

Sports Writing and Reporting

JOUR 4150/6150-001

Spring 2019

TR 2:40-4:04 p.m.

Meeman 208

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CATALOG DESCRIPTION

Development of advanced writing, reporting, and professional skills specific to sports media. Emphasis on practice of game reporting, feature stories, column and opinion writing, and multimedia.

PREREQUISITES:

JOUR 3526 and 3120

TEXTBOOK:

Gisondi, J. (2017). *Field Guide to Covering Sports* Second Edition. Washington: CQ Press. / ISBN-13: 978-1506315683 / ISBN-10: 1506315682.

Stout & Bryant (eds) (2017). *The Best American Sports Writing 2017*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt Press. ISBN-10: 0544821556 ISBN-13: 978-0544821552

CLASS INSTRUCTION:

This course is designed to develop writing, reporting, and professional skills specific to sport media. You will learn about writing strategies for stories produced in print, Web, social media, audio, and video. Further, we will discuss opportunities on television and radio for sports. Additionally, we will discuss sports publicity and promotion through team in-house communications. Some sessions will require students to leave the classroom, in which case conduct will be governed by the rules of the classroom and the rules of the venue in which the class is meeting. A typical class session will consist of a lecture, discussion, and assignment/lab time. Students are required to complete multiple writing and media projects throughout the semester, as well as a final project.

REQUIRED SOFTWARE:

Adobe Photoshop CC

Adobe InDesign CC

Adobe Premiere CC

Audacity

Infographic applications found online

Note: You can purchase the Adobe Creative Cloud on a month-to-month basis from Adobe.com.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

One Flash Drive (At least 2GB capacity)

GRADING:

A = 92%-100%

A- = 90%-91%

B+ = 87%-89%

B = 82%-86%

B- = 80%-81%

C+ = 77%-79%

C = 72%-76%

C- = 70%-71%

D = 65%-69%

F = 0%-64%

Grading Philosophy: A=Professional quality work that could be use with little or no modification; B=Good to excellent work and exceeds requirement but would require revision to be used professionally; C=Satisfactory work and adequately meets requirement but would need significant revision; D=Barely satisfies minimum requirement and below average quality; F=Unsatisfactory work and does not meet minimum requirement. NOTE: Plusses and minuses may be given.

Grade Distribution:

Assignment	Number	Points
Reading Reviews	5	100 (20 points each)
Beat assignments	5	500 (100 points each)
Social Media Stories	4	400 (100 points each)
Sports Issue Project	1	250 points
Online Portfolio	1	100 points
Participation	1	50 points
Total		1,400 points

Graduate Student Requirements

Students enrolled in JOUR 6150 will be required to complete an additional assignment, which will be determined by the instructor and student. The assignment will be based on the student's individual interests and may be either research based or practical.

Assignment	Number	Points
Reading Reviews	5	100 (20 points each)
Beat assignments	5	500 (100 points each)
Social Media Stories	4	400 (100 points each)
Sports Issue Project	1	250 points
Grad Assignment	1	250 points
Online Portfolio	1	100 points
Participation	1	50 points
Total		1,650 points

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT:

- All assignments are to be submitted electronically via eCourseware.
- Generally, each assignment and project will come with unique formatting guidelines. Be sure to follow these guidelines exactly. Work that does not comply to these guidelines, as well as the production specifications for the assignment, will receive a grade of 0.
- All assignments will have a firm deadline. **LATE WORK IS NOT ACCEPTED.**
- Students will receive a participation grade that is based on your in-class contributions. This is not an attendance grade.
- Work will be critiqued in the classroom and must be suitable for presentation. Students are encouraged to work ahead on assignments to develop their own processes for the work.
- Students will create a professional online portfolio as a tool to market themselves on the job market. The details and requirements of the portfolio will be discussed later in the semester.

COMPUTER USAGE:

Students are expected to use a computer in this course. Students will use Apple computers running the Macintosh operating system in class but may use Windows computers at their own discretion. Students will work with the design software standard in the professional world. At this time, the professional standard is the Adobe Creative Cloud, particularly Adobe InDesign, Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. You will need to rely on skills you learned in previous courses. This course is not designed to teach how to use software or basic skills. This course is designed to move those skills forward in the world of sport journalism.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.

