CROSS-LISTED:

**JOU3405-B51: South Florida News Service: The Newsroom**  
**JOU4101-B51: South Florida News Service: In-Depth Reporting**

Semester: Fall 2015  
Classroom: AC II #255 & 303 Lab  
Date/Time: Mondays & Wednesdays 11 am-12:50 pm

Professor Chris Delboni  
Office: AC2 #303  
Work: 305-919-5639 | Cell: 202-413-1418 | Email: cdelboni@fiu.edu

Office Hours: Monday – 4 – 5 pm, Wed. - 10 – 11 am, and by appointment  
SFNS news meetings: Monday – 1 p.m. – 1:45 p.m., and by appointment

**CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

**JOU 3405: South Florida News Service: The Newsroom** - Instruction and practice in researching, reporting and writing a variety of complex news stories. Teaches the fundamentals of reporting, interviewing, public records and writing news, the basic skills required for any sort of journalism. Write and produce feature stories, such as human interest, trends and personality profiles.

**JOU 4101: SFNS: In-Depth Reporting** - Advanced instruction and practice in researching, reporting and writing a variety of complex news stories. Write and produce more advanced and in-depth news stories.

**PREREQUISITES:**

**JOU3405:** Before enrolling in this course, students must have been granted full admission into SJMC's upper division. Department consent required. Prerequisites: MMC3104C, JOU3003, have completed 60 credits, passing score in MMC3003 and 3.0 cumulative GPA. [Substitutes for JOU3117: News Reporting and Writing]

**JOU4101:** Before enrolling in this course, students must have been granted full admission into SJMC's upper division. Department consent required. Prerequisites: MMC3104C, JOU3003, JOU3117 or JOU3405, have completed 60 credits, passing score in MMC3003 and 3.0 cumulative GPA. [Substitutes for JOU3300: Advanced News Writing]
PURPOSE:
The cross-listed courses JOU3405 and JOU4101 provide practice in newsgathering and reporting in a “convergent” newsroom environment. In these courses, students learn the basics of solid reporting, news writing skills, multimedia journalism and news values. As part of the class, students will write and publish stories for the South Florida News Service, a partnership with mainstream media such as the Miami Herald, Sun-Sentinel, Palm Beach Post and Scripps newspapers, among others.

This is a laboratory course that prepares students to function as journalists in traditional and new media environments. Lectures, research, deadline writing, coaching, critiquing, in-class and outside assignments will be elements of the class sessions.

OBJECTIVES:
Students will learn how to generate story ideas, focus story angles, research, identify and locate sources, conduct interviews, structure stories in the appropriate genre, write clearly and concisely -- and have the opportunity, if they wish, to produce videos and/or other multimedia and visual elements to complement their news stories.

METHOD & COURSE STRUCTURE:
JOU-3405/SOUTH FLORIDA NEWS SERVICE: THE NEWSROOM and JOU-4101/SFNS: IN-DEPTH REPORTING operate as a newsroom and wire service for professional media outlets. That means you are the reporters, and I am your editor.

The courses are writing-intensive. You will be reporting and writing under deadline pressure on a daily basis - not only during class time. The more you write, the better you'll write.

We will cover real stories with real people. You are expected to pitch ideas, write “news budget” lines, go out to report, gather background information, talk to people and find sources, organize your stories and publish at professional and student publications.

In class, we will discuss many of the fundamentals: What is a lead, what makes a good story, what is the importance of the focus of a story. Many of the stories will be read aloud and discussed in class. Through this method, you’ll get an instant grasp of the effect of your story on the audience, what works and what doesn’t work.

By the end of the semester, students will have completed at least four assignments:

*JOU3405 students will have a chance to work on one assignment for practice and three others with potential for publication. The grading system will be discussed below. The assignments will add up to 75% of your grade
*JOU4101* students will have different options to work on throughout the semester: two in-depth stories; one in depth and one with a multimedia element; simpler, quick turnaround news stories – or a combination to be discussed on a one-on-one basis. The grading system will be discussed below. The assignments will add up to 80% of your grade.

