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Mass Communications Teaching
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Urban Journalism: A Course Overview

Catalog Description: Students enrolled in urban journalism will study the journalistic, ethical and economic issues facing newspapers in metropolitan areas. Throughout the semester, students will analyze why newspapers do what they do, cover what they cover and operate the way they do. This course will also emphasize elements of urban journalism ranging from covering government meetings, policy, economics, the arts, social concerns and other urban issues.

Goals: This course will not teach the basic elements of journalism, but will build upon prior knowledge students have learned in other coursework; students are expected to have a command of news writing, reporting and other information gathering skills. This course is not Public Affairs reporting. Students will not learn how to cover urban events, but rather look at them theoretically and discuss the pressing issues urban newspapers face, such as the internet, social issues, and urbanization.

Rationale: Most students who study journalism hope to write for a large daily newspaper or magazine, often in an urban setting. Although *The New York Times* is frequently the job of choice, many journalism programs do not adequately prepare their students for work in large urban environments such as New York, Boston, Los Angeles, or a number of Florida Cities. As the population of Florida continues to swell by hundreds of thousands each year, cities around the state will continue to grow, expand and develop into larger urban areas – much like those in the Northeast. The study of urban journalism will only benefit students who work in Florida after graduation. It is also important to

note that urban journalism will continue to emerge as a necessary skill as smaller cities around the state grow into large areas (Orlando's rapid growth being case in point).

Number of students: Ideally the course would have between 20-30 students. Since the course is based primarily on discussion, theory and out of class assignments, a smaller classroom environment is preferred to engage students in debate and to closely monitor student progress throughout the semester.

Prerequisites: Students should have either junior or senior standing and have completed Writing for Mass Communications (MMC2100), Reporting (JOU 3101) and Applied Fact Finding (JOU 3110). Students should already have a command of journalistic writing, including grammar, writing, news gathering, reporting and AP style.

Format: Urban Journalism will be taught in one hour periods, three days a week, preferably around noon or in the early afternoon. Urban Journalism will be offered in both the fall and spring, but students should be advised that there is a large amount of out-of-class work.

Curriculum: Urban Journalism will be a capstone course within the Department of Journalism at the University of Florida.