

# Sports Media & Society



MMC 3703: Section 1A32  
MMC 6936: Section 8904 (Graduate)

**Times & Location**

Weimer Hall 1064  
Tuesday Period 3  
Thursday Period 3-4

**Instructor:** Ted Spiker

**Office:** 2070 Weimer Hall  
**E-mail:** tspiker@jou.ufl.edu  
**Phone:** 392.0500

**G-Chat/Skype:** ProfSpiker (appointment)  
**Twitter/IG/Snap:** @ProfSpiker  
**Office Hours:** W 3-5 p.m.  
(other times as well, best by appointment)

**TA:** Brett Ball

**Phone:** 273.1637  
**E-mail:** ball.s@ufl.edu  
**Office:** 2039-A Weimer Hall  
**Office hours:** T 10:30-11:30 a.m.  
or by appointment

**Required Reading**

Links to the readings will be posted on Canvas.

**Prerequisites**

None

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## The Course

In this survey course, we will cover the relationships between the sports industry, athletes, media, and audience. We will discuss the evolution of sports media from the early sportswriters to the day when athletes control their own messages via social media. We will cover the various mediums—newspapers, magazines, books, radio, TV, online, forums, blogs, and social media—in terms of their history, function, impact, and ethical implications. This course is about developing literacy and critical-thinking skills about the sports industry and its relationship with the media. The course will consist of lectures, discussion, and guest speakers (live and via Skype). Please use professional courtesy when instructor, fellow students, and guests are talking.



## Tweets of the Week

You are not required to have a Twitter account, but you are encouraged to be familiar with the social-media platform, because many current sports-media issues are played out on Twitter. The instructor will use Twitter and Snapchat to extend discussion, post relevant links, or give exam hints. Every week, posts will be eligible to win Tweet/Snap of the Week for extra-credit points. On Twitter, use #SportsMediaUF. There's no limit to how many times you can win. #boom

## Discussions

Because we will not be able to cover all issues during class, you are encouraged to continue discussions on Canvas. You are required to make 3 insightful comments in the discussion section during the course of the semester (see more below). Once a topic is open, it will close after one week. You only need to pick one post to comment on per deadline cycle. There will be roughly five or six opportunities to make comments before each deadline. Your response should be approximately 75 to 100 words to get full credit.



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## The Grading

You will have the opportunity to accumulate 1,000 points for the semester. (Graduate students: See file on Canvas.)

- 200:** Exam 1
- 200:** Exam 2
- 200:** Exam 3
- 75:** Discussion Comments (3 @ 25 points each)
- 100:** Reading Quizzes (3 quizzes @ 50 points, drop the lowest)
- 100:** Social Media Assignment (2 @ 50 points each)
- 125:** Participation (your total points on Top Hat)

**Exams:** Includes only material from lectures and guests. Scantron multiple-choice.

**Quizzes:** From required reading only (links on Canvas). Most will be short-answer.

**Discussion Comments:** You must make 3 discussion comments on the Canvas site (see deadlines below).

**Social Media Assignments:** See details on Canvas.

**Participation:** See details below about the use of Top Hat during lecture.

Late assignments, discussion comments, etc... will not be graded. Makeup exams and quizzes will only be given with documented medical excuse.

## The Dates

### EXAMS

Oct. 2  
Oct. 30  
Dec. 4

### QUIZZES

Sept. 27  
Oct. 25  
Nov. 29

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Oct. 11  
Nov. 13

### DISCUSSION COMMENTS

1 before Sept. 18 at 11:59 p.m.  
1 before Oct. 23 at 11:59 p.m.  
1 before Dec. 4 at 11:59 p.m.

### IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

<b>Sept. 18:</b>	<b>Discussion 1</b>
<b>Sept. 27:</b>	<b>Quiz 1</b>
<b>Oct. 2:</b>	<b>EXAM 1</b>
<b>Oct. 11:</b>	<b>Social Media 1</b>
<b>Oct. 23:</b>	<b>Discussion 2</b>
<b>Oct. 25:</b>	<b>Quiz 2</b>
<b>Oct. 30:</b>	<b>EXAM 2</b>
<b>Nov. 13:</b>	<b>Social Media 2</b>
<b>Nov. 29:</b>	<b>Quiz 3</b>
<b>Dec. 4:</b>	<b>EXAM 3</b>
<b>Dec. 4:</b>	<b>Discussion 3</b>

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## The Required Reading

Links are posted on Canvas under each quiz description.

### For Quiz 1

- >> “The Worldwide Leader in Dong Shots,” GQ, Gabriel Sherman, February 2011
- >> “How ESPN Ditched Journalism,” Deadspin, November 11, 2012
- >> “Twitter is Abusive and Declining, But Still Dominates the Sports Media,” The Big Lead, April 2016

### For Quiz 2

PICK ONE:

- >> “Damned Yankee,” Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith, Oct. 13, 1997

OR

- >> “Eyes of the Storm,” Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith, March 2, 1998.

### For Quiz 3

- >> “Bill Simmons Breaks Free,” Hollywood Reporter, June 2016
- >> “Michelle Beadle: ESPN’s Female Rebel, Raw and Uncensored,” Daily Beast, June 2015
- >> “This is Bad for America, But Great for Us,” Politico, September 29, 2017

## Participation

We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. You can visit the Top Hat Overview (<https://success.tophat.com/s/article/Student-Top-Hat-Overview-and-Getting-Started-Guide>) within the Top Hat Success Center which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system. An email invitation will be sent to you by email, but if don't receive this email, you can register by simply visiting our course website: at <https://app.tophat.com/208375> Note: our Course Join Code is 208375 Top Hat requires a paid subscription, and a full breakdown of all subscription options available can be found here: [www.tophat.com/pricing](http://www.tophat.com/pricing). Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time, due to the fact that they require specific user information to troubleshoot these issues, please contact their Support Team directly by way of email ([support@tophat.com](mailto:support@tophat.com)), the in app support button, or by calling 1-888-663-5491.

