

# DRONE JOURNALISM – Spring 2026

## JOUR 4720 Special Topics, JOUR 4980 Experimental Course

## JOUR 5350 Seminar in Journalism and Mass Communication

### INSTRUCTOR CONTACT

**Name:** Thorne Anderson

**Email:** [Thorne.Anderson@UNT.edu](mailto:Thorne.Anderson@UNT.edu)

**Weekly Class Meetings:** Mondays, 12:00 am - 2:50 pm

**Meeting Location:** Chilton 154, UNT Discovery Park, or other locations in Denton  
UNT Discovery Park Campus Shuttle Bus: <https://transportation.unt.edu/campus-transit>  
*Class meeting locations may change due to weather concerns.*  
*Check your email and Canvas for updates on the morning of class meetings!*

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays, 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm Sycamore 250. You may reserve appointment times by email.

**Virtual Office for Individual Appointments:** [Check email and save the link I send you there.](#)

**Communication Expectations:** The best way to reach me is via the UNT email address listed above. I'll get back to you within one business day. Please give your email clear, informative subject lines.

The CLEAR office has a webpage for students that provides [Online Communication Tips](#)

### ABOUT THIS COURSE

This course provides an introduction to the use of drone aircraft for visual communication in journalism, advertising, and public relations. A drone may also be referred to as UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) or sUAS (small Unmanned Aircraft Systems). This course will cover essential FAA rules and regulations, safe drone operations and flight, drone photography, and drone videography. We will discuss drone law and ethics, and will explore the most effective and aesthetically compelling uses of drones for photography and video.

This course will be focused on drone operations – not FAA certification. Although this course covers the knowledge and skills required to fly a drone for commercial purposes, it should be noted that it will not result in FAA "Part 107" remote pilot certification. However, students will gain a strong foundation in the fundamentals of flying a drone safely and legally. This course aims to provide an in-depth understanding of drone operation and will equip students with some of the necessary skills to apply for FAA certification or take additional courses to further their knowledge and gain certification in the future.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course you will:

- Become a TRUST-certified recreational drone pilot
- Demonstrate understand and compliance with essential FAA regulations for drone flight
- Demonstrate competent and safe drone operation in flight
- Learn drone specific videography skills
- Use editing software to compile drone footage into a compelling highlight reel
- Discuss ethical and legal concerns related to drone photography
- Develop a discerning eye for aesthetically compelling drone photography and apply visual communication techniques from traditional still and video photography to drone photography

## COURSE STRUCTURE

This course will be taught in-person on the UNT-Denton campus. The class will meet weekly at the assigned time. Students will be assigned a variety of interactive activities including asynchronous online discussions and critiques of each others' work. This course will be administered through Canvas and will have both online and in-person components. The online components of the course will take place asynchronously. In order to receive credit for the course both the online and in-person components must be completed.

## REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

### **MicroSDXC Micro SD Card w/UHS-I, U3, V30, A2 – WRITE SPEED AT LEAST 30Mb/s**

Do your own research, but I recommend [this SanDisk Extreme card](#)– at least 256Gb

### **Self-powered portable hard disk or SSD drive(s)**

SD cards are for image and video capture – not for storage! Each student must arrange for a secondary file backup system on a separate file storage device. It is the student's responsibility to back up his or her work in progress. I will not accept flash storage or hard drive loss or failure as an excuse for failure to complete a project on deadline. Again, do your own research.

I'm a fan of the [Samsung and SanDisk portable SSD drives](#).

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

This is a high-participation, “workshop-style” course. So much of the learning in this course will come through in-class collaborations and class critique of the work students produce during the course. It is essential that you “show up” (in every sense of the phrase) for these experiences. That means you have your heart and your head in the game on behalf of your fellow students.

