [Teaching Center](#): Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- [LinkedIn Learning](#), formerly Lynda.com, offers thousands of training courses.

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- [Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- [UF JCA Communication Coaching Center](#)
- [UF Gatorlink VPN Service](#) provides secure remote access to the UF network.
- Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code](#) webpage for more information.
- On-Line Students Complaints: Contact [UF Online](#).