



JRL 5090

Syllabus

Spring Semester - 2018



Instructors

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Overview

The most critical difference between this course and other courses is that you will work as a professional, not a student. This is work. We are proud to say that the students who have graduated from this program tell us that they are better prepared than any other students they meet because of this. We're equally proud to say the people who hire our graduates tell us the same thing— because of this.

Changes

You will note some changes from the way *Newssource* has been produced in the past. We will continue to put more emphasis on digital. The web, mobile, Facebook, Tweets, Snapchat, Instagram and Periscope, will come first. The broadcast show will come at the end of the day. It will be both live and modular, like last semester. You will still rotate through positions. You will still do real reporting on the community. Your work will still air to the public. But the workflow will be a bit different.



Objectives

The primary purpose is to get you to understand the journalistic principles that underlie **ALL** news - digital, broadcast, or print. Secondly we want you to

understand the value of, and importance of, visual storytelling. To do that, you have to have technical, conceptual, and practical understanding.

Schedule

In the first week, you will refresh some skills you were taught in the previous classes by Professors Shumway, Castengera, Pjesivac and others and learning about the workflow. Then, you will rotate through all the positions in the news operation. The start of live newscasts will depend on our assessment of your level of preparedness but we expect to start filing for the web and producing video news modularly (which will be explained in class) sooner rather than later, probably the second week.

Faculty will make adjustments to the schedule and syllabus as needed to adjust to the news situation.

Expectations

This is technically a “class” but, as you all know, it is not a typical “class” setting and we don’t treat you as “students.” We treat you as professionals. We expect you to behave like professionals. Equally important, you have a responsibility to the public. We expect you to live up to that responsibility.

We run this “classroom” using the same standards and expectations of any journalism newsroom in the country. We demand a lot from you. We expect a lot from you. We do that for you so you will enjoy success because you will have the skills, knowledge, and experience to provide the highest level of service to your audiences.



Even if you do not pursue digital journalism as a career, you will find the thinking skills, practical skills, and knowledge you acquire in this process will prepare you for any profession you choose. We have numerous testimonials from former students, saying that as well.

What we teach are things you can’t learn from a book. It is the ability to think – critically, creatively, and quickly. The process we employ is a total immersion.

There are three over-riding goals:

- 1) Transition from a consumer to a producer of broadcast and digital news.

- 2) Transition from print to digital writing.
- 3) Transition from college student to professional multimedia journalist.

VIP (Very Important Point): From now on you are a **JOURNALIST**. The same standards that apply in a newsroom apply here. You will be expected to act like adults and professionals, NOT like kids or students.

To make the transition from college student to professional broadcast journalist, you will need to work hard and to work smart.

Course Changes

By virtue of something as simple as your date of birth, you are in a position to reinvent your chosen profession. The traditional profession of journalism – print, broadcast and digital – is in a massive state of flux. These advances are influencing our society as profoundly as the inventions that fostered the Industrial Revolution.

There are two key positions in any newsroom – the broadcast producer and the digital producer. These are co-equal positions, and they will be treated as such, with the final call going to the broadcast producer for TV and the digital producer for mobile and the web. The other key position is the Assignment Editor. All reporters, all photographers, anchors, all positions will answer equally to the persons occupying those roles.

The broadcast producer is responsible for insuring that all stories are researched and written, all packages are produced by deadline, and that the director and production staff are kept up to date on the rundown and structure of the newscast.

The digital producer is responsible for producing constant updates as stories change. “Constant” means “constant, starting 9:30 in the morning.”

The assignment editor is responsible for making sure reporters and all news gatherers are accounted for throughout the day and that the two producers are fully informed of any news developments throughout the day. The assignment editor is the person who “fills the bucket”. The producers reach in and decides what they want from the bucket. The assignment editor is responsible for making sure we don’t miss stories.

All other job responsibilities should be familiar to you from previous classes. However, we will be reviewing all the positions, and what is expected from you in those jobs, during our first week.

3. Course Objectives

To make the transition from being a consumer of news to a producer of news, you must understand the mechanics of getting a newscast on air on time while seamlessly serving news and information to your audiences through the day on multiple platforms including, but not necessarily limited to, online and through texts, tweets, and mobile phones. You will master the skills of gathering and accurately and truthfully presenting the news on these varied platforms and develop a broad knowledge base.