ERRORS AND PENALTIES:

Edit stories carefully. Your multimedia projects are graded for content minus mechanical errors. Spelling, grammar and style count for each activity. A fact error will result in the reduction of one letter grade for each error. Fact errors include inaccurate information, errors and typos in names, numbers, addresses, dates, quotes, and proper nouns. **Bottom line: REPORTERS MUST SELF-EDIT. Read and re-read, and edit and re-edit your assignments.**

FINAL COMMENT:

Sharpening multimedia, reporting, and editing skills is a journey best undertaken as a team, with open hearts, open minds and good humor. You can learn much from your peers as from your instructor. I encourage you to speak frequently and work together on stories/assignments with your classmates. We will critique our own work in class and I will accept rewrites and additional multimedia elements to stories.

If you want to talk about the class, feel free to come and see me. Don't worry if you don't have an appointment. My office door is often open. If my office hours are inconvenient for you, make a special appointment and I will work to accommodate you. I want to help you succeed.

**TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:
JOUR 4150/6150-001 Class Schedule**

Note: What follows is a tentative schedule. The syllabus is a general plan for the course; the instructor reserves the right to make changes as the semester progresses. If there are any changes, you will of course be notified in a timely manner.

- Week 1:** Course Introduction, Picking your Sports beat.
- Week 2:** Intro to the field: From Sports Fan to Reporter, Ethics
- Week 3:** Reminders: Leads, Story structure & Interviewing
- Week 4:** Social media.
- Week 5:** Play-by-play; game stories.
- Week 6:** Feature Stories.
- Week 7:** Mega-events.
- Week 8:** *Spring Break.*
- Week 9:** Columns and blogging.
- Week 10:** High School and college sports.
- Week 11:** Radio and podcasts.
- Week 12:** Sports news and enterprise.
- Week 13:** Final Project & online portfolios.
- Week 14:** Final project & online portfolios.
- Week 15:** Presentations

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:

If you are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, please visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. If you are comfortable doing so, please also let the instructor know you are experiencing challenges as they may be able to assist you in connecting with campus or community supports.

FIVE PILLARS OF JOUR4150

- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional skills and attitudes necessary to work in sports media today. JOUR 4150 reinforces basic principles of media writing, interviewing and reporting. Students also learn what makes sports unique.
- *Writing:* Students continue to work on writing mechanics and AP style, developing both basic news stories and more complex reports about the world of sports.
- *Multimedia:* Several assignments in 4150 include a multimedia component, including photos, videos, and social media, to bring added value to written work. Additionally, students build an online portfolio to showcase their professional skills, work experience, and writing samples.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students work independently and as a team to develop story ideas and to target stories for publication.
- *Media Literacy:* Students learn about the complex interrelationship of sports and the media, including ethical and social questions raised through mediated sports.

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR4150:

- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity.
- Think critically, creatively and independently.
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work.
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve.
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness.
- Apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive objectives to be mastered (ability to explain, analyze, understand, think critically):

- Acquire an awareness of the various kinds of sports writing.
- Deepen knowledge of writing skills, specifically as it pertains to sports.
- Understand the professional routines of sports writers.
- Understand the critical need for thorough reporting and research in order to write effective sports writing pieces.
- Be sensitive to the needs of diverse and under-represented groups in sports media.
- Understand the role of multimedia skills in sports.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies):

- Write various kinds of sports stories for print and web (thematic feature, profile, review of a sports book, opinion columns), all on deadline.
- Cover live sports events digitally.
- Hold knowledgeable conversations with the professional sports writers brought to class.
- Pass weekly sports news quizzes.
- Prepare and participate in radio sports programming.

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET:

Awareness:

- Recognize various kinds of sports writing
- Learn about a variety of sports (outside of men's basketball, men's football and men's baseball)
- Find out what opportunities exist in the field of sports writing

Understanding:

- Understand the professional requirements needed to become a sports writer
- Understand the importance of reporting on diverse populations and of writing for equally diverse readers
- Understand the differences between journalistic sports writing and fan-written sports stories, and between critical analysis and opinion
- Appreciate the role of multimedia in sports writing

Application:

- Read pre-selected news stories about "minor" sports (any sport other than men's football, men's basketball and men's baseball)
- Take weekly quizzes about these stories about "minor" sports
- Meet professionals from the sports media industry
- Cover live sports events on Twitter and with full-length stories
- Write an in-depth thematic feature, a profile, a review of a sports book, and opinion columns, all on deadline
- Record one-minute sports news audio updates

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix, or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

EMAIL:

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

COURSE REPETITION:

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all." (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

ONLINE SETEs:

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

DEADLINES:

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

DISABILITY:

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

DIVERSITY:

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY:

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

STUDENT SUPPORT:

Students who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.