

NEWSROOM

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MY ELECTION NEWSROOM DEBUT

WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT JOURNALISM COVERING ELECTION NIGHT IN A BUSY CITY
NEWSROOMby [Noah Shubert '25](#) | November 11, 2024*Above: Noah Shubert '25 (right) interviewing voters at the precincts.**Read time: about 2 min*

Every generation lays claim to at least one life-changing, momentum-swinging event; something that defines their personal growth and development, and impacts the world around them. For Gen Z, we've had so many of these life-altering events that it would be hard to pick just one. Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic and its lingering effects have completely transformed the way we exist in our everyday lives. But intertwined in this monstrous event, there have been three presidential elections—all of which have altered the trajectory of the United States.

I had the opportunity to witness this most recent election cycle in a really unique way. As part of my journalism capstone course with Professor Cynthia Davis, I had the privilege of working with WHRO Public Media, an extension of National Public Radio in Norfolk, covering this historic event. This collaboration provided me, and the other students in the capstone, the opportunity to gain firsthand journalism experience during one of the most

consequential and high-stakes periods in our nation.

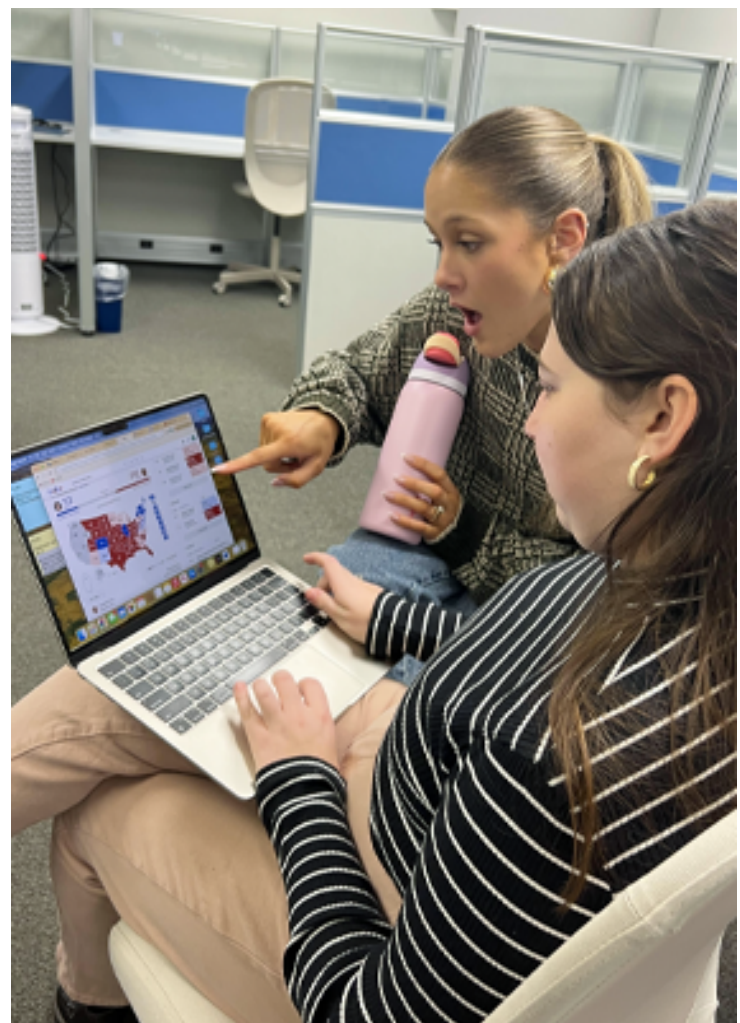
We spent the entire semester leading up to November 5th learning how journalists approach events like an election. Alongside Professor Davis, we worked with WHRO News Director Mechelle Hankerson, who guided us through the journalistic process. For the first few weeks, we were tasked with selecting social issues to frame post-election stories we would contribute to the WHRO website. I was able to earn a byline in a professional news organization, which was an opportunity I never expected as a student.

Our class spent the next few weeks preparing for the second part of the project, which turned out to be equally as amazing.

On Election Day, we were assigned to go out to local precincts and interview voters about the issues that were most important to them and their reactions to the possibility of either Donald Trump or Kamala Harris being elected. The audio we recorded was used for WHRO's election coverage, and was part of the responsibilities we had as student reporters. Hearing firsthand from members of the community was fascinating, as it offered a multitude of perspectives and truly stressed how divided voters were about key issues.

Later that day, we all headed over to the WHRO main station, where we were greeted by Mechelle and given a tour of the newsroom. We observed writers as they crafted their Election Day stories, and even sat in for a live radio update in one of their many audio studios. The tension was apparent and it was clear that people working there were stifling their own reactions and opinions, which only added to how interesting it was to watch fully objective journalism in the making. Moods and storylines changed with every new shift in voting trends, constantly evolving the narratives of stories. We stayed until almost midnight and observed almost four hours of newsroom operation on a challenging and extremely busy night.

This experience has stoked my drive and interest to enter the journalism world. Having the chance to watch a newsroom in action as reporters cover an event as large as the election emphasized to me how important accuracy and consistency is in local journalism. With the journalism minor being such a new reintroduction to the CNU curriculum, being able to establish this connection with WHRO and make meaningful, tangible contributions as students to such a significant story was not just amazing, but extremely rewarding.



Students Samantha Spears (left) and Katherine Zickel (right) monitoring election results at WHRO studios.

Noah Shubert is a senior majoring in Communication with minors in German and Journalism. Set to graduate this December, Noah serves as the main student broadcaster for CNU Athletics and looks to pursue the same career path post-graduation. A proud brother of Sigma Phi Epsilon, Noah loves to be involved both on and off campus and looks to embody the spirit of being a Captain every day.