Most importantly, you must appreciate the importance of honesty and truth in everything you do.

A copy of the Radio Television Digital News Association (RTDNA) Code of Ethics is on the wall in the newsroom. Learn it. Print it. Look it up online if you have an issue. Work according to its standards and ask questions if you don't understand.

Remember the axiom that, in the end, all any of us owns is our good name. When you produce stories that have a negative impact on a person and that story is found to be in error because you failed to use appropriate care as outlined in the Code of Ethics, the damage lasts forever – you cannot “un-ring the bell.”

In today's journalism world, you are expected to have multiple skills. It goes under different names – Multimedia Journalist, Backpack Journalist, One-Man Bands, Video Journalist. Whatever the name, the expectation is the same-- to have creative and writing abilities, technical understanding and practical skills.

Technical Skills

Videography (Shooting). Most of you are already familiar with the cameras we will be using in Newsource, but we will use a couple of different types. The principles are the same in all of them.

Nonlinear Editing. Our primary system this semester will be Adobe Premiere which you are also familiar with.



Computer Newsroom System. Again, many of you already know the system -- CAN, Computer Assisted Newsroom, to construct newscast rundowns and write stories. You will not print your stories for executive producer review. You will aim them at it in CAN so we can save paper.



Lighting. You will be shooting inside and outside, in studio and “on the run.” You should know the differences in demands. And you will HAVE to light indoors.

Audio. It is just as important as the video. You must be “ear catching” as well as “eye catching” in what you produce.

Internet/ Web Skills. As noted earlier, we are going to put even more emphasis on the Website and social media networking.

Creative Appreciation

Videography. Framing, Sequencing, Match Action. Composition.

Editing. Sequencing. Natural sound use. Opening and Closing shots. Iconography.

Producing versus Stacking. Story and audience flow. Use of graphics. Camera shots and angles.

Package Production Techniques. Use of Nat Sound Color ‘pops.’ Story Flow. Soundbite use.

Internet/ Web/ Social Media. Viewer dialogue. Engagement. News and Marketing dimensions.

Journalistic Understanding

Interview Skills. Have a conversation, not an interview. Questions that elicit answers, not 'yes' or 'no' replies.

Information gathering. You must be thorough in your research on-line and through phone and in person interviews.

Information "vetting." Do you know the information you have gathered is true? Who is your source? Do you have the data to support the information?

Fairness/ Balance/ Perspective. There is a minimum of two sides to every story. Usually three – for – against – independent

You are expected, from this day forward, to know what is the lead national, state, and local story *at all times*. There are simply no acceptable excuses.

You will be expected to read/watch/ listen to:

VIP (Very Important Point): You should use other news media to broaden your knowledge of news and current events. You do **NOT** use other news media as news sources unless you attribute the information to them, and then only sparingly. You **MUST** verify the information first yourself.

OnlineAthens
ATHENS BANNER-HERALD

Anybody using other news source material without either verifying the information or attributing the source will be given an "F" for that day. Repeated offenses will result in an "F" for the course.

- The Atlanta Journal or Constitution (daily)
- The Athens Banner Herald (daily)
- The Red and Black (Candidly, we are not as concerned with this because its total focus is university news only.)
- At least one local television evening newscast (daily)
- At least one local television morning newscast (daily)
- At least one Athens radio newscast (daily) WGAU, Fox Radio

VIP (Very Important Point): We have a shared responsibility (you and your professors) to inform the viewers, to cover the news, to produce a product that meets not only legal and journalistic standards but moral and ethical standards as well. You represent the audience in your interaction with officials.

The Schedule

Please make certain you have read the syllabus and understand it. Be prepared to ask questions about it. Your first and second days of class will include basic introductions and re-introductions to each other, to the systems, to the equipment. We will review basic operations, the semester schedule, explain job assignments, roles and responsibilities; plus take care of some housekeeping chores like photos for press passes, waivers, etc.

