



Communication + Journalism

JOU 3300 – ADV NEWS REPORTING – FALL 2017 • 3 UNITS

Prof. Dan Evans • daevans@fiu.edu • (213) 321-3661 • Ofc: AC2 303

Class meets: Mon/Weds 3–4:50 pm @ AC2 258

Ofc Hrs: Mon/Weds 12-1 pm @ AC2 303 and by appointment

CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Intensive instruction and practice in the fundamentals of reporting and writing, including interviewing, data gathering, public records research and legal considerations of news gathering.

PURPOSE

This class provides students real world training in journalism via the South Florida News Service. All students are de-facto members of the press through their association with the SFNS. One only becomes better at the craft of writing and the science of reporting by actually doing it.

In addition, there will be intensive, in-class workshops designed to get students to write quickly, accurately and grammatically. Assignments completed outside of class will be eligible for publication on the SFNS. Such stories will be made available to the wider South Florida media – including the Miami Herald, Sun-Sentinel, Rise Miami and others – for republication on their sites and pages.

OBJECTIVES

Students will learn to generate story ideas, identify and cultivate sources, conduct interviews, organize their articles clearly, and begin to develop a journalistic voice. In addition, extra credit opportunities will be available for those who wish to enhance those stories with video, audio or interactive graphics.

METHOD & COURSE STRUCTURE

JOU 3300 is effectively a newsroom. This means that you are reporters, and I am your editor. Like a professional editor, I will give you direction, push for additional information, help shape stories and assign pieces as necessary. **This also means that deadlines are real.**

Though college can be a (somewhat) benign way to fail, understand I will have no problem severely marking down assignments for factual errors, grammatical sloppiness or late work. In the world, you'd get fired; here you only get an "F." It still hurts, but it's easier to recover.

Also, please note that when I say this course is writing-intensive, I mean it. We will have in-class news drills and hands-on tutorials in addition to your assignments. I strongly subscribe to the truism that the more you write, the better you become.

There is a corollary regarding reporting that states, “The harder you work, the luckier you get.” Along those lines, we will be covering actual stories involving actual human beings. You will need to talk to strangers, some of whom may be less than enthused to speak to you. You will deal with reports, databases and the minutia of civic, county and state government that appear to be written in an alien language. In short, your job is to jump on a train that is already moving. It will not always be pleasant, but if you put in the effort, it will reward you throughout your college career and afterwards.

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS

You must have access to the **AP Stylebook** at all time, whether in class or outside. You can purchase the bound edition or get the smartphone app. Either are fine. In addition, you strongly encouraged to get a copy of **The Elements of Style by Strunk and White**, which provides an enormous number of good writing tips.

We will also be doing a number of courses via NewsU.org. You will need to sign up for an account and pay for our course modules. We will be discussing this on the first day of class.

In addition, you must read the online or print edition of the **Miami Herald** and **New York Times daily**. I strongly suggest you subscribe to the Herald and sign up for the Times online (which is free at nytimes.com/passes). The New York Times is also free on campus. You have no excuse.

Additionally, if you have access to a DSLR, video or audio equipment, I suggest you keep them with you at all times. Though not required for the class, having these materials handy will give you the ability to enhance a story (with the attendant extra credit) when news strikes.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the class, students should have learned:

- Fundamentals of news reporting and interviewing for print and online media
- Necessary skills to report news and write in a journalistic style
- To recognize and respond to ethical principals
- The ability to recognize “angles,” or what makes something newsworthy
- The ability to aggregative various sources with style
- The ability to write quickly and accurately

GRADING CRITERIA

Traditional grades and grade point averages are assigned as follows:

“A” (90-100%) stories are accurate, clear, comprehensive stories that are well written and require only minor editing.

“B” (80-89%) stories require more than minor editing, and have a few style or minor spelling errors or an error of omission.

“C” (70-79%) stories are stories that need considerable editing or rewriting and/or have many minor spelling and style errors.

“D” (60-69%) stories require excessive rewriting; have numerous minor spelling and style errors, and should not have been submitted.

“F” (0-59%) stories have at least one proper name misspelled, and/or one factual error.