**The secret to success: SHOW UP TO ALL CLASSES**

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING**

### **A NOTE ABOUT FLEXIBILITY**

This course requires both indoor classroom and outdoor flight instruction. The weather must cooperate for us to be able to fly. That means we must shuffle our course schedule and number of skills assignments to accommodate the weather, taking advantage of good weather for flying and “bad” weather (wind, fog, rain) for indoor topics. Roughly speaking we’ll cover topics in this order:

WEEKS 1-6 – FAA Regulations and Drone Operation

- Weekly Flight Tests on Flight Days
- In-class instruction on regulations on bad-weather days

WEEKS 7-10 – Drone Photography

- Weekly In-Class Photo Assignments on Flight Days
- In-class instruction on video standards and processing on bad-weather days

WEEKS 11-15 – Final Project Work & Compilation

- Weekly Field Production Flights on good-weather days
- In-class Post Production on bad-weather days

### **GRADE COMPONENTS – UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL**

Your grade for this class will be determined by:

- 30% - A final project
- 40% - Skills Assignments
- 20% - Course Quizzes & Flight Tests
- 10% - Class attendance and participation  
(including discussion board posts and service as a visual observer)

### **GRADE COMPONENTS – GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Your grade for this class will be determined by:

- 30% - A final project
- 35% - Skills Assignments
- 5% - Special Project Assignment
- 20% - Course Quizzes & Flight Tests
- 10% - Class attendance and participation  
(including discussion board posts and service as a visual observer)

### **VIDEO SPECS**

The DJI Mavic Mini 3 shoots a variety of video formats. For this class I generally recommend 4k .mp4 video at 30fps (or 24fps) with H.264 compression. For slow-mo you can shoot 4k 60fps. You can shoot “Normal” 8-bit color or 10-bit “D-Cinelike” color, but D-Cinelike takes more care in post production.

## FINAL PROJECT

Your final project will include an artfully edited “highlight” or “sizzle” reel of your drone photography from this semester. I hope this is a nice addition to your professional portfolio. Additional details for the assignment will be found in Canvas. Your reel must include:

- Use of music and natural sound (with appropriate noise reduction)
- Use of both slow motion and conventional speed
- Expert Technical control (exposure, shutter speed, smooth motion)
- Carefully controlled camera motion
- Use of multiple techniques (such as tracking, circling, hovering, tilting, etc)

## SKILLS ASSIGNMENTS

The number and type of skills assignments will be flexible (we are dependent on the weather after all).

### Assignments may include

- Contributions to our drone journalism “clipboard” (clips from the news)
- Flight time log
- Graphic composition in aerial photography
- “Dolly” camera simulation
- Tracking a moving subject
- Circling a subject
- “Booming” a subject
- Use of ambient recorded sound
- Slow motion
- Use of foreground elements and graphic parallax
- Contributions to group projects

## QUIZZES & FLIGHT TESTS

### Quizzes will include

- TRUST Certification
- Essential FAA Rules & Regulations (including airspace classification and charts)
- Drone Parts & Operation (including controller display information)
- Drone Flight Test (including an obstacle course)

## PARTICIPATION

### Participation consists of

- Meeting minimum guidelines for Discussion Posts in Canvas
- Meeting minimum guidelines for Assignment Peer Critique in Canvas
- Missing no more than one class without a waiver from the instructor
- Logging a minimum number of flight hours
- Reliable participation as a visual observer to classmates’ flights
- Participation in class discussion

## GRADE SCALE

Include the grading scale (A-F) along with the point totals/percentages you will use to calculate the final grade. For example:

A = 90% - 100%

B = 80% - 89%

C = 70% - 79%

D = 60% - 69%

F = 0% - 59%

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Rock Solid deadlines are a fact of life for journalists. If you can't meet deadlines then you are in the wrong field. If you know at least two days ahead of time that due to extraordinary circumstances you can't meet a deadline then contact me immediately and we may be able to arrange an alternate deadline for you. Otherwise, the first individual assignment turned in late will be penalized by the equivalent of one letter grade. The second late assignment will be penalized by the equivalent of two letter grades, and so on.

## SAFETY POLICY

Students must remain alert to instructor directives at all times during flights. If the instructor says "land!" you land. Failure to follow safety rules and instructions can result in suspension of your flying privileges and a reduction in your course grade.

## FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS

We will be following guidelines set forth by the FAA, the state of Texas, the city of Denton and the University of North Texas.