## The Grading Breakdown

925–1000	A	725–774	C
900–924	A-	700–724	C-
875–899	B+	675–699	D+
825–874	B	625–674	D
800–824	B-	600–624	D-
775–799	C+	0-599	E

Graduate students enrolled in the MMC section of this course should see the document on the Canvas site for adjustments to the grade distribution regarding graduate requirements.

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## The Topics

Note: The order of topics covered in class is subject to change based on the availability of guest speakers, as well as current issues in the sports media (we adjust on the fly when something of relevance breaks). This will serve as a blueprint for the topics we'll cover, but not in this order.

**BASICS:** *Understanding how it works...*

**Introduction: An Overview of the Sports Media & Basic Journalistic Principles**  
**America's Best Sportswriters, Historical and Modern**  
**Sports Radio: From Play-by-Play to Talk Radio**  
**TV Coverage and the Power of ESPN**  
**The New Sports Media**  
**The Business of Sports Media**  
**International Sports Media**  
**Fictional Portrayals of Sportswriters**

**ISSUES:** *Conflict in sports and media industries...*

**Balanced Coverage: Who Gets It, Why, and Is It Right?**  
**Portrayal of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in Sports**  
**Women in Sports Media**  
**Athletes in Control: The Social Media Effect**

**CASE STUDIES:** *Specific instances to reflect on the bigger issues...*

**Case Study: Media Coverage Colin Kaepernick**  
**Case Study: Ball in the Family**  
**Case Study: Recruiting and Social Media**  
**Case Study: Gambling, Point Spreads and Betting in Media Coverage**  
**Case Study: Media Coverage of Michael Sam**  
**Case Study: The Decision and Portrayal of LeBron James**  
**Case Study: Media Coverage of Tiger Woods**  
**Case Study: How Sports Handled 9/11**  
**Case Study: John Rocker's Mouth**  
**Case Study: Bill Simmons**  
**Case Study: Gary Smith, America's Best Sports Writer?**  
**Case Study: Olympic Coverage**  
**Case Study: The Penn State Saga**  
**Case Study: The Cultural Importance of Sports Illustrated**  
**Case Study: Falls from Grace (Urban Meyer, Manti Teo, Lance Armstrong, and more...)**

More!

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## The Fine Print

### UF's Grading Policy

Please read: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

### Academic Integrity

The College of Journalism and Communications at UF is committed to upholding the University's Academic Honor code as detailed on UF's website. Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. The university's guidelines provide additional details, which you are expected to understand completely. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

### Technology Devices (Phones & Computers)

We will incorporate technology in many of the class sessions, so you will need to bring your laptop, smartphones or tablets to class. This is how your participation score will be measured (see Participation). When using these devices, you are expected to be on task (no texting, Facebook, or changing fantasy lineups). As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means you are affecting everyone's learning experience if your cellphone or laptop makes noise or is visually distracting during class. In short, turn your cellphone settings to silent/vibrate and use your laptop to take notes, not to watch YouTube videos (we'll do plenty of that in class).

### Resources

The University of Florida is full of resources that can help you in your academic career. You are encouraged to make use of resources such as the library, tutoring, career resource center, etc. A list of useful UF resources can be found here: <http://www.ufadvising.ufl.edu/student-resources.aspx>

### Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for any students with disabilities. If you have a disability, the Dean of Students Office will give you official documentation, which you will give to your instructor. More information is on the Disability Resource Center page from the Dean of Students Office. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

### Counseling & Mental Health Center

UF's Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) offers support for students in need. CWC is located at 3190 Radio Road and is open from 8-5 Monday through Friday. Please refer to the CWC's website for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>



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## The Instructors

Professor **Ted Spiker** is the chair of the department of journalism at UF. He was named the University of Florida Teacher of the Year for 2016-17. He came to UF in 2001 after being articles editor at Men's Health. A graduate of the University of Delaware and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Spiker has had work published in Outside, O the Oprah Magazine, Fortune, Women's Health, Runner's World, Reader's Digest, and many other magazines. He is also the author or co-author of more than 20 books, including New York Times bestsellers. For ACCENT and other events, he has conducted on-stage interviews with such sports stars as Abby Wambach, Alex Rodriguez, Erin Andrews, Steve Spurrier, and Dan Mullen. He is a Philadelphia sports fan, but has never once booed or thrown snowballs at Santa Claus. He developed and started teaching #SportsMediaUF in 2010.

Twitter/Insta/Snap: @ProfSpiker

Web site: [www.tedspiker.com](http://www.tedspiker.com)

**Brett Ball** is a second-year PhD student in the College of Journalism and Communications. Her research focus area is Health Communications, particularly mental health and well being of athletes. She graduated with her bachelors degree from the University of South Carolina and also played on the women's basketball team. She recieved her masters from the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) and was the graduate assistant for their women's basketball team. Brett also hosts her own podcast called, "Ballin' with Brett", which discuss topics related to the intersection of sports, culture and ideas. It will be released this fall.

