**MEJO 522 & 523**

# CAROLINA WEEK

**Fall 2021**

M 1:00 -1:30 p.m. via Zoom

W 9:00 a.m. – 1 p.m. Dr. Lynn Owens

Carroll Hall 135 (studio and newsroom) Office: Carroll 325

Office hours: By Appointment. lynnowens@unc.edu

ZOOM LINK: <https://unc.zoom.us/j/5955031029?pwd=REFnQWRLQlFXK05vUUU1RUhtc1Jndz09>

Meeting ID: 595 503 1029

Passcode: 2021

**PRE-REQUISITES: JOMC 221 Audio-Video Information Gathering and JOMC 421 Electronic Journalism. If you haven’t completed 221 and 421, the instructor will drop you from this course. Permission of instructor is required.**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is entirely hands-on. Under the direction of the newsroom managers, students will write, produce, and broadcast a weekly TV news program. Students will fill all normal newsroom positions. We will incorporate all standard news program elements, including weather, satellite feed material, live remotes and the exact timing of the shows.

**OBJECTIVES:**

As a group, newscast staff will work toward producing news programs that contain no technical mistakes, are precisely written, impart important and interesting information, and flow as a cohesive whole.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:**

Approach this class as you would a job in the news business. We can’t tolerate you being late or absent. Each unexcused absence will result in a deduction of one grade mark. For example, if you do B work but miss a show, you’ll get a B- for the course. The same deduction applies for failing to submit video stories as per the class requirement. In other words, **failing to submit a video story in a given week is equivalent to missing class.**

**LATE WORK:**

There’d better not be any. Pay close attention to deadlines and details.

**Required Material**:

SD cards, *AP Stylebook*, *Broadcast News Handbook*, and a good dictionary.

**DETERMINATION OF GRADE:**

Your grade will be based on objective and subjective criteria, as will whether you’re hired and subsequently retained by a news or sports operation after you graduate. We’ll assess both the quality and quantity of your work. You don’t want to make the same mistake twice, such as not lighting interviews, editing with jump cuts, turning in blue video, or worst of all, missing your deadline. In addition, a big factor will be the extra effort you expend outside of class preparing shows we can all be proud of. There’s always something to be done. Ask. Look. Ask again. Be productive. Merely filling space and breathing air during class time each week won’t get you very far. If you’re enrolled in the class, you’re expected to turn video content **each week**, with a minimum of **four** TV packages part of that mix. Readers and FSGs written or built during class time can count toward extra effort, but don’t count toward fulfilling your required assignments. Additionally, you’re required to be involved with the production of the program on show days. Each person should be trained in one of the six key positions: producer, director, TD, audio, graphics, loading and playback.

Be sure to keep a log of what you do, so you can check your points against our records. It’s your grade….. make a case for yourself. When we sit down to do grades, we'll be looking to see which of the following categories best describes you and your efforts:

A: nearly perfect in execution... quality and quantity of work is exceptional

A-: stands out from crowd (in a good way!)... good attitude… work is impressive in terms of quantity and quality... very few problems all term... works like career depends on it

B+: very good performance... would get an unqualified job recommendation... consistently does more than required... a self starter

B: solid effort... should become a solid pro... would have no problem recommending this person

B-: with a bit more polish, this person should make it in the business... has a pretty good handle on things… good team player

C+: good in one phase of job, but consistent problems in another phase or contributed in only one phase

C: acceptable work... follows instructions... understands basics…. but didn’t perform/contribute across the board…punches the clock.