## SAFETY BASICS

Drones may present a danger to yourself or others. At a minimum, we will follow these safety rules:

- Never fly without explicit clearance from the instructor
- Always perform a pre-flight briefing with your team
- Always perform a pre-flight equipment check
- Always fly with at least one Visual Observer (VO) in addition to the pilot
- Always maintain "line-of-sight" with the aircraft
- Always yield far from manned aircraft
- Never "horse around" while flying – remain serious and focused
- Never fly or hover over people who are not in your team
- Never fly or hover over any moving vehicles
- Never pilot from a moving vehicle
- Never fly or hover higher than 400 feet
- Never land within 10 feet of people (including your team)

## **EXTERNAL LINKS**

### **CLASS RELATED LINKS**

UNT Discovery Park Campus Shuttle Bus

<https://transportation.unt.edu/campus-transit>

DJI Videos and Tutorials

<https://www.dji.com/mini-3-pro/video>Links to an external site.

FAA Recreational UAS Safety Test – TRUST

<https://www.faa.gov/uas/recreational-flyers/knowledge-test-updates>

Pilot Institute TRUST Certification Site

<https://trust.pilotinstitute.com>

Pilot Institute DJI Mavic Mini 3 Introduction

<https://learn.pilotinstitute.com/courses/enrolled/1767580>

### **FAA CHARTS NOTAMS & ACs**

FAA Aeronautical Chart Users' Guides (Updated Regularly)

<https://www.faa.gov/air-traffic/flight-info/aeronav/digital-products/aero-guide/>

DFW Chart – September 2024

[https://aeronav.faa.gov/visual/09-05-2024/PDFs/Dallas-Ft\\_Worth.pdf](https://aeronav.faa.gov/visual/09-05-2024/PDFs/Dallas-Ft_Worth.pdf)

Digital Chart Supplements – Including [NOTAMS](#)

<https://www.faa.gov/air-traffic/flight-info/aeronav/digital-products/dafd/>

FAA Advisory Circulars

<https://www.faa.gov/regulations-policies/advisory-circulars/>

### **CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS – TITLE 14 – PART 107**

CFR Title 14 Part 107 Regulations (Updated Regularly)

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-14/chapter-I/subchapter-F/part-107>

### **PART 107 EXAM MATERIALS**

Airman Knowledge Testing Supplement (Exact book used during Part 107 Exam):

[https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/training\\_testing/testing/supplements/sport\\_rec\\_private\\_akts.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/training_testing/testing/supplements/sport_rec_private_akts.pdf)

FAA Remote Pilot Study Guide

[https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/regulations\\_policies/handbooks\\_manuals/aviation/remote\\_pilot\\_study\\_guide.pdf](https://www.faa.gov/sites/faa.gov/files/regulations_policies/handbooks_manuals/aviation/remote_pilot_study_guide.pdf)

FAA Part 107 Exam Study Flashcards

Apple App Store: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/part-107-study-flashcards/id1476913752>

Google App Store link (currently unavailable on some Android OS):

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pilot\\_institute\\_part\\_107](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.pilot_institute_part_107)

Web Flashcards:

[https://www.proprofsflashcards.com/cardshow.php?title=flashcardp0kqo&data\\_carrier=rg2d5tuoika9e25cs5pjrochtn](https://www.proprofsflashcards.com/cardshow.php?title=flashcardp0kqo&data_carrier=rg2d5tuoika9e25cs5pjrochtn)

## **COURSE & CLASS PARTICIPATION**

### **Expectations**

Students are expected to participate thoughtfully, respectfully, critically, and energetically in all class meetings and online discussions. This participation is essential to both your own and your fellow classmates' intellectual growth.

### **Rules of Engagement**

Rules of engagement refer to the way students are expected to interact with each other and with their instructors online. Here are some general guidelines:

- Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in email or any other communication.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar (this includes discussion boards).
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you."
- Use standard fonts such as Ariel, Calibri or Times New Roman and use a size 10 or 12-point font
- Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or sound offensive.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and others').
- Do not send confidential information via e-mail

See these [Engagement Guidelines](https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) (https://clear.unt.edu/online-communication-tips) for more information.

## Virtual Meeting Etiquette / Zoom Etiquette

Some class meetings may be held remotely in a “virtual” environment. In preparation for our Zoom classroom meetings, make an effort to secure a location where you can safely turn on your camera. We all understand there may be times when you may need to temporarily disable your camera, but, to be frank, it feels disrespectful to your instructor and your classmates when your camera is regularly disabled. “Show up” for class meetings.