**EHCE Undergraduate Class Schedule
Fall Semester**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:00	305	310	305	310	305
9:00	200 353 432		200 353 432		200 353 432
10:00	305 470	340	305 470	340	305 470
11:00	301 454	215 360 411	301 454	215 360 411	301 411 lab 454
12:00					
1:00	370	300 444	370	300 lab	370 100
2:00	201 302	441	201 302 444 lab	441	201 411 lab 302
3:00	305	465	300 lab	465	
4:00		420			
5:00					
6:00		423		422	
7:00					

Multidisciplinary
WR/Env
Infrastructure
Transp/PM

There are two sets of waivers for you to review. One is the camera liability waiver; the other is the liability form concerning the use of your personal vehicle for travel off campus to cover news events.

There will be two levels of starting the newscasts. The first will be the second week, when we begin to update the website and produce content modularly. The second is when we begin the broadcast newscast, which will be a combination of a live first block and modularly produced clips, which will call “SuperClips”. We will make the determination of when to start the second layer based on your level of preparedness and the technology. A full, detailed schedule outlining positions alphabetically and chronologically will be provided later.

You will be doing 30:00 minute newscasts Monday through Thursday. Friday is reserved under the present system for other possible student programs. Later in the semester, we allow a little more flexibility in the schedules to allow people to spend more time in positions they are interested in.

General Daily Schedule

9:00 a.m. – Editorial Meeting. Everybody is expected to contribute ideas. This is when decisions are made about story coverage. The focus is on LOCAL news possibilities; do NOT re-hash stories everybody should know about or national and international stories we can do nothing about unless there is a local angle. (Producer and Assignment Editor will be expected to be in half an hour earlier.)

11:00 a.m. - Web producer should have already posted the major stories of the day, reporters on each should have sent in both text content, a video clip, and Tweeted about it and any sound bites that are available. TV producer goes over rundown with the EP.

1 p.m. - Anchors in their seats on the set, ready to record clips. (Three tries only to record a clip right, taking the best of the three.) Show staff will also be in at one to assist.

2:00 p.m. – Broadcast newscast Rundown finalized by the producer in consultation with the director and executive producer.

3:30 p.m. – Directors’ Meeting. Production staff and studio on-air talent are expected to attend. Taping of SuperClips goes on during this time to 4 PM, when it ends. Everything after that is live.

5:00 p.m. – Broadcast newscast airs.

5:30 p.m. – Newscast Review and Critique. We will discuss what you did right, what you did wrong, what you could do better. This is an essential part of the learning process. As you know, these reviews also are aired live and streamed. It might run longer than a half hour and usually does.

Presume we will be VERY interested in constantly updating the web page and all of the associated postings, so this schedule is just a “rough” schedule as markers.

VIP – These are “critique” sessions. You will be told what you (and we) did right, and what we can do better. Do Not take it personally. Deal with it professionally.

Remember, we are available to offer individual critiques of your work along the way and are pleased to do so; However, you will have to initiate the conversation. We are as vitally interested – or disinterested – in your career as you are in your future. Take advantage of this offer. It is to your benefit.

Disclaimer

The university demands that student and teacher work reflect an honest effort, in both the pursuit and presentation of your work. This is the official notice the University asks us to include in the Syllabus:

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Each student is responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work.

More details are available here: <https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-policy>

Point: The newscasts are broadcast on Charter Cable via the University channel over a three county area live at 5:00 p.m., with the critique, also airing live, at 5:30 p.m. In addition, we live stream the newscasts on UStream, which means it has local, state, national and even international distribution. And your mom and dad can watch it.

What You Will Do

As you know, Grady Newsource, or to use the official title, JRL-5590, are not traditional ‘classroom’ courses. They are actual hands-on, working experience. Everybody will rotate through the different positions in a newsroom. These include anchor, reporter, photographer, producer and digital producer.

During a normal 15-week semester, you should work each position at least once, possibly twice. The rotations are done on a scheduled basis to give everybody an equal chance to work every position. **You may not swap shifts without specific approval by the professors.**

We will allow some swapping of position after the middle of the semester if you want more time in one particular position you’re interested in.



VIP: All scripts must be approved before air. Reporter packages must be approved by an executive producer. **IF YOUR STORY IS NOT APPROVED, IT WILL NOT AIR!**

Deadlines: Throughout the day there are deadlines that you will be expected to meet. These include scripts, video and graphics. A separate one-sheeter listing deadline times will be supplied by the student production managers.

Warning: The critique sessions are blunt, direct and honest. But they are not personal. So, don't take them personally. Treat them as they are intended – criticisms meant to make you better. And remember, the standards being applied are PROFESSIONAL standards, not student or amateur level standards.

