

JRLC 4800: Multiplatform Storytelling for Sports

Spring 2022

3-4:45 p.m. Mondays/Wednesdays

Journalism 242

Prof. Vicki Michaelis, vickim@uga.edu

Office: Room 423A, Journalism Building

Office hours: 1:30-3 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Communication: I will communicate with you primarily through our class Slack channel. The only exception will be communications about your grades, which I will send to your UGA email address. If you need to reach me, please DM me in the class Slack channel between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. If you reach out at other times, I will not respond until after 8 a.m. the next weekday. My goal is to respond to all communications within 24 hours of receipt. If I fail to do this, please feel free to circle back with me.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Through a critical, creative and independent approach, identify and report a wide range of sports stories, including those that reflect diversity and inclusion.
- Develop and refine source-building, interviewing, researching and other reporting skills.
- Learn and practice elements of good journalistic storytelling, including: scene; anecdotes; telling details; dialogue; character and plot development.
- Learn and practice elements of good journalistic writing, including: ledes; nut grafs; simple sentence construction; active verbs; punctuation for pacing; fresh similes, metaphors and analogies.
- Continue developing basic competency with audio and visual forms of storytelling including photos, videos and infographics.
- Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts to journalistic storytelling.
- Learn how to build the background knowledge and source list necessary to cover a beat.
- Develop and hone content- and line-editing skills to evaluate stories for accuracy, fairness, clarity, and adherence to proper style and grammar.
- Learn and practice basic principles of search engine optimization for digital and social platforms.

- Test and innovate on new platforms while applying journalistic fundamentals and ethics.
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COURSEWORK

Video profile, team assignment (15 points or 15% of your grade)

A two-minute video profile and digital (written) story that you and a classmate will produce on an athlete, coach or other sports figure. Must include interview clips from at least two people in addition to the profile subject.

Trend or behind-the-numbers infographic and written story, individual assignment (15%)

An infographic that illustrates a trend or behind-the-numbers sports story. Written version must reflect that you interviewed at least two sources, including an unbiased expert.

Written enterprise story, individual assignment (20%)

A 750-word written sports story that fits any [story type](#) except a profile, trend or behind-the-numbers story. Must reflect that you interviewed at least four sources.

Audio project, team assignment (12.5%)

An audio project that you and a classmate will produce. Details TBA.

Homework (12.5%)

Five assignments, all designed to give you experience with multiplatform storytelling skills. Assignments will be detailed in the #schedule on Slack. Each is worth 2.5 points. They will be graded on a pass-fail basis. If you complete the assignment on time and in full, you will receive the full 2.5 points. If you don't, you will receive zero points.

Quizzes (10%)

Ten quizzes will be given in eLC to ensure that you read the assigned material and are prepared for in-class discussions and exercises and assignments. Each quiz is worth one point. If you pass the quiz, you will earn the point. If you fail the quiz or don't take the quiz, you will earn zero points.

Participation/Preparedness (10%)

I expect you to be an engaged contributor to discussions and activities. Often, this will require completing pre-class prep that will be fully detailed in the schedule. For every instance in which it is apparent you did not complete the prep or in which you do not contribute to class discussions, two points will be deducted from this grade. You also will be assessed a two-point deduction for every unexcused absence.

Digital portfolio update (5%)

You will update your digital portfolio at the end of the semester.

Extra credit

You can earn extra credit by attending specific on-campus discussions, events and professional activities. I will post these opportunities in the #schedule on Slack.

REPORTING STANDARDS

The stories you write and produce this semester will not be tied to specific sports events. I want you to explore stories outside of event coverage. Remember that every story must answer these two questions for the reader:

- Why now?
- Why should we care?

For all class assignments, you will be expected to know and adhere to the following reporting standards:

- All information and quotes in stories must come from original reporting — you must get it yourself, directly from your sources. You must clear any exceptions with me, in writing via Slack DM, before turning in a story.
- You should not have sports information directors (SIDs), athletic directors (ADs), public relations staffers or anyone else conduct interviews for you.
- An SID or other public- or media-relations employee would count as a source only in special circumstances, which you need to clear with me, in writing via Slack DM, before using that person as a source.
- You should not conduct any interviews via email or text. You must clear any exceptions with me, in writing via Slack DM, before agreeing to them. **I will automatically deduct 25% from your assignment grade if I find out you did not conduct an interview in person or by phone without my written approval.** For video stories, you can conduct interviews via Zoom, but only if an

in-person interview is not possible. Your finished product will be much better if you conduct your video interviews in person.