And speak up. This course is heavily dependent on student participation in the exchange of ideas – especially during critique sessions. The empty spaces in class discussion are even more pronounced in Zoom meetings where microphones are typically muted. Be energetic and help me fill those spaces with your good ideas and thoughtful observations. For the student whose work is being critiqued, a wall of silence can be excruciating. Bring energy to the conversation.

## Success During Online Class Meetings (When Required)

While the virtual classroom shares many similarities with the face-to-face classroom, success in online education requires certain skills and expectations that students may not be aware of. Here are some tips:

[“How to Succeed as an Online Student”](#)

(<https://clear.unt.edu/teachingresources/online-teaching/succeed-online>).

## REQUIRED TEXTS AND EQUIPMENT

There will be no textbook expenses for this course. All course readings will be either from library reserves or from the internet. Students will be required to provide their own SD capture card and HDD or SSD file storage device as described above.

Free software tutorials are available to UNT students at: <https://linkedin.com/learning>.

Students will be required to complete assignments using Adobe Premiere software. Many UNT open-access student computer labs, including the computer lab in the Mayborn School of Journalism, are equipped with Adobe Premiere. However, for those students who choose to work remotely and for ALL students in the event of a campus shut-down, it is the students' individual responsibility to gain access to a computer with Adobe Premiere and a license. Adobe offers student discounts for software licenses.

This course will require students to store and access a large volume of media files. Student's may even have to purchase additional hard drive space. 250Gb should be sufficient, unless you are working with 4k files.

Furthermore, each student must arrange for a secondary file backup system on a separate file storage device. It is the student's responsibility to back up his or her work. I will not accept flash storage or hard drive loss or hard drive failure as an excuse for failure to complete a project on deadline.

Please read that last sentence again – this time with a shudder.

## Adobe Access

UNT has a contract with Adobe for special student discounts. In addition to a discounted price, you may be able to opt-out of an existing agreement that if you are currently subscribed at a higher price:

<http://www.unt.edu/adobe>

## JOURNALISM EQUIPMENT CHECK OUT

**STUDENTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO CHECK OUT DRONES UNLESS THEY HAVE PASSED ALL REQUIRED FLIGHT COMPETENCY TESTS (about mid-way through the semester)**

Checkouts are for 24 hours from the time of checkout, unless specified differently from your assigned Professor.

If the student needs equipment for 48 hours or longer, please send an email with an Approval from your Professor to:

[mayborn-equipment@unt.edu](mailto:mayborn-equipment@unt.edu) or [ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu](mailto:ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu).

For your convenience, the hours for the equipment room are as follows:

9:00 a.m.–10:00 p.m. - Monday through Thursday

9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. - Friday

12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. - Saturday and Sunday.

The violations listed below will occur if due equipment is not return on the agreed time.

1<sup>st</sup> late infraction – 1 week ban from checking out equipment.

2<sup>nd</sup> late infraction – 3 weeks ban from checking out equipment.

3<sup>rd</sup> infraction – Semester long ban from any and all equipment checkout.

If you are going to be late or unable to return equipment that you checked out on time, please email [mayborn-equipment@unt.edu](mailto:mayborn-equipment@unt.edu) or [ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu](mailto:ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu)

Active communication brings leniency in many cases.

Equipment room phone number is 940-565-3580.

Equipment room is located in CHIL 155.

## TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS & SKILLS

### Minimum Technology Requirements

Students are responsible for acquiring and maintaining access to:

- Computer capable of running professional video editing software
- Reliable internet access
- Image/Video capture and storage cards and drives
- Adobe Premiere Subscription (unless you edit on campus)
- Text editing software capable of producing .docx and .pdf files
- [Canvas Technical Requirements](https://clear.unt.edu/supportedtechnologies/canvas/requirements)  
(<https://clear.unt.edu/supportedtechnologies/canvas/requirements>)

### Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

To succeed in this course learners must be able to:

- Use Canvas
- Use email with attachments
- Download and install software
- Use presentation and graphics programs
- Use software for audio/video editing, exporting, and sharing
- Operate audio/visual recording equipment
- Operate a dual-joystick drone controller