The final course grade will use percentages as above, with the addition of high/low letter grades (e.g. A-; B+; C, etc.). Ask if you would like specific percentage data. Please note that CARTA no longer awards grades of C-, D+ or D-.

All assignments will be edited on a professional basis. Each story will be returned with written comments and explanations of any editing. Our style guide will be “The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual.” Your copy should not contain any errors in spelling, style, grammar and facts. There should not be any omissions, either. In fact, any misspelled proper noun (even if it’s due to a typographical error) or any inaccuracy will result in a full-grade markdown. A factual error will also result in a full-grade markdown.

Accuracy is the first law of journalism. Professional journalists are expected to get their facts right, to spell and punctuate correctly, and to respect grammar and syntax. In case of doubt, check your facts, consult the AP Stylebook or a dictionary. It only takes a minute or two to avoid mistakes.

Typing skills are essential in this course. You must be able to use a computer, type fast, and use Word. When working on a computer, save often, make a back-up copy of your work, and print it out at various stages of the writing process. Always keep a hard copy for yourself. Claims that “the computer lost it” will not be accepted as an excuse.

Don’t be discouraged if your writing receives low grades at the beginning of the semester. Your grades will improve. Newswriting and reporting is hard work, but the only way to get better is to keep writing, regardless of the difficulties. I am far more concerned with where you are in the final weeks of the course than how you do in the first weeks of the course.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Late assignments are not accepted. However, late assignments should still be turned in under the rewrite policy. Any assignment receiving a grade of **70%** or lower may be rewritten and turned in **by the following week**. The highest grade a rewrite can receive is an **80%**.

1. Attendance is required for all classes. However, I realize things do happen. To make up for this, you receive one pass. You do not need to clear this in advance, **but you do not get a second one**. One emergency is normal; two is suspicious. I don't need to chase after you or see doctor's notes. Just know you only get one.
2. If you miss a class, please get the notes from another student. I will not hold separate "catch-up" sessions. Again, in-class assignments cannot made-up.
3. In addition to being ethical in developing and writing your stories, it is important that you consider diversity. When looking at your work, you should consider who is involved and how it will impact others. Is your work fair and does it represent all stakeholders in a balanced manner? This class will help you learn how to write in a manner that includes diverse viewpoints. The class will discuss socioeconomic/class, race/ethnicity, religion, gender/sexual orientation, geography and generations in the context of current events.
4. This is a professional degree program. As such, students are expected to deal with each other and with their instructors in a collegial manner. That means you should immediately talk to me if you have any concerns about the course, grading, fellow students, the length of time it takes to get back graded assignments, etc.
5. For purposes of this class, you are a bona fide member of the working press. You should expect to be treated with all of the normal courtesies and privileges afforded to the news media. In return, you are expected to represent the profession in a dignified and appropriate manner. If you do not take yourself seriously, be advised that no one else will.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING PERCENTAGES

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| Biz Card/Selfie Assignments (Pass/Fail) | 5% |
| NewsU.org Modules (Pass/Fail) | 10% |
| First Article | 20% |
| Second Article | 20% |
| Third Article | 20% |
| Final Article | 25% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

A 1% overall grade bonus will be awarded for each piece on the South Florida News Service. **A second overall 1% bonus** will be awarded for any piece also picked up by an outside news outlet.

Finally, **a 1% overall bonus** is available for high-quality video, audio or interactive graphics that accompany each piece. This bonus is only available if the additional material is “A” level work.

Additionally, the winner of the pitch competition receives the coveted “**silver scoop**,” given to the student judged by his/her peers to have the best story idea for each of the three assigned articles. **The winner receives an automatic 5% boost in the grade for that story.**

Finally, a team of two students who agree to lead the discussions on readings will **each receive a 5% boost in the grade for the next upcoming article.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students at Florida International University are expected to adhere to the highest standards of integrity in every aspect of their lives. Honesty in academic matters is part of this obligation.

Academic integrity is the adherence to those special values regarding life and work in an academic community. Any act or omission by a student that violates this concept of academic integrity shall be defined as academic misconduct and shall be subject to the procedures and penalties set forth herein.

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University.

All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Misconduct includes:

Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not.

Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

Fabrication – The quoting or use of sources that do not exist, or stating that a reporter attended an event when he or she did not do so. This is one of the biggest crimes in journalism, and one that will lead to automatic failure in the class and possible expulsion from the university.

About your instructor

Dan Evans is an associate professor of journalism at FIU and the news director of the South Florida News Service, which provides student-produced work to professional news outlets and publications in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Prior to coming to FIU in 2016, Evans oversaw local coverage for numerous communities in Los Angeles County for the Los Angeles Times. The publications he oversaw have received nearly 100 local, state and national awards — including an EPPY from Editor & Publisher — and Evans was personally named journalist of the year by the Los Angeles chapter of SPJ in 2012.

He currently lives in Wynwood, is currently learning Spanish and is more tan than he has ever been. (Yes, I know. But it’s true.)

COURSE SCHEDULE: A WEEKLY BREAKDOWN

Important note to students: Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change – and probably will change – based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

| | Topics | Activities | Deliverable/ Due Dates |
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| <p>Week 1 Aug 21/23</p> | <p>Review syllabus, Associated Press Style.</p> <p>Formal story pitches</p> <p>Assign beats</p> <p>Grammar review</p> <p>NewsU signup</p> | <p>Homework: Complete NewsU.org “Fact Checking” http://www.newsu.org/courses/fact-checking</p> <p>Also you will need to order your business cards. Template is at editordanevans.com. Screenshot of order due Aug 30 at 3 pm.</p> <p>Read: Reuters Handbook: http://handbook.reuters.com/?title=The_Essentials_of_Reuters_sourcing</p> <p>Observer: http://observer.com/2015/04/journalism-s-sourcing-problem/</p> <p>CJR: http://archives.cjr.org/data_points/crowdsourcing_done_right.php</p> | <p>NewsU module due: Aug 30 at 3 pm</p> <p>Complete sourcing readings</p> |

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| <p>Week 2 Aug 28/30</p> | <p>Sourcing City Council</p> | <p>Homework: Go to your assigned beat and get a feel for the place. Take a selfie in front of city hall or other landmark. Enter in 10 sources on Google document.</p> | <p>Source List/Selfie assignment due: Sept 6 at 6 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 3 Sept. 4/6</p> | <p>Sept 4 – Labor Day – No Class Sept. 6 – Field Assignment – No Formal Class Meeting</p> | <p>Complete NewsU module “Fundamentals of Editing”: http://www.newsu.org/courses/fundamentals-editing</p> | <p>First story pitches due: Sept. 11 at 3 pm NewsU module completed by: Sept. 6 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 4 Sept. 11/13</p> | <p>Editing and rewriting</p> | <p>Classwork: - Pitch competition!</p> | |
| <p>Week 5 Sept. 18/20</p> | <p>In field: No formal class meetings</p> | <p>Sign up for one-on-one edits via Doodle</p> | <p>First story (pre-edit) due: Sept. 25 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 6 Sept. 25/27</p> | <p>Peer editing One-on-one editing</p> | <p>Classwork: - Bring in five printed copies of your story for your classmates to edit.</p> | <p>First story (post-edit) due: Oct. 2 at 3 pm Second story pitches due: Oct. 4 at 3 pm Complete ethics readings by next class</p> |

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| <p>Week 7 Oct. 2/4</p> | <p>Review first story</p> <p>Ethics</p> <p>Public Records</p> | <p>Classwork: - Pitch competition!</p> <p>Readings: Gene Weingarten's Pulitzer Prize-winning story: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/27/AR2009022701549.html</p> <p>Poynter Lessons on Charlottesville http://www.poynter.org/2017/how-journalists-should-handle-racist-words-images-and-violence-in-charlottesville-update3/470297/</p> <p>Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics at http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp</p> <p>ONA "Build your own Ethics Code" https://journalists.org/resources/build-your-own-ethics-code/</p> <p>RTNDA Code of Ethics at http://rtnda.org/content/rtdna_code_of_ethics/index.html</p> | |
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| <p>Week 8 Oct. 9/11</p> | <p>In field: No formal class meetings</p> | <p>Sign up for one-on-one edits via Doodle</p> <p>Complete NewsU module “Alternative Story Forms”: http://www.newsu.org/courses/creating-alternative-story-forms</p> | <p>Second story (pre-edit) due: Oct. 16 at 3 pm</p> <p>Complete diversity readings before next class</p> <p>NewsU.org module due: Oct. 11 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 9 Oct. 16/18</p> | <p>Diversity</p> <p>Peer Editing</p> <p>One-on-one editing</p> | <p>Classwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in five printed copies of your story for your classmates to edit. <p>Readings</p> <p>ASNE Newsroom Census http://asne.org/newsroom_census</p> <p>GLAAD Transgender Terms https://www.glaad.org/reference/transgender</p> <p>Covering People with Disabilities https://www.poynter.org/2015/6-tips-for-covering-people-with-disabilities/359267/</p> | <p>Second story (post-edit) due: Oct. 23 at 3 pm</p> <p>Third story pitches due: Oct. 25 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 10 Oct. 23/25</p> | <p>Review second story</p> | <p>Classwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pitch competition! | |