If you write additional assignments, I will consider the highest grades. Students will also have a chance to produce a video to complement one or two of their stories. For a multimedia element, you can work with a partner if you prefer.

Your grade for each assignment will be based on the gradual progress of your work. At each step, I will give you specific and detailed comments for your revisions.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of the course, 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 the ethical principles that are the foundation of responsible journalism

**SUGGESTED & REQUIRED TEXTS:**

1. There is no required text for this class, but you must carry with you at all times the *Associated Press Stylebook* – hardcopy or the “app” -- and read daily the *Miami Herald* and *The New York Times*. **If you feel a textbook would be helpful, please let me know, and I can make recommendations and/or let you borrow a copy from my office for a few days.**

2. As a reporter, you must always be familiar with the media outlet you work for. The Miami Herald is one of your main “employers” in this class. The more you read, the better writer you become. It’s mandatory that you read the print edition of the Herald for the duration of the course at least twice a week: Thursdays and Sundays, when the Neighbors section is published. Though not mandatory, I strongly suggest you subscribe to it. The other days, you are expected to read the digital edition and dissect at least one full story. Every class, we will discuss a front page and/or a Neighbors story of the Miami Herald. **As part of the SFNS, you get access to the digital edition of the Herald at** [http://nieonline.com/miami/](http://nieonline.com/miami/) (**login: cdelboni@fiu.edu**, password: sfnsstudent). **You must also be familiar with The New York Times. You have free access to the print copy at school and to its digital edition by registering @ nytimes.com/passes (for the website and smartphones app).**

3. To succeed in journalism today, you must do more than report and write well. You must also become familiar with and develop multimedia skills, learn to operate
a camera and edit your video. If you choose to produce a video for one of your stories, you must bring your own portable external hard-drive.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
Classroom experiences are a vital part of the learning process. Therefore, regular class attendance is essential. I call attendance in the beginning of each class. Being late is unprofessional and counts against your final grade. No unexcused absences are accepted. The first one, there is no penalty but a warning. Each unexcused absence in excess of one as well as failure to show up on time will impact your grade. You will miss a point for each time you are late and/or absent without my previous consent.

GRADING POLICY:
You will have a chance to work on two drafts before getting a grade: first and final. But keep in mind I will look at your work as many times as you’d like at my office, during my office hours or by appointment – as long as it’s before deadline. I strongly recommend that students take advantage of one-on-one critic outside of class. The South Florida News Service is a professional program. This course’s main goal is to help you publish your work. At each draft, I will provide you with very specific and detailed comments that go from a simple sentence restructure to additional reporting. If you follow my guidance closely, you will publish and possibly get an A. But remember **humility and willingness to learn are key ingredients to succeed in this class, in journalism and in life.**

Grading Scale:
A 95-100   A- 90-94   B+ 87-89   B 82-86   B- 80-81   C+ 77-79
C 72-76   C- 70-71   D+ 67-69   D 62-66   D- 60-61   F 59-0

DETERMINATION OF GRADES:

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<tr>
<th>JOU3405</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attitude: team work, collaboration and humility</td>
<td>5 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Story 1: Budget</td>
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<td>Story 1: Draft</td>
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<td>Story 2</td>
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<td>Extra credit/bonus if published (1% per story published)</td>
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<td>AP errors/misspellings/missed deadlines</td>
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Grades are not an exact science when we talk about writing and publishing, but the following rules will be applied when judging your work:

1. An “A” means that the work is excellent and has been published as it is. It is well researched, well reported, imaginative and original.
2. An “A-“ means that the work is very good but requires some editing.
3. A “B+” means that the work could be published but requires editing or more reporting.
4. A “B” means that the work could be published but requires a fair amount of editing, investigation and reporting.
5. A “B-“ means that the work could be published after considerable editing and re-writing.
6. A “C+” means that the work is a good draft but requires more reporting, research and heavy editing.
7. A “C” means that the work fulfills the minimal requirements.
8. “D” and “F” are different evaluations of insufficient quality or reporting work.