C-: has glimpses of potential in a limited range of jobs

D: needs to consider a different field

F: wouldn't have gotten this far

In addition to the general requirement of a certain amount of content per week, we expect you to amass a certain number of points. Here’s how you earn points:

VOs – 5-15

VO/SOTs – 10-20

Audio stories with sound - 10

Audio packages – 15

Non-voiced highlights and bites with accompanying text – 15

PKGs– 20-40

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| PKG 1:  If aired by show 4– 40  If on social media by show 4– 30  If turned in after show 4– 20 | PKG 2:  If aired by show 8– 40  If on social media by show 8– 30  If turned in after show 8– 20 | PKG 3:  If aired by final show– 40  If on social media by final show – 30  If turned in after final show - 20 |

Live reports - 5-15, depending on distance travelled and extent of set-up

Filling basic crew positions – 5

Building graphics, audio, TD, anchor– 10

Main producer, director – 15

Associate producers - 5

live assist – 5 -15 depending on distance travelled and extent of set-up

NOTE: When you split a project with 1-2 other people, that means you also split the points.

For the Fall session, you’re expected to earn a MINIMUM of 360 points. You must have accumulated 120 points by show number four and 240 by show number 8. Failure to meet any one of these benchmarks will result in a grade mark reduction from your final grade. (For example, from B+ to B. If you miss all three, that would take you from a hypothetical B+ to a C+.)

Also, remember that absences (for any reason other than those listed) will affect your grade. Pieces (or portions thereof) we drop strictly because of time constraints will still count toward your total. Pieces (or portions thereof) we drop because of quality issues **will not**. So, if you do a VO/SOT and the SOT is dark to the point that we drop it, that counts as a VO only. If the only reason we drop the SOT is time, you’ll get credit for having shot a VO/SOT. When we do grades, we’ll look first at your total points, then at the column that shows us if you missed any weeks turning in video content, then at the column that shows how often we dropped pieces of yours, then at the column that shows if you produced fewer than three packages or missed one or more of the benchmarks. The quantitative score is affected, either good or bad, by the qualitative score.

**CARE OF EQUIPMENT:**

It’s your responsibility to be very cautious regarding the field gear and editing equipment. When you check out or reserve gear, take a moment to look it over to see if anything is wrong and report it immediately. If anything happens to the equipment while it’s checked out in your name, you’ll be responsible for the cost of repairs. So, return every piece in the same condition it was in when you took it out. Here is a link to the Park Library equipment room guide:  <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/equipment-room/instruction-manuals>

**\*\*NEVER LEAVE EQUIPMENT UNATTENDED!!!\*\* BE AS PARANOID AS YOU HAVE TO BE, IT’S YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!!!! DO NOT LEAVE EQUIPMENT IN YOUR CAR.**

ATTENDANCE:

**University Policy:**

No right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](https://ars.unc.edu/) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](https://eoc.unc.edu/what-we-do/accommodations/) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](https://odos.unc.edu/), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators,](https://womenscenter.unc.edu/resources/gender-violence-services/) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](https://eoc.unc.edu/what-we-do/accommodations/) (EOC).

**Class Policy**:

*Instructors may work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessments and assignments. Please provide your approach on the course syllabus.*

Please communicate with me early about potential absences. Please be aware that you are bound by the [Honor Code](http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/honor-code/) when making a request for a University approved absence.

*(source:*[*http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/*](http://catalog.unc.edu/policies-procedures/attendance-grading-examination/)*)*

**HONOR CODE:**  
I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system ([http://honor.unc.edu](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=_PwXhu5wkEKfdEIVTpil9KJAr6RORM8IBwmgW7JyZPUuO4or7Dri_9D4gXEkBO0Z0IIreRKEjIQ.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fhonor.unc.edu)). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor’s responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Syllabus Changes

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

ARS

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: [https://ars.unc.edu](https://ars.unc.edu/) or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

(source: <https://ars.unc.edu/faculty-staff/syllabus-statement>)

Counseling and Psychological Services

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more. 

*TITLE IX*

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim – [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/).

POLICY ON NON-DISCRIMINATION

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals’ abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University’s [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](https://unc.policystat.com/policy/4467906/latest/) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.  Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at  [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu/)) or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](http://eoc.unc.edu/), or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students.  Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve; I appreciate any suggestions.  More broadly, our school has adopted diversity and inclusion [mission and vision statements](http://hussman.unc.edu/diversity-and-inclusion) with accompanying goals. These complement the University policy on [prohibiting harrassment and discrimination](https://eoc.unc.edu/our-policies/ppdhrm/).  In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran’s status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. The Dean of Students (Suite 1106, Student Academic Services Building, CB# 5100, 450 Ridge Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-5100 or [919] 966-4042) has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the University’s nondiscrimination policies.

