

JOU 4950 (12928) APPLIED JOURNALISM
Section 3G04 • Spring 2025

University of Florida College of Journalism and Communications
Meets Thursdays Jan. 16 to April 17 • 10:40 a.m.-11:30 a.m.

• Period 4

No class March 20 (Spring Break Week)

CLASS LOCATION

Weimer Hall, Room 1090

INSTRUCTORS

Professor Joanna Hernandez, MPA

*Senior Lecturer, Department of Journalism; Director of Community
and Culture*

jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu

Professor Jessica Marsh

Adjunct Lecturer

jmarsh@ufl.edu

OFFICE HOURS

In-Person @ Weimer 3046 / or on Zoom

1:30-3:30 p.m. Tuesdays

8:30-10:30 a.m. and 11:45 a.m.-12:45 p.m. Thursdays

And By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

THIS IS A CAPSTONE course. That means you will be producing work that showcases the journalism skills you acquired here at CJC. Professional-caliber journalism work produced by you is expected. And good writing. You'll get feedback to improve and strengthen your work in new, creative ways.

OUR MAIN GOAL is to get you published. We have a relationship with WUFT. But if you strive to publish elsewhere, we need to vet the publication before project approval. Most of you will work in teams created by the professor, although you are welcome to make individual pitches and produce your own project.

THIS SPRING 2025 SEMESTER, WUFT is happy to assist us in assigning or taking pitches that focus on local government. We are also accepting pitches for evergreen multimedia stories that have the potential to be published later in the semester or a month or two afterward.

A PANEL COMPRISED of journalists and journalism educators will provide you with feedback on your pitch and final project. This feedback will help guide you to producing a multimedia reporting package.

ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT. Here is our policy for all absences for all reasons: First absence, 100% excused; second absence, 80% excused; third absence, 70% excused;

subsequent absences get a zero, plus one letter-grade drop. Even with a doctor's note, the above policy still applies.

WE WILL WORK to ensure that you are progressing through the project and getting feedback to produce professional-caliber, publishable acts of journalism.

WELCOMING CLASS ENVIRONMENT

REPORTERS TELL STORIES of a community and all individuals who make up a given community. These stories serve, help and inform everyone.

TO BEST CARRY OUT these ideals, it's best to be respectful, kind and exhibit an understanding for all people – during field work and in this classroom.

OUR DIFFERENCES SERVE as a strength to embrace as we discuss relevant story ideas, develop contacts within a community or even storytelling techniques.

EXPOSURES TO DIFFERENT perspectives, values, ideals and experiences make us all better, more compassionate and understanding journalists.

WE ALL LEARN BEST and maximize our outcomes when we feel comfortable. Please let us know what we can do to ensure you feel welcomed in our space.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Students gain refresher in multimedia reporting and production tools.
- Students practice best practices in written, visual and audio storytelling.
- Students collaborate with journalists of different strengths than their own.
- Students display their journalistic acumen.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES:

ACEJMC Objectives

University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communication is accredited by the [Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication](#) (ACEJMC). The ACEJMC has identified several [core values and competencies](#) that journalism and mass communication students ought to possess upon graduation:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use/presentation of images and information.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.

COURSE OUTCOMES: PROJECTS

1. Students produce publishable digital multiplatform stories.
2. Each project is a journalistic resource produced for an external audience.
3. Students determine goals/timelines within the context of syllabus deadlines.

EXPECTATIONS: FINAL PROJECT

Final Project Elements include:

1. A deeply reported written story of 800 or more words that includes hyperlinks, evidence of research and originally reported interviews.
2. Multimedia components include:
 - At least one video (2.5 minutes maximum);
 - Or two audio sound bites no longer than a minute each;
 - Multiple photos;
 - Educational component utilizing maps, data visualization and/or informational graphics;
 - Quotes from at least three sources who are real live people.
 - If the story is unpublished, it must be presented on Adobe Express
3. Final project with accompanying PowerPoint will be presented to the class.

COURSE TEXT, READINGS and RESOURCES

WEB READINGS AND ARTICLES will be posted on Canvas by the instructors.

APRIL HINES is our Journalism Department guide at the UF George A. Smathers Libraries. You will meet her in Week 4 when she provides our class with a research refresher. Below is a link to Ms. Hines homepage, where there are multiple research tools and resources:

<https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/journalism>

LEARNING JOURNALS, MEET UPS, AP STYLE QUIZ, AND THE POINT

1. Each student is required to submit weekly Learning Journals created on Adobe Express. Learning Journals are worth 10% of your final grade.
2. Each student will meet in person or on Zoom with the professor three times this semester, once in January,

February and March/April. These meet ups are worth 15% of your final grade.