## GETTING HELP

### Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

**UIT Help Desk:** [UIT Student Help Desk site](http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm) (<http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>)

**Email:** [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu)

**Phone:** 940-565-2324

**In Person:** Sage Hall, Room 130 **Walk-In Availability:** 8am-9pm

**Telephone Availability:**

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

**Laptop Checkout:** 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit [Canvas Technical Help](https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328)

(<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

## Student Support Services

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellnesscenter/services/psychiatry) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellnesscenter/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

Other student support services offered by UNT include

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu/>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)
- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)

## Academic Support Services

- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)
- [MathLab](https://math.unt.edu/mathlab) (<https://math.unt.edu/mathlab>)

## COURSE POLICIES

### Assignment Policy

Assignments will be posted in Canvas. Some assignments may be made through email.

### Potential Technical Problems

The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto:helpdesk@unt.edu) or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

### Attendance Policy

One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with your instructor in advance about an extraordinary problem. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting. Participation includes showing meaningful work of your own and providing meaningful constructive critique of others' work.

*I emphasize that your weekly participation in class discussion is extremely important.*

### Syllabus Change Policy

It is sometimes necessary and beneficial to students to alter the syllabus during the course of instruction. This will be done in consultation with students and all students will be notified of the changes.

## COURSE EVALUATION

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. SPOT evaluations will become available during the last two weeks of the semester.

## CONTEST ENTRIES

Students are advised to enter their work as often as possible in as many contests as possible. This kind of recognition goes a long way in job or grant applications. Below is a list of the most widely-respected journalism contests available to students.

- [CPOY: College Photographer of the Year](https://www.cpoym.org/?s=Home)  
(<https://www.cpoym.org/?s=Home>)
- [POY: Pictures of the Year International](https://www.poy.org/competition.html)  
(<https://www.poy.org/competition.html>)
- [NPPA Best of Photojournalism](https://competitions.nppa.org/best-of-photojournalism/) (Annual Competition)  
(<https://competitions.nppa.org/best-of-photojournalism/>)
- [NPPA Student Quarterly Clips Competitions](https://competitions.nppa.org/student-quarterly-clip-contest/) (Stills & Multimedia)  
(<https://competitions.nppa.org/student-quarterly-clip-contest/>)
- [NPPA \(Professional\) Quarterly Multimedia Contest](https://competitions.nppa.org/quarterly-multimedia-contest/)  
(<https://competitions.nppa.org/quarterly-multimedia-contest/>)
- [NPPA \(Professional\) TV Quarterly Contest](https://competitions.nppa.org/tv-quarterly/)  
(<https://competitions.nppa.org/tv-quarterly/>)
- [NPPA \(Professional\) Monthly News Clip Contest](https://competitions.nppa.org/monthly-news-clip-contest/) (Stills)  
(<https://competitions.nppa.org/monthly-news-clip-contest/>)
- [NPPA Contests Complete List](https://competitions.nppa.org/)  
(<https://competitions.nppa.org/>)
- [Hearst College Journalism Contest](http://www.hearstawards.org/guidelines/entry-guidelines/) (Enter with instructor consent)  
(<http://www.hearstawards.org/guidelines/entry-guidelines/>)
- [White House News Photographers Association Eyes of History Awards](https://www.whnpa.org/main/the-eyes-of-history/)  
(<https://www.whnpa.org/main/the-eyes-of-history/>)
- [Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence Awards](https://www.spj.org/a-moe.asp)  
(<https://www.spj.org/a-moe.asp>)
- [Texas Intercollegiate Press Association Awards](http://texasipa.org/) (Coordinated by NT Daily)  
(<http://texasipa.org/>)
- Online News Association: [Online Journalism Awards](https://awards.journalists.org/awards/) (Entry fee)  
(<https://awards.journalists.org/awards/>)

## **UNT & JOURNALISM REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES**

### **JOURNALISM COURSE REGISTRATION**

- By registering for this course, you are stating that you have taken the required prerequisites according to your catalog year and major/minor status. If the instructor later determines that you haven't taken and passed these requirements, then you may be dropped at any point in the semester. If you have questions about your prerequisites, please see an advisor.
- A journalism major enrolled in any restricted 3000 and 4000 level classes must have taken and passed all foundational courses. Students must earn and maintain a 2.5 UNT and/or overall GPA (depending upon catalog year) to be eligible for major-level courses.