MASK USE

All enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community -- your classmates and me – as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, I will ask you to leave immediately, and I will submit a report to the [Office of Student Conduct](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UNCChapelHill&layout_id=23).  At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. Students who have an authorized accommodation from Accessibility Resources and Service have an exception.  For additional information, see <https://carolinatogether.unc.edu/university-guidelines-for-facemasks/>.

**ACCREDITATION**

The Hussman School of Journalism and Media’s accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program.  Learn more about them here:

[http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps](https://outlook.unc.edu/owa/redir.aspx?C=XciXt6cD-UGWmSsiOI50ZzqEMU9vI9AI9RIjk3k3N01dLuvhbfv_0PYGw11_4sIpiXYZSqGOi3A.&URL=http%3a%2f%2fwww2.ku.edu%2f%7eacejmc%2fPROGRAM%2fPRINCIPLES.SHTML%23vals%26comps)

No single course could possibly give you a solid grasp of all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas.  Our advanced courses will provide you with more detailed guidance based on your specific area of specialization. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link noted above.

**WEEKLY CLASS SCHEDULE:**

August 18th – Info Session in studio (Carroll 135)

Virtual Anchor Auditions Due on VoiceThread by Friday, 8/20 at 5 p.m.

August 23rd – First Story development meeting via Zoom @ 1 p.m.

August 25th & September 1st – practice shows

September 8th – First Show of the semester

November 24th – NO SHOW/THANKSGIVING BREAK

December 1st - Last show of semester

**NOTE:** Always be professional in your dealings with your fellow workers and the people you meet as you gather news. News directors say they want people with good attitudes as well as solid journalism skills.

**SHOW SCHEDULE**  
  
by 5 p.m. on Monday - send all package scripts to Dr. Owens for approval

By 8:00 p.m. Tuesday – edited packages must be approved

9:00 – 10 a.m. on show day, all content loaded to server and double-checked

10 a.m. rundown and scripts finalized   
  
10:30 a.m. scripts and rundowns printed and distributed, pre-show and other pre-pro elements done, all video loaded, all graphics elements finalized and double checked against script. Anchors and live reporters read though and mark scripts, read to VOs and FSGs, click through all video  
  
11:15 a.m. – Pre-show meeting  
  
Noon – Show Time

Carolina Week/Sports Xtra Guidelines

Everyone enrolled in the class or listed as a reporter is responsible for **one video story per week**.  We expect volunteers to turn pieces as well. Those interested in reporting careers should naturally gravitate toward packages. Even if you double up in a given week, you’re still responsible for at least one piece the next week. This applies regardless of any other title you might hold: producer, director, etc.  EVERYONE is responsible for content.  In addition to providing content, there are production positions available: including producer, assistant producer, director/TD, audio and graphics.

Always set up shoots/interviews with several days’ notice, if possible.  If that isn’t possible, give as much notice as you can, because business managers or SIDs don’t have to let you shoot video inside their establishments/ interview their athletes. Do NOT show up at a local mall or a sports venue expecting to be able to shoot without setting it up in advance. Also, please don’t wear or display anything that indicates support for a particular candidate, whether in campus, local, state, or national elections.  We strongly encourage you to register as an independent, especially if you plan to pursue this career. You may not report about a team or organization you’re a part of unless it’s a first-person report.

**See a manager to chat about story development before you go out to shoot a package. This isn’t a suggestion, but a requirement. If your story changes while you’re doing an interview or after that, you need to communicate this with a manager. This is also a requirement, not a suggestion.**

**PKGs**

Packages should span 1:30 (or less!) . . . the Gettysburg address was only 2:30

Anchor leads & tags – what the anchor(s) will be reading on desk before/after your package. These do not count toward the TRT (total run time) of the package. You should learn to write these, though your wonderful producers will certainly help you out when necessary.