3. Each student will have more than a week to take the open-book AP Style Quiz, which is worth 20% of your final grade. No extensions will be granted.
4. Each student must subscribe to The Point. Class discussions may focus on news found on The Point. Students can subscribe using this link:

<https://www.wuft.org/the-point>

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

ALL JOU 4950 STUDENTS have the opportunity to checkout cellphone-reporting gear from the G020 Equipment Room. There are five kits set aside specifically for this class. But there are forms you must read and sign first.

THESE FORMS ARE on Canvas; look in "Files" for Gear Policy Documents. This folder has two documents – Spring 2025 Gear PickUp:Return Loading Zone Policy and Spring 2025 JOU 4950 GearPolicy. We will go over the forms on the first day of class. Your signature establishes permission to take out this equipment.

OTHERWISE, STUDENTS ARE expected to own basic digital audio, photo, video equipment and a laptop with necessary software installed. Specific are here:

<https://www.jou.ufl.edu/current-students/current-undergraduate/current-academics/equipment/>

HOWEVER, IF YOUR need for equipment is crucial (for example, it's harming the project), please speak with us. We can work with you to overcome any difficulty.

HOW-TO-REACH-US TIP

WRITE "JOU 4950" and a few words that describe the essence of your message **in the Subject Line**. Why? Because it makes it easier for us to find you when we have that opportunity to glance at our emails. Important: Always send your email to both professors.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

THIS CLASS IS scheduled to meet once a week for 50 minutes. It's not a lot of time. Whether we meet in person or on Zoom, your attendance is required.

IF YOU MUST miss class, we **DON'T WANT EXCUSE NOTES**. If we do, we will ask you for it (and that would be only in extreme cases).

Check out the way absences are recorded:

1. First absence, 100% excused
2. Second absence, 80%
3. Third absence, 70%
4. Fourth and subsequent absences, 0%
 - o Please note that attendance at the pitch session and final project presentations is mandatory. Not attending will result in a zero for attendance and a one-grade drop for the presentation.

You are responsible for notifying the professors that you will be unable to attend class. You must check Canvas to review the PowerPoint for the day's class and complete the assigned homework by deadline.

JOU 4950 SPRING 2025 COURSE SCHEDULE

- This course schedule is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. -

- Week 1 – Jan. 16** – Welcome, Semester Review & Intro
- Week 2 – Jan. 23** – Brainstorming
- Week 3 – Jan. 30** Pre-Reporting with guest speaker
- Week 4 – Feb. 6** – Research Refresher with guest speaker
- Week 5 – Feb. 13** – Accessing Florida Data
- Week 6 – Feb. 20** – Pitch Presentation Panel Feedback – **Location: Zoom**
- Week 7 – Feb. 27** – Cellphone Reporting
- Week 8 – March 6** – Research Reinforcement with guest speaker
- Week 9 – March 13** – Multimedia Feedback
- Week 10 – March 20** –No class **Spring Break**
- Week 11 – March 27** –Reporting Challenges and Successes
- Week 12 – April 3** – Self-editing Tips
- Week 13 – April 10** – Final Project Presentations – **Location: Zoom**
- Week 14 – April 17** – Final Project Presentations – **Location: Zoom**

GRADING

10% – Assignments and Attendance

You are expected to complete class and homework assignments and submit them when due. Missing a deadline will result in a 0 (zero). No exceptions. When class meets in person, you need to sign the attendance sheet before leaving the room. If you do not sign, you will be recorded as being absent, even if you and I chatted. If class meets online, attendance is automatically recorded by Zoom.

10% – Bi-Weekly Learning Journal (on Adobe Express or Canva).

I've found learning journals useful as a writing tool to reflect on lectures, readings and other class work. Create this assignment on Adobe Express or Canva. Do not submit PDFs or Word Docs.

15% – Three Meet Ups With Professor (January, February, March/April)

Teams and individuals will meet outside of class with the professor. Canvas has dates and times for you to select from for these meet ups.

20% - AP Style Quiz

You'll have 10 days to take this open-book quiz on your own time. It opens at 11:59 p.m. on Feb. 28 and closes 11:59 p.m. on March 10. No extensions.

20% - Pitch Presentation

You will record and submit your pitch for review by a panel. The recorded pitch is due by Feb. 10. The panel will provide you with live feedback during class on Feb. 20. We'll talk more about how this works in class. You are required to attend this class regardless of your excused absence status.

25% - FINAL Project Package with Presentation

Panelists will listen to your presentation on April 10 or 17. You are required to attend both dates, regardless of your excused absence status.

GRADES

Excellent. Strong in every category, especially newsworthiness. Copy/media is usually publishable with little or no editing.

A = 94-100

A- = 90-93

Good. Many strong points. Copy/media is usually publishable with minor editing and revision.

B+ = 87-89

B = 84-86

B- = 80-83

Average. Some strong points. Copy/media needs additional reporting/rewriting.