### **RE-TAKING FAILED JOURNALISM CLASSES**

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for one calendar year after the date you received the second failing grade. Once a student has waited one calendar year after failing a course twice, the student may submit a written appeal to the director to be approved to enroll a third time. Students will not be allowed to re-take a failed journalism course more than three times.

### **TEXTBOOK POLICY**

The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn't require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

### **ATTENDANCE**

One absence in the course is the limit without penalty toward your final grade, unless you have communicated with me from the beginning about an extraordinary problem. Coming to class late or leaving early may constitute an absence for that day. This is a seminar course, and it requires your attendance and participation each class meeting.

### **FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES**

A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

**If at any point you consider dropping this or any other course, please be advised that the decision to do so has the potential to affect your current and future financial aid eligibility.**

Please visit [UNT Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements) (https://financialaid.unt.edu/satisfactory-academic-progress-requirements) for more information about financial aid Satisfactory Academic Progress. It may be wise for you to schedule a meeting with your MSOJ academic advisor or visit the Student Financial Aid and Scholarships office to discuss dropping a course before doing so.

## **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

All first-time-in-college students at UNT are required to schedule an appointment with their Academic Advisor and receive an advising code to register for classes both fall and spring semesters of the first year in college. ALL students should meet with their Academic Advisor at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

**It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount.** Students have been unknowingly dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student's responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

## UNT Spring 2026 Semester Calendar

Academic Calendar is subject to change

KEY SEMESTER DATES	Full Semester Jan. 12-May 8	3 week I Winter Session Dec. 15-Jan. 9	8 week I Session Jan 12-Mar. 6	8 week II Session Mar. 16-May 8
Schedule of Classes Available on myUNT	Sept. 22	Sept. 22	Sept. 22	Sept. 22
Registration Opens <small>For specifics by student group/class: <a href="https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register">https://registrar.unt.edu/when-can-i-register</a></small>	Oct. 6	Oct. 6	Oct. 6	Oct. 6
Prerequisite Drop <small>Students not meeting course prerequisites will be dropped from their courses.</small>	Dec. 16	Dec. 15	Dec. 16	Mar. 16
Regular Registration Ends	Jan. 8	Dec. 11	Jan. 8	Mar. 12
Late Registration Period—For Students not Registered for the Term	Jan. 9-16	Dec. 12-15	Jan. 9-16	Mar. 13-20
Last Day to Withdrawal from Entire Term on myUNT <small>Courses do not appear on the transcript. After this date see Dean of Students to withdrawal from the entire term.</small>	Jan. 11	Dec. 14	Jan. 11	Mar. 15
Classes Begin	Jan. 12	Dec. 15	Jan. 12	Mar. 16
Last Day to Add a Class or Swap Sections <small>A swap is switching sections of the same course in the same session.</small>	Jan. 16	Dec. 15	Jan. 16	Mar. 20
Last Day to Drop a Class Section Without a W (Census) <small>Courses dropped before this date will not appear on official transcript. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)</small>	Jan. 24	Dec. 16	Jan. 17	Mar. 21
Drop with a Grade of W Begins <small>Course appears on the transcript with a grade of W and tuition and fees remain. (Dropping courses may impact financial aid and degree completion. See advisors.)</small>	Jan. 25	Dec. 17	Jan. 18	Mar. 22
Last day to change to pass/no pass grade option (undergrads)	Feb. 20	Dec. 19	Jan. 30	April 3
Midpoint of the Semester	Mar. 6	Dec. 24	Feb. 6	April 10
Last day for a student to drop a course or all courses with a grade of W.	April 10	Jan. 6	Feb. 20	April 24
First day to request a grade of Incomplete	April 11	Jan. 7	Feb. 21	April 25
Pre-Finals Days	April 29-30	N/A	N/A	N/A
Last Regular Class Meeting	April 30	Jan. 8	Mar. 5	May 7
Reading Day—No Classes	May 1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Final Exams	May 4-8	Jan. 9	Mar. 6	May 8
Last Day of Session	May 8	Jan. 9	Mar. 6	May 8
University Grade Submission Deadline 4 pm	May 11	Jan. 12	Mar. 9	May 11
Grades/Academic Standing posted on the Official Transcript 6pm	May 13	May 13	May 13	May 13
Winter Break (no classes; university closed)	December 24-26, December 29-January 2			
Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday	Jan. 19, 2026			
Spring Break	March 9-15, 2026			
University Commencement	May 7-11, 2026			