- The required source minimums for stories do not include documents or reports or information you find on the Internet. Those would be additional. The minimums include only people you interview, either in person or by phone.

GRADING

All work will be graded according to how much editing it would need before being published or broadcast by a professional media outlet, as outlined below. Grades are not negotiable. But if you have concerns about your progress and learning, **please DM me in Slack within seven days** of receiving the grade so that we can talk through the feedback. I do not round up for assignments or the final grade.

- A (90-100%): Needs only some editing.
- B (80-89%): Needs some structural revisions but no additional reporting.
- C (70-79%): Needs some structural revisions and some additional reporting.
- D (60-69%): Basic framework in place but needs significant additional reporting.
- F: Assignment needs to be entirely redone.

You can earn a total of 100 points in this class. For your final letter grade, I will use a plus/minus system:

- A (93.0-100)
- A- (90.0-92.9)
- B+ (87.0-89.9)
- B (83.0-86.9)
- B- (80.0-82.9)
- C+ (77.0-79.9)
- C (73.0-76.9)
- C- (70.0-72.9)

REQUIRED RESOURCES

- AP Stylebook OR subscription to AP Stylebook online OR AP Stylebook app for iOS or Android
- A laptop computer or tablet with wi-fi access

- A still/video camera and an audio recorder that allow you to capture and send files in digital format. If your smartphone can handle all of this, that will work. For audio assignments and video stories beyond in-class exercises and homework, you should use the college's equipment (see below).

Equipment Checkout

For audio and video stories, either check with me to use Sports Media's equipment or check out equipment from the Field Equipment Supply Room (FESR), located in room 145 of the Journalism building. Jim Black, the college's resource manager, runs the FESR. Either he or a student manager will check out the equipment to you. Mr. Black's email address is jimblack@uga.edu. You will need your student ID when you check out equipment. You are expected to know and follow [the FESR policies](#) when checking out equipment.

Journalism Department Resources

[Newssource Local Style Guide](#), [Digital Stylebook](#) and [Suggested Digital Programs and Tools](#) (bookmark/save the Google docs, not the website)

CLASS RULES

1. All assignments and exercises are to be turned in by the designated deadline, unless I announce otherwise. **If you miss the deadline for sharing budget lines, pitches, ideas and/or drafts, I will automatically deduct 25% from your assignment grade. If you miss the deadline for turning in the final version of the assignment, you will get a zero for the assignment.** No exceptions, unless you provide documented proof of a major medical or other emergency. (Please see the definition of an emergency in rule No. 6.) Problems with technology or other equipment do not constitute excusable emergencies. You are responsible for testing your equipment ahead of the deadline.
2. Your assignments must be written/produced to the assigned length. **I will deduct 10 percent from the assignment grade for stories that are more than 10 percent shorter or longer than the assigned length.**
3. Your assignments must conform to AP style and the rules of proper grammar. **If you have more than five style and/or grammatical errors in one assignment, I will deduct 10 percent from your assignment grade.**
4. You must avoid factual errors in your assignments. **The first factual error you make will automatically reduce your assignment grade by half. Any others, throughout the duration of the semester, will result in a grade of zero for the assignment.** It will be difficult to pass the class if you have factual errors in

two assignments. Some of the most common factual errors are misspelled names and other proper nouns (such as place names and company names), incorrect titles and incorrect statistics. I recommend you double-check all proper nouns and numbers in your stories before submitting them.

5. For every assignment, you must provide the contact information (email address and/or phone number) for each of your sources by the assignment deadline. You can either DM me the contact information (for audio and video stories) or include it in the Google doc that contains your story (either at the top or bottom or bottom of your story). **Failure to include or to send me the contact information by the assignment deadline will result in an automatic 10 percent deduction in your assignment grade.** If you accessed athletes and/or coaches through a sports information director or someone else, give me that person's contact information.
6. **You are allowed three unchallenged absences during the semester. Any absences beyond the three each will result in a two-point deduction from your participation grade.** If you have a major medical or other emergency that results in more than three absences, you must provide documentation. In general, I would classify a major emergency as something that keeps you out of all your UGA classes and activities for more than a week. I only want documentation for major emergencies. If you have a medical or other situation that keeps you out of class for just a day, that day will count against your unchallenged absences. I do not want documentation in those instances. You are responsible for finding out what was covered in class on days you are absent. I will not provide slides or notes.
7. If, during class time, I see you using your cell phone or any other device — including your laptop — for anything other than class-related purposes, **I will assess a two-point deduction to your participation grade.** In other words, it will be the same as if you were absent from the class. I will grant an exception to this rule if a source for a class assignment contacts you or a personal emergency arises during class.
8. You are allowed to miss class to conduct an interview or attend a media availability for class purposes, if you notify me at least 24 hours in advance. These absences will not count against your three unchallenged absences. **However, if you do not provide 24-hour advance notice and/or I find out there was no media availability or interview – I will be spot-checking – I will deduct two points from your participation grade for the absence.**
9. While you are in class, and while you are representing the class, you are not a sports fan. Leave your loyalties at home. Do not wear team logos or any other sports-related clothing or other items to class, or to any event you attend or any interview you conduct for this class. **If you conduct a Zoom interview, this rule**