C+ = 77-79

C = 74 -76

Unacceptable work. Not newsworthy. Weak news value. Not grammatical English. Copy contains major factual, structural, writing or usage flaws. Copy/media fails to meet even minimum standards for the assignment.

C- = 70-73

D+ = 67-69

D = 64 - 66

D- = 60 - 63

E = 59 and below

GRADING PENALTIES

Missed deadline. Missing a deadline will result in a 0 (zero). I do not take off a certain number of points for each day an assignment is late; assignments turned in late by any amount of time at all will receive a zero. No exceptions.

Spelling, grammar, punctuation and style errors will be penalized accordingly: 5 points for every spelling, grammar, punctuation and style error; and 10 points for every fact error, including misspelling a name.

Fact errors: Errors in fact can result in failure of the assignment/project.

Misrepresentation: Grades can be lowered to zero if students misrepresent themselves or act unprofessionally while committing the act of journalism.

Factual math: I do not "round up." An 89.99 is still a B+; it takes a full 90 earned points to receive an A-.

Grades are based on the final product. Not the amount of time or effort put in or how hard you tried. If you believe I have made a mistake in a grade, or do not understand something about your grade, please see me within one week of receiving your grade. No grade changes will be considered after this deadline.

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 University expulsion. Get educated on plagiarism here:

<https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/copyright/plagiarism>

If you have **even the smallest doubt or are confused** about this or anything else in the course, **ASK THE PROFESSOR FOR CLARITY.**

YOUR CONDUCT AS A STUDENT

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. It will be reported to the student's department chair AND to the university's Dean of Students – and **it will result in a failing grade for this course.** A formal report of the offense will be filed with the university's Dean of Students.

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 or exam.
- Submitting work you did for another class or course.
- Copying and pasting text written by another person *or automated system* without 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 exams or quizzes online or with anyone.

A Note About ChatGPT and Similar AI Systems

You may not turn in work that is not your own, including work generated by Chat GPT and other AI programs. If the instructor suspects that a student used an AI system to generate text used

in a written assignment or any type of project, the student will be subject to an oral examination (in Zoom), which will be recorded. If the student is unable to adequately answer questions related to the suspect material(s), a violation of the UF Student Honor Code will be assumed and the above penalties will be applied. Refusal to submit to a recorded oral exam will be taken as an admission of the violation.

UF Student Honor Code

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

ZOOM PROFESSIONALISM

Please be mindful of maintaining a professional appearance and conduct when our class meets online. Consider your wardrobe and hygiene just as you would were we all in the same room, as well as your audio and visual backgrounds.

You are expected to have your camera on during Zoom sessions. If you go to black screen for a significant amount of time, points will be deducted from your attendance/participation score at the instructor's discretion. Note that lectures might be recorded for educational purposes. If you have extenuating circumstances or concerns about Zoom attendance, please see let us know.

Virtual backgrounds

You are encouraged to use virtual backgrounds for Zoom if you want to protect the privacy of your environment or surroundings.

RECORDED MATERIALS

If any of our class sessions are recorded, students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

MASK-RELATED PRACTICES

- There may be times when we meet in person when I feel more comfortable wearing a mask. You are welcome to wear one, too.
- Use your best judgment on physical distancing, particularly when indoors.
- If you are experiencing any illness symptoms ([click here for guidance from the CDC on symptoms of coronavirus](#)), DON'T COME TO CLASS. But please email us and let us know of your impending absence; then rest and know we want you to get better – and see you the following week. REMEMBER: Absence is no excuse for not getting the work done on time.
- Check out [the university attendance and illness policies](#) for more information.

WORDS OF CAUTION

- o Missed deadlines can result in failure of the assignment/project.

- o Errors in facts can result in failure of the assignment/project.
- o Stories in which reporters have conflicts of interest shall result in automatic failure.
- o Grades can be lowered to zero if students misrepresent themselves or act unprofessionally while committing the act of journalism.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

LET US KNOW immediately - informally and then with a formal letter from the proper authorities - if you have a life issue that would hinder your work in this course. We will do our best to help you. Students requesting accommodation must register with the Disability Resource Center -

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/>

STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS

THE U MATTER, WE CARE initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength.

IN CASE of emergency, call 911.

GATOR EVALUATIONS

It's appreciated when students provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluation. You will be notified by email and/or Canvas when the evaluations are open, typically in the last two or three weeks of the semester. Summary results are available to you and the public.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

- E-learning technical support: 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learningsupport@ufl.edu or reach the [website](#).
- For career or academic advice and planning, contact the [Career Connections Center](#) in the Reitz Union, 392-1601.
- To find resources, ask a UF librarian through [Library Support](#). [April Hines](#) serves as the CJC librarian. You can reach her at 273-2728 or aprhone@uflib.ufl.edu
- General study skills and tutoring available from the [Teaching Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420.