Last Modified: December 3, 2025

## ACCREDITATION

The Mayborn, which is one of over 100 journalism programs across the world that are accredited, is renewing its credentials this year. Accreditation is important to you because it means your degree is more valuable than one that comes from an unaccredited school.

Accreditation has profound benefits. Accredited programs may offer scholarships, internships, competitive prizes, and other activities unavailable in non-accredited programs.

Accreditation also provides an assurance of quality and rigorous standards to students, parents, and the public. Students in an accredited program can expect to find a challenging curriculum, appropriate resources and facilities, and a competent faculty.

Accreditation is our promise to our students that you will receive the best education possible in journalism and mass communication. With today's technology, anyone can present information to a mass audience. But not all are trained in the creation of ethical messages that reach and serve diverse audiences that our standards uphold. What you learn in an accredited program makes you more marketable and your degree more valuable!

The Mayborn School's accreditation is determined by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) through an extensive evaluation process. Accreditation by the ACEJMC council means we embrace the value of a broad, multidisciplinary curriculum that nurtures critical thinking, analytic reasoning and problem-solving skills that are the essential foundation for all mass communication education.

### **Adobe Access**

UNT has a contract with Adobe. The following link contains all the information that students will need to purchase a subscription, and opt-out of an existing agreement that is at a higher price: <https://cvad.unt.edu/cvad-it-services/it-services-adobe-cloud-access.html>

The email address for students to ask questions or report problems is [adobe@unt.edu](mailto:adobe@unt.edu).

### **JOURNALISM EQUIPMENT CHECK OUT**

Checkout length for the **Canon Mirrorless Camera, Batteries, Lighting Gear, Mirrorless Tripods, Individual Lenses, and Accessories** can be checked out up to 72 hours.

To checkout a **Canon Mirrorless Camera and items listed above** longer than 72 hours, the Professor for the course will need to approve the request.

Checkout length for the **Panasonic Video Camera, Batteries, SDXC, and Tripods** can be checked out up to 24 hours.

To checkout a **Panasonic Video Camera and items listed above** longer than 72 hours, the Professor for the course will need to approve the request.

Please send extended reservations approval from the Professor to the following email: [mayborn-equipment@unt.edu](mailto:mayborn-equipment@unt.edu)

### **Journalism Equipment Room - Location and Contact Information**

The Journalism equipment room is located at **Chilton Hall 410 S. Ave. C, Room 155.**

Equipment room phone number is **940-565-3580**.

Equipment room email is [mayborn-equipment@unt.edu](mailto:mayborn-equipment@unt.edu).

Equipment room supervisor can be reached at [ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu](mailto:ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu)

### **Journalism Equipment Room - Operating Hours**

Monday/Wednesday: 9 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Tuesday/Thursday: 9 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Friday: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Sat-Sun: 12 p.m. - 6 p.m.

### **Journalism Equipment Room - Agreement Form**

Anyone who plans to check out equipment during the semester must complete the checkout agreement form found below:

[Journalism Web Checkout Agreement Form](#)

This form must be completed prior to checking out equipment and only needs to be done once per semester.

### **Journalism Equipment Room - Late Returns/Abuse of Checkout Policy**

For every hour the student is late; a ban will be placed on the student's account accumulating the same amount of time.

A **ban** restricts the student from checking out any equipment within the Journalism Equipment Room.