still applies. Also check to be sure there are no sports logos anywhere in your background during Zoom interviews. Lastly, dress professionally for Zoom interviews. Represent yourself, UGA and Sports Media @ UGA well.

10. Be aware that any form of plagiarism will trigger harsh consequences, possibly including a failing grade for the class and expulsion from the University. If you are unclear on what constitutes plagiarism, please check with me.

POLICIES

1. As the instructor, I respect all students and viewpoints. I expect you to extend the same courtesy to your classmates and to me at all times. If I fail to do this, please call me on it — respectfully, of course — and I will do the same for you.
2. As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found [here](#). Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to me.
3. The University of Georgia is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for qualified students with disabilities in accordance with state and federal laws including the American Disabilities Act. Help for disabled students is available from the Disability Resource Center. More information is available at www.dissvcs.uga.edu. If you have a particular issue that needs to be accommodated, please share it with me as early as possible in the semester.
4. Students who miss classes, quizzes or assignments as a part of their religious observance will be provided with a fair opportunity to complete their academic responsibilities. Absences for religious reasons do not relieve students from responsibility for any part of the coursework required during the period of absence. Students must provide the instructor with a week's notice of the dates of holidays on which they plan to be absent.
5. To foster a safe learning environment in which various viewpoints are respected, the redistribution of audio, visual or video recordings or transcripts thereof **is prohibited** without the written permission of the faculty members in charge of the class and the permission of all students who are recorded. We endeavor to construct a learning environment where individuals can test out ideas in a trusting environment, and making public our private discussions focused on learning is a violation of this classroom trust — whether virtual or in person.
6. Students who train or use service animals should be aware of UGA policy. A FAQ is available at <http://eoo.uga.edu/policies/pdfs/ServiceAnimalPolicyFAQ.pdf>.

7. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations may be necessary. If they are, they will be posted on the class web site and, when possible, announced in class.

CORONAVIRUS INFORMATION

The guidance referenced in this syllabus is subject to change based on recommendations from the Georgia Department of Public Health, the University System of Georgia or the Governor's Office. For the latest on UGA policy, visit coronavirus.uga.edu.

What is the expectation for face coverings?	Following guidance from the University System of Georgia, face coverings are recommended for all individuals while inside campus facilities.
What do I do if I have COVID-19 symptoms?	Students showing COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see this website .
What do I do if I test positive for COVID-19?	If you test positive for COVID-19, you are required to report it through DawgCheck . UGA adheres to Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) quarantine and isolation guidance and requires that it be followed. Follow the instructions when you report your positive test result in DawgCheck.
What do I do if I am exposed?	<p>Students in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 are no longer required to quarantine if they have been fully vaccinated and show no symptoms.</p> <p>Students who are not fully vaccinated and have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for at least five days. Report the need to quarantine on DawgCheck and communicate directly with your professor. For additional help, reach out to Student Care and Outreach.</p>

MENTAL HEALTH, WELLNESS AND ACADEMIC RESOURCES

If you or someone you know needs assistance, contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit its [website](#). They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA offers free workshops, classes, mentoring and health coaching led by licensed clinicians or health educators to support your well-being and mental health: well-being.uga.edu; #BeWellUGA.

Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) is your go-to, on-campus resource for emotional, social and behavioral-health support:

- caps.uga.edu
- TAO Online Support (caps.uga.edu/tao/)
- 24/7 support at 706-542-2273
- Crisis support: healthcenter.uga.edu/emergencies

Academic and career resources

- Academic coaching through the [Office of Academic Enhancement](#)
- The college's [student organizations](#)
- [College Career Services](#)