Front pad – 1.5s. For packages, front pad should be just video with natural sound – wait 1.5s to start your voice track. SOTs that are part of VO/SOTs have 1 sec. of silent front pad.

Back pad – at least 5s of the **same** shot AFTER the last words in your package, meaning your last shot should be at least 8 seconds long (freeze frame if absolutely necessary) Back pad on packages includes low nats, back pad on SOTs is silent

Track like you mean it; if you sound bored, imagine how the viewer feels. Emphasize the ‘power’ words in your sentences, because the goal is to sound natural and conversational. Similarly, don’t write things in your scripts that you wouldn’t say in a regular conversation.

Close-ups & sequencing – close-ups are your friends! Makes it easy to avoid jump cuts and can turn a boring-looking action into something more interesting. Use them frequently.

Nats pops – good way to keep people watching; can be used to transition between locations/time. Use them frequently. (at least two per PKG)

Primary sound should be mixed to about **-12db**. Nat sound should be mixed to about **-24db**. Your natural sound should NOT compete with your track or interviews. It’s very important to make sure the audio is even throughout your package – your audio board operator will appreciate it.

Package scripts go to your professor for approval prior to editing, and the earlier the better. You can’t do much without a finalized script.

Write to your video and edit to your script – keep in mind the footage you have when writing your script. Good writing is wasted if you use wallpaper video.

For each person in your package, make a lower third – or ‘super’ – to identify him or her. Both Carolina Week and Sports Xtra supers are posted online at **www.cwhelp.wordpress.com.** It would behoove you to download the appropriate one and save it to your hard drive, otherwise you’ll have to download it every time. Be sure to read the lower third guidelines on the website. Supers should appear on camera for 4-6s and dissolve on/off.

**Note: every story goes through two rounds of checks: script, editing.  Packages go through a third round; audio mix**

**VOs**

About 20-25s, depending on the topic

Write an anchor lead, but no tag necessary

No front pad, but the first shot should be at least **four seconds**.

Back pad – your video should be about 10s longer than needed, so your last shot needs to be fairly long. If it takes about 25s to read the script, then the video should be at least 35s (with the last shot lasting about 13s). Have an anchor (preferably the one who will read it during the show) read the script while you are editing and see how it matches up. The shot should not change in the pad.

SWAP – Synchronized Words and Pictures – if the anchor says something, the viewer should see it. If we’re talking about one player hitting a 3, you shouldn’t see a different player miss a free throw.

Because VOs have only natural sound, they should be mixed down to -24db. Nats pops are possible in VOs, but can be tricky. Make sure your anchors know when/what they are.

For game highlights, use a healthy dose of close-ups and/or cutaways so the video isn’t just one play after another from the same angle (i.e. anything that isn’t the main game action – fans, coaches, hero shots, mascots, etc.). Close-ups and sequencing are still good ideas when appropriate.

The script should be more than a dictated box score. Watch some highlights and try to focus on the writing and how it matches the video.

**VO/SOTs**

This will require two separate videos – one with the VO and the other with the SOT.

The VO is structured just like a regular VO, but the last line of the script should transition into the SOT.

The SOT should have one second of muted front pad just before the person starts speaking. Add at least 5s of muted back pad to the SOT.

Make sure the SOT really adds something to the show. Roy Williams might say “Daggum, we need to score more points than the other team to win” . . . but that doesn’t mean we need to use it on the air.

The person talking in your SOT should have a super.

The SOT audio should be mixed to -12db.

**FSGs** – Full Screen Graphics

When you’re assigned an FSG, you need to write the script for the anchors (including a lead) AND build the graphic. It’s generally a good idea to run graphics ideas by your producer and director. The graphics coordinator will tweak the FSG as needed.

The length of graphics depends on the content, though it’s important not to have graphics cluttered with unnecessary text. Less is more when it comes to graphics…. BIG and BOLD are the key words here. Too much text is actually distracting. No single page should be up for more than 10 seconds. If the script is longer than that, we’ll need a second page.