Disclaimer

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Again, the University asks teachers to note this disclaimer in their syllabus. Again, though, in no other major is this more critical or central to how we operate. News is a constant response to changes and crises. Adaptability and flexibility are two key words.

Grades



We know they are important to you and important to your academic career. We take the grading process very seriously for that reason. But be aware that nobody in the work world will ever ask you about your GPA. They will want to know what you know – do you understand journalistic principles... can you write... can you shoot... can you edit... can you do the job.

What doesn't count:

- **Just showing up.** You don't get an automatic "B" for attendance. In fact, you don't even get an automatic "C" for attendance.
- **Comparisons.** You will be graded on YOUR work, not on your work compared to other people's work.

What does count:

- ★ **Results – Getting the facts from primary sources. Getting the facts right.** Meeting deadlines. Writing good copy. Generating stories. Getting stories. Performing well on air.
- ★ **Attendance** -- In order for a show to get on the air, everyone has to do his or her part; in order to do their part, they have to be present. Cuts are unacceptable. You are expected to be present every day. Period.
- ★ **Team Effort** – The final product is the result of everyone’s combined efforts. You will be expected to do your job and to help your fellow student-journalists to get these newscasts on air. Broadcast news is a collective business.

Note: Under our system, the producer of the newscast and the digital producer assigns grades, one grade for the week by the TV producer for one of the two courses, the other by the digital producer. These grades are given to the instructors who use them as PART of the total grading process. At any point, we will be happy to discuss your current grade.

Special Note: We put a greater weight on your performance in the second half of the semester, when you have had more hands-on experience, more constructive feedback and more opportunities to use your skills. That is why we strongly encourage each one of you to meet with us to discuss not just your grade but your overall performance, in addition to the regular critiques. We would especially like to meet with each one of you just before the mid-term break.

VIP: In the end, your grade is our subjective assessment, based on our years of experience, of how well you accomplish the goals stated above on a professional level.

Specific Grades

We believe management training should also be part of this course. Your grade will be determined each week we are producing content **by both the Digital Producer and Broadcast Producer**. So you will get two grades each week. They will be combined for the final 6 hour grade. Each producer will submit a recommended grade form by the following Monday after they produce which will include a recommended grade and a one line reason for the grade. Professors will record both grades, add their own observations, and then assign a grade for that week. Producer grades will be assigned singularly by the professors.

- * **Producers who do not submit a grade form by the following Friday, i.e. the Friday after the week after they have produced, will have their own grade reduced by two letter grades for that producing assignment.**
- * **Producers who submit all “A” grades will have the grade form returned to them for a more honest, realistic assessment.**
- * **ALL staff must be evaluated and a grade submitted for each.**

Grading Criteria

You will be assessed (or will assess your team) on the following criteria:

- knowledge of the news
- ability to meet deadlines
- ability to find stories and story angles
- ability to write well conversationally
- punctuality and cooperation
- willingness to help make the entire news gathering operation better
- ability to write and edit well

The course grade will consist of:

- 100% from these twice weekly grades, plus instructor’s observations.

There will be no midterm or final as this course is made up of continuous, practical lab exercises.

And Finally...

The ***Grady Newsource*** course is well known to be a tough, demanding, rigorous program. And it is. In large part, that is because these are NOT *university* newscasts. These are *community* newscasts. That means you must reflect the community and reflect the professional standards of any news operation in any part of the United States.

We know your work in Grady Newsource will prepare for the so-called ‘real world.’ It must, because as a community newscast, by the time you complete the courses you will have, in effect, operated in that ‘real world.’ Your stories will matter to people. They will impact people. You are producing news that will influence your audiences. They will make life decisions based on what you show and tell them.

After you have completed the program you will join an elite group of people who are smarter than their peers, more skilled than their colleagues, more knowledgeable than their coworkers. But most of all, people who are successful.

The history of journalism in the United States is rooted in our unique First Amendment; once you graduate and work in the “real world” you are responsible for determining how well you use these new technologies. You are supposed to advance our democratic society by assuring that you make every effort to provide honest, accurate, actionable information to America’s citizens.

As the lettering over the door stated when you enter Grady:

You Are Democracy’s Next Generation.