Although these are the general rules, elements like a creative approach, an interesting idea or an active pursue of sources will play a part in the final grade. You have to take into consideration that grades are not an opinion on your personal qualifications but a judgment on the quality of a specific article or video. Low grades should not discourage you; high grades should not conceit you.

There is no magic in good journalism. A good piece is the result of a lot of work, patient research and a lot of rewriting. But ultimately, grades reflect quality not effort. Challenge yourself.
TO MAINTAIN AN “A” IN THIS COURSE YOU NEED TO:

- Complete all assignments on time
- Attend all required sessions
- Participate in class discussions and activities
- Complete assignments on time at a 90%-100% quality level
- Be prompt and communicate with your editor constantly

USEFUL WEBSITES

* FIU Library/Journalism page (for research): Lexis-Nexis, Newsbank, Proquest

* SFNSonline: http://sfsonline.com (stories and resources)

MISCONDUCT:

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.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT:

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication also fosters an environment of inclusivity and respect for diversity and multiculturalism. The SJMC educates students to embrace diversity and understand the root causes of discrimination, as well as social, ethnic, sexual, disability and gender-based exclusion.
Preliminary and tentative schedule (subject to change):

Time permitting:

Tentative guest lectures: Miami Herald editors on writing, background/fact check, online headlines and current trends/expectations in newsrooms, among others.

NOTE: Deadlines will differ for JOU4101 students to adjust to the work they choose and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. For instance, an in-depth story would take the same amount of time as two regular stories, but, on the other hand, I would also need to see additional drafts through the process – not just one.

WEEK 1:

Aug. 24: Introduction to the course | syllabus | news budget | Herald subscription/Neighbors (Digital edition) | sign course and equipment room contracts
Aug. 26: Lecture – basic techniques: reporting and news writing review
Bring story ideas

WEEK 2:

Aug. 31: Bring story ideas | Interview techniques / Practice
Sept. 2: Background check guide | Research tools (finalize story ideas)

WEEK 3:

Sept. 7: LABOR DAY – NO CLASS
Sept. 9: Story 1 – Budget line [bring on drive]

WEEK 4:

Sept. 14: Budget line revision [due by end of the day]
Sept. 16: Story 1 – 1st draft

WEEK 5:

Sept. 21: SPJ CONVENTION – REPORTING DAY/NO CLASS
Sept. 23: Story 1 – 1st draft revision

WEEK 6:

Sept. 28: Story 1 – Final draft revision
Sept. 30: Story 1 – Final revision [due by end of the day]

WEEK 7:

Oct. 5: Story 2 – Story ideas
Oct. 7: Story 2 – Budget line
WEEK 8:
  Oct. 12: Story 2 – 1st draft
  Oct. 14: Story 2 – 1st draft revision

WEEK 9:
  Oct. 19: Story 2 – Final draft revision
  Oct. 21: Story 2 – Final revision [due end of the day]

Week 10:
  Oct. 26: Story 3 – Story ideas
  Oct. 28: Story 3 – Budget line

Week 11:
  Nov. 2: Story 3 – 1st draft
  Nov. 4: Story 3 -- 1st draft revision / multimedia

WEEK 12:
  Nov. 9: Story 3 -- Final draft revision / multimedia
  Nov. 11: Story 3 -- Final draft revision / multimedia [due end of the day]

WEEK 13:
  Nov. 16: Story 4 -- Story ideas
  Nov. 18: Story 4 -- Budget line

WEEK 14:
  Nov. 23: Story 4 – 1st draft
  Nov. 25: Story 4 -- 1st draft revision / multimedia

  Individual meetings/no class

WEEK 15:
  Nov. 30: Story 4 -- Final draft / multimedia
  Dec. 2: Story 4 -- Final draft revision / multimedia
  Extra work -- Final revisions / multimedia

FINAL WEEK - Dec. 7 - 11 | ALL FINAL WORK DUE by noon on Wed., Dec. 9.