**Preshow & Teases**

Your producer will assign three preshow videos and three tease videos.

These should be about 15s (depending on how long the script is) of compelling video. Your producer might write the script and the banner text; make sure it makes sense with your video.

All preshow and tease videos should be loaded by 1:15 on show days.

**Graphics Check & Show Run Through**

All graphics will be check for accuracy and spelling at 2:30.

There will be a full show run through at 3 p.m. (this should allow plenty of time to catch any potential problems)

The show starts at 4:00:00.

**Social Media**

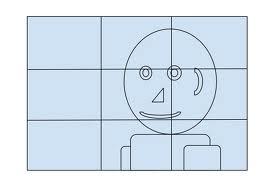
When shooting stories record a quick “tease” about your story for Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. This can be done on your phone and really quickly. It needs to be short. Just your name, what you’re doing, and when people can watch. Also, think ahead on your stories. If you have a great talker topic, reach out to social media early. An example: Just say your name, and “this week we’re catching you up on all things Carolina basketball. I’m sitting down with ??? What are some things you want to know? Let me know on my Facebook/Instagram page and tune in to see ?? answer your questions and more.” (Something like that, but be creative.) If you need help reach out to your manager. Also, brainstorm some good polls or questions that we can run on social media and share on the shows. We can get those questions out early in a quick social media live and give responses on the show and after. Finally, let’s take people live behind the scenes before the show starts. We will go live on Instagram/ Facebook live showing people behind the scenes as we get ready for the show and tease what is ahead. The more we interact with social media, the more people will tune in. We’ll do social media hits throughout the afternoon, including one from the producer at 3:30 p.m.

**Shooting**

Things to keep in mind for general camera use:

* NEVER leave your camera unattended
* Be prepared – have your batteries charged, have the appropriate mic(s), have a memory card, etc.
* White balance whenever you change locations to shoot. Video shot without doing so just looks bad, and is often unsalvageable.
* Check/adjust your audio levels; overdriven audio is unusable. Use headphones while shooting.

When shooting interviews:

* Use the ‘rule of thirds’ – imagine the screen gridded into thirds; the person you are interviewing should have plenty of nose and head room, as seen here: 
* Make sure your tripod is level – use walls, pillars, etc. to match the verticals of your framing and ensure that you aren’t shooting at an odd angle.
* Use the ‘five eye rule’ – you, the person being interviewed, and the camera eye should all be on the same level. Shooting people from below makes them look powerful and intimidating, while shooting people from above makes them look meek and unimportant.
* Be sure to barrel focus before starting the interview. With your camera on manual focus, zoom all the way in on the person’s eye, grab a focus, then zoom back out to frame your interview. Interviews that are out of focus (or “soft”) look bad.
* Be conscious of what’s behind the interviewee:
  + Avoid shooting into open windows or reflective surfaces
  + Don’t shoot into really boring backgrounds or cluttered backgrounds that will distract the viewer
  + Don’t shoot people with lighter skin against black backgrounds; don’t shoot people with darker skin against white backgrounds.
  + Don’t put the interviewee against a wall. Add some depth.
* When conducting an interview, position yourself right next to the camera. You don’t want the interviewee looking right into the camera. Note that this is much easier to do if you have someone else shooting the interview.
* Fight the urge to say “uh-huh” or “okay” during interviews; just nod. The mic often picks it up and it can sound awkward on air.

Light all standups and bites. No exception. No MOS pieces. No “ringer” interviews.

**For SX Only**:

When the event occurs             Where the coverage goes

F - M afternoon                SX/CN/FB

M NIGHT/WED AFT         CW/CN/FB

Wed. Night/Th.                 CN/FB

For social media, it’s important that we post at the right times and know how to maximize our reach.

We’ll shoot all local events with two cameras. Version one is straight highlights with a bite or two, for SX or CW. 30 second VO, 10 second bite in most cases. Coordinate with each other to get six high-quality cutaways without missing critical action.

FB version concentrates on Carolina’s top performer. Two written sentences, 30-45 seconds of bites with video over the top. CN can use either version.