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| <p>Week 11 Oct. 30 /Nov.1</p> | <p>In field: No formal class meetings</p> | <p>NewsU: Plagiarism and Fabrication: https://www.newsu.org/plagiarism-and-fabrication</p> | <p>Complete NewsU.org module by Nov. 1 at 3 pm</p> <p>Third story (pre-edit) due: Nov. 6 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 12 Nov. 6/8</p> | <p>Economic literacy</p> <p>Peer editing</p> <p>One-on-one editing</p> | <p>Classwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in five printed copies of your story for your classmates to edit. | <p>Third story (post-edit) due: Nov. 13 at 3 pm</p> <p>Final story pitches due: Nov. 15 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 13 Nov. 13/15</p> | <p>Review of third story</p> | <p>Classwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pitch competition! | |
| <p>Week 14 Nov. 20/22</p> | <p>In field: No formal class meetings</p> | | <p>Final story (pre-edit) due: Nov. 27 at 3 pm</p> |
| <p>Week 15 Nov. 27/29</p> | <p>Peer editing</p> <p>One-on-one editing</p> <p>Recap</p> <p>Review of trouble spots</p> | <p>Classwork:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bring in five printed copies of your story for your classmates to edit. - Food! | <p>Final story (post-edit) due: Dec. 8 at 2 pm</p> |

List of Deadlines/Deliverables

All work must be submitted on a Word document to daevans@fiu.edu with your name and the assignment **both in the file of the document and in the document itself.** (E.g. “Dan Evans – Story Pitch #1”)

| <u>Date/Time</u> | <u>Assignment</u> |
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| Aug. 30 at 3 pm | NewsU.org – Fact Check |
| Aug. 30 at 3 pm | Business Card Assignment |

In-field (No class meetings) Sept. 4/6

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| Sept. 6 at 6 pm | Source List/Selfie Assignment |
| Sept. 6 at 3 pm | NewsU.org – Fundamentals of Editing |
| Sept. 11 at 3 pm | Story Pitches for First Article |

In-field (No class meetings) Sept. 18/20

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|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sept. 25 at 3 pm | First Article Due (pre-edit) |
| Oct. 2 at 3 pm | First Article Due (post-edit) |
| Oct. 4 at 3 pm | Story Pitches for Second Article |
| Oct. 11 at 3 pm | NewsU.org – Alternative Story Forms |

In-field (No class meetings) Oct. 9/11

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|-----------------|--|
| Oct. 16 at 3 pm | Second Article Due (pre-edit) |
| Oct. 23 at 3 pm | Second Article Due (post-edit) |
| Oct. 25 at 3 pm | Story Pitches for Third Article |
| Nov. 1 at 3 pm | NewsU.org – Plagiarism and Fabrication |

In-field (No class meetings) Oct. 30 / Nov. 1

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|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Nov. 6 at 3 pm | Third Article Due (pre-edit) |
| Nov. 13 at 3 pm | Third Article Due (post-edit) |
| Nov. 15 at 3 pm | Story Pitches for Final Article |

In-field (No class meetings) Nov. 20/22

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|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Nov. 27 at 3 pm | Final Article Due (pre-edit) |
| Dec. 8 at 2 pm | Final Article Due (post-edit) |