

Syllabus for MET3940 WEATHERCASTING

1st 6 weeks of summer 2010: Session B

Section 1: MW 2:00 - 3:15, 353 Love

Instructor: Jon Ahlquist, ahlquist@fsu.edu. Office: 421 Love, 644-1558. Research lab (308 Love, 644-7511). TV weathercasting studio (008 Love, 644-1684, 644-4087).

Office hours: 12:30–11:45 pm, MWF, or by appointment. Check my lab (308 Love, 644-7511) before checking my office (421 Love, 644-1558).

Course description (taken from the *FSU General Bulletin*): Prerequisite of MET1010 or corequisite of MET2700. Practice in preparing and presenting weathercasts for radio and television. May be repeated to a maximum of four (4) semester hours. (If you want to go into TV, I suggest that you take MET3940 for 2 consecutive semesters, get involved with our cable TV operations as early as possible, and take MET3940 again your final semester at FSU.)

Objectives: Improve oral communication skills; prepare students for careers in broadcast meteorology. (Typically, half the class is considering a career in broadcasting, and half is not.)

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should:

1. register with and provide documentation to FSU's Student Disability Resource Center ("SDRC," 8 am - 5 pm, 108 Student Services Bldg, voice 644-9566, TDD 644-8504, <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu>); and
2. bring a letter to the instructor from the SDRC indicating you need academic accommodations. This should be done during the first week of class.

(Every syllabus is required to contain the disability section above. In practice, you don't need to do that. In weathercasting, if you have a physical disability such as a broken leg or whatever, we'll be creative in dealing with it.)

Grading: S/U grading only. Performances at the C– level or better for oral presentation will earn a Satisfactory (S) grade. If a student performs below the C– level, does not do two or more assignments, or has two or more unexcused absences from class, the student will receive an Unsatisfactory (U) grade.

There are no absolute rights and wrongs for weathercasting. The instructor encourages students to try creative approaches. Such attempts may produce poor results initially. Therefore, the instructor will praise a creative approach that fails if it is clear that the student is trying to do his or her best. If the instructor judges that a student is not performing at the C– level or better or is not putting forth a "good faith" effort, the student will receive a warning. If sufficient improvement is not made following two warnings, an Unsatisfactory (U) grade will be assigned.

Syllabus statement required by FSU: In order to fulfill FSU's Oral Communication Competency Requirement, the student must earn a "C–" or better in the course, and in order to receive a "C–" or better in the course, the student must earn at least a "C–" on the oral communication competency component of the course. If the student does not earn a "C–" or better on the oral communication competency component of the course, the student will not earn an overall grade of "C–" or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

Text: There is no textbook on weathercasting, so I am starting to write a book. From time to time, you will receive handouts that may become part of this book.

Assignments: The list of weekly activities is attached. **Students are expected to dress neatly for videotaping and to record their performances on their own videotapes. Keep your old assignments; do not tape over them.** Record everything at "Standard Play." Once you start the VCR to make a tape for class, **never** stop the tape recorder and start again. The reason is that your tape is a simulation of a "live" weathercast, and it is important to learn how to recover after making mistakes.

We will meet weekly to review tape recordings as a group. Have your tape cued to your most recent performance. Each week, each student will receive written and/or oral critiques from the instructor and classmates. From time to time, the instructor will give handouts to be read, there will be quizzes, and we will view videotapes of professional weathercasters.

If you speak another language in addition to English, you are encouraged to make tapes in both English and the other language(s). Our cable TV show "FSU Weather" includes segments in Spanish. Four alumni have been hired as Spanish language weathercasters.

After one semester in this course, a student is eligible to be considered to present weathercasts on FSU's cable TV channel. A student who is doing very well can even be considered for cable TV during his or her first semester in MET3940. Students will also be encouraged to visit one or more public schools to make a presentation to primary or secondary school students.

Students are expected to uphold the **Academic Honor Policy** published on the Web at <http://www.fsu.edu/~dof/forms/honorpolicy.pdf>. Read this document! It has evolved in recent years, but as you would expect, it is based on the notion that everyone at FSU has an individual and collective responsibility to be honest and ethical. The Honor Code mainly applies to our class in that we always need to treat each other with respect. You will be working closely with each other in what is essentially a lab class. Be constructive and helpful. Please let the instructor know of any problems.