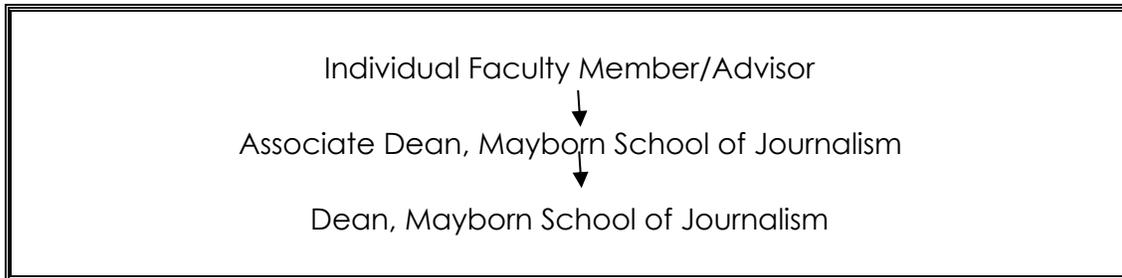
For example, if the student returns equipment 2 hours late, a 2 hour ban will be placed on the student's account.

If the student returns equipment 72 hours late, a 72 hour ban will be placed on the student's account.

If you are going to be late or unable to return equipment that you checked out on time, please email [mayborn-equipment@unt.edu](mailto:mayborn-equipment@unt.edu) or [ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu](mailto:ladaniel.maxwell@unt.edu)

## **ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the steps outlined below:



## OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCESS

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time. However, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class.

**Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student.**

For additional information see the website for the [Office of Disability Access](http://www.unt.edu/oda) (<http://www.unt.edu/oda>). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works *without* full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook.

## MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 06.003 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

## FINAL EXAM POLICY

Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts. There is no final exam for this course.

## ACCESS TO INFORMATION

As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the [My.UNT site](http://www.my.unt.edu) (www.my.unt.edu). If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please so do, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. Visit the [Eagle Connect website](http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/) for more information (http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/) including tips on how to forward your email.

## Courses in a Box

Any MSOJ equivalent course from another university must receive prior approval from the MSOJ academic advisor to ensure that all MSOJ degree plan requirements are met. For example, courses that are taken online or from a program that offers course material via CD, booklet, or other manner of correspondence must have prior advisor approval.

## Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email [international@unt.edu](mailto:international@unt.edu)) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

## EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials. If Canvas is not accessible during the emergency, contact me via email or phone for more information. Students should confirm that their Eagle Alert contact information is correct via the myUNT portal.

## STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The short SPOT survey will be made available to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" ([no-reply@iasystem.org](mailto:no-reply@iasystem.org)) with the survey link.

Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://www.spot.unt.edu) (www.spot.unt.edu) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto:spot@unt.edu).

Spots survey dates:

Term	Survey Administration Dates
<a href="#">Regular Academic Session</a>	April 14 – April 30
<a href="#">8W1</a>	February 24 - March 05
<a href="#">8W2</a>	April 28 – May 07
<a href="#">3W1</a>	January 07 – January 08

### Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found on the [Dean Of Students website](http://www.deanofstudents.unt.edu) (www.deanofstudents.unt.edu).

### Classroom Policies

The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

### SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, & ASSAULT

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

[UNT's Dean of Students' website](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0) ([http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources\\_0](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0)) offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs. Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT's Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at [SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu](mailto:SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu) or by calling the Dean of Students' office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

UNT provides mental health services to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

1. [Student Health and Wellness Center](#)

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center#programs>)

1800 Chestnut St. (Chestnut Hall)

940-565-2333

M-Th, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

2. [Counseling and Testing Services](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)

801 N. Texas Blvd., Suite 140 (Gateway Center)

940-565-2741

M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

3. [UNT CARE Team](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)

Dean of Students, University Union

940-565-2648

[careteam@unt.edu](mailto:careteam@unt.edu)

4. [Psychiatric Services](#)

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)

940-565-2333

5. [Individual Counseling](#) – Free to UNT Students

(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

940-369-8773

If at any time you are feeling alone or in jeopardy of self-harm, reach out to any of the following:

- National Suicide Hotline 800-273-8255
- Denton County MHMR Crisis Line 800-762-0157
- Denton County Friends of the Family Crisis Line (family or intimate partner violence) 940-382-7273
- UNT Mental Health Emergency Contacts
  - During office hours, M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m: Call 940-565-2741

- After hours: Call 940-565-2741
- Crisis Line: Text CONNECT to 741741
- [Live chat](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org): (<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>)

## **COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

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