Arrive 15 minutes before game start. Tweet prior to, at halftime, and twice after the event. FB script and media need final approval and must get posted within 18 hours of the end of the event. Bonus points if posted within two hours.

The video coordinator will be available from 4-7:45 the day before the shows and will alert producers at 8 regarding which packages are approved. All video and full screens must be loaded by 1:30 on show day.

We’ll use video from other sources (such as GoHeels, only when absolutely necessary). We want at least one story per week that’s not about a varsity sport (including clubs and intramurals). There will be weekly quizzes related to this document at 1 p.m. sharp.

**A College Reporter’s Quick Guide to the**

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

**FERPA: WHAT IT MEANS, HOW IT WORKS**

* **FERPA** = Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act.
* FERPA protects student **“education records”** from unauthorized disclosure.
* Student (or parent of a minor) must authorize disclosure of education records.
* However, not everything is an education record.
* So what is an “education record”:
  + must be a record, file, document, or other materials
  + must be maintained by an educational agency or institution such as a college or university
  + must “directly relate” to a student
* A student’s official record maintained by the school, transcripts, tests, and assignments are education records.
* AREA OF TENSION: To be an education record, a record must do more than merely mention the name of a student, tangentially relate to the student, or discuss the non-educational activities of a student.
* For example, non-educational activities include police or campus security records relating to law enforcement.

**REDACTED RECORDS AND FERPA**

* **COURTS**
  + **Redaction** = The censoring or obscuring of fact of a document for legal reasons.
  + The courts have been clear that, once the identifying information is removed from a document (“redacted”), it ceases to be a FERPA “education record.”
  + Therefore, a redacted document is otherwise subject to the state’s open-records law, and it must be turned over.
* **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**
  + The Department of Education, however, has given unclear guidance on this subject.
  + The department revised its FERPA rules in January 2009 to broaden the definition of “education records.” Under the Department’s revised definition, schools are allowed to deny requests for records – even with all identifying information removed – if information in the records could be linked to a particular student by someone in the school community with inside knowledge (even if the general public would have no idea of the student’s identity).
  + The Department’s interpretation stands on shaky legal footing and may be vulnerable to challenge as an unreasonable expansion of the law.

**WHAT IS *NOT* COVERED BY FERPA?**

*“FERPA does not provide a student with an invisible cloak so that the student can remain hidden from public view . . . .”*

It is common for schools to abuse FERPA by claiming that it covers more than it does and using it as a shield against public records requests. Here are some commonly requested records that are NOT protected by FERPA:

* **Information gathered from a source other than a school record.**  FERPA applies to “records,” not information. For example, information gathered during an interview that pertains to a student’s academic record is not covered by FERPA.
* **Parking tickets issued to students.**
* **The minutes and recordings of public meetings.**
* **Records created and kept by student organizations, including student government.** These records are not maintained by the educational institution.
* **Video footage shot inside or outside of a school bus.**
* **Crime reports.**
* **Employment records.** FERPA does not cover the employment records of students employed by academic institutions, although it may apply to the employment-related records of work-study students.
* **Findings that a student committed a crime of violence or a sex crime.**
* **Settlements and litigation documents.** A lawsuit or settlement agreement cannot be withheld solely because a student is involved in the case, although student identifying information can sometimes be redacted.
* **Reports of employee misconduct.** An investigation of employee misconduct does not “directly” relate to any particular student, and even the student names in such records can be disclosed.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

“FERPA and Access to Public Records,” The Student Press Law Center (November 2014), *available at* <http://www.splc.org/article/2005/05/ferpa-and-access-to-public-records>.

“The Family Educations Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA),” Reporters Committee For Freedom of the Press (2010), *available at* <http://www.rcfp.org/ferpa-hipaa-and-dppa/family-educational-rights-and-privacy-act-ferpa>.

University of North Carolina’s Policies and Procedures Under FERPA (2010), *available at* <http://policy.sites.unc.edu/files/2013/05/FERPA.pdf>.