

JOU4930: Sports Media & Social Change
Autumn 2020 - Online

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

While plenty of time is spent working on the reporting of sports scores and news, there is an area of sports journalism that has long gotten too little attention: Social issues.

In the last couple of years, of course, this has changed dramatically as the social conscience of people in sports has become awakened in powerful ways. The year 2020 will be remembered in the United States in large part for conversations about race and equality. More and more athletes and sports figures are engaging on these issues – be it through social or traditional media – and there is a wealth of opportunity for media figures who understand how to engage.

This course will prepare future journalists to engage on what have long been considered “tough” issues and more.

These issues include:

- Racism
- Sexism
- Homophobia & Transphobia
- Ableism
- Religion
- Class & Social status
- Domestic violence
- Sexual abuse
- Drug use

The course is conducted online through Canvas. The 16 classes will consist of a mix of VoiceThread lectures, reading and quizzes. In addition, two mandatory long-term writing assignments will bring together the lessons learned and put them into practice. An online forum where the class can engage in discussion of hot news items and reporting methods may also be used.

Classes will feature discussion about various topics including:

- Morals and ethics of reporting opinions of sports figures
- How to ask the tough questions
- When is it appropriate to engage
- Tips and tricks on getting what you want when they don't want to give it

- Understanding accepted language to use when discussing these issues
- Resources to help build your story and keep you on track
- Disconnecting your reporting from your personal opinion
- Using sports media to advance a social cause
- Recognizing and understanding the use of editorializing

CANVAS, VOICETHREAD, READING & QUIZZES

The class will be accessible throughout the semester on Canvas. There you will find links to various elements of each class, which may include:

- VoiceThread – Lectures with slides and video discussing the day’s topic.
- Reading – There is no textbook. The weekly readings will be largely articles that help bring to life the topic of the week’s discussion. The reading is mandatory.
- Quizzes – There are quizzes some weeks that reflect the topics discussed and read in class. The answers to all the quiz questions are readily available in the readings, lectures and across the Internet, and students are encouraged to engage all of those resources for the answers.

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

There are two mandatory writing assignments, and one optional assignment for bonus points. It is imperative that students get ahead of these assignments and communicate about their selected topics and the sources they plan to interview.

Single-Source Story (Mandatory)

Single-source story in which you interview one and only one sports figure about their thoughts on an issue of current interest and pertinence. Sports figure must be an active athlete or coach in the NCAA, NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, MLS, PGA, LPGA, ATP, WTA, NASCAR, WNBA, NWHL, NWSL, WPSL or the Olympics. Current or former Univ. of Florida sports figures are excluded. Source should have a direct link to the issue at hand. Must be 700-900 words.

Multi-Source Story (Mandatory)

A feature-length story that explores in depth the impact of a broader social issue in sports. Story must include at least three different sources including at least one from the sports world – be they athlete, coach, executive, administrator or agents – and at least one not from the sports world (academic, activist, member of the media). People connected with the Univ. of Florida are valid for this assignment. Must be 1,000-1,200 words.

Editorial Op-Ed (Optional)

A personal column in which you discuss some aspect of the interaction of social issues and sports. Hook must have had relevance to an incident or event from the

prior eight weeks. Using journalistic techniques, including original interviews, is encouraged. Column must take a particular position. Must be 700-900 words.

YOUR GROWTH AND WELL-BEING

Paramount to me in this class is your growth as a writer, as a researcher, as a student, and as a person. Consider me your editor. I'm here to work with you to help you accomplish the tasks I've set forth for the class, as well as your personal goals.

Communication between us is paramount. I will hold you strictly to the handful of deadlines. However, I also understand -- as does every good manager and editor -- that our personal lives sometimes get in the way. The further ahead of a deadline you contact me -- whether you are ill, having trouble finding suitable sources, overwhelmed by the impact of current events -- the easier it is for us to work together to find a solution.

In addition:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official records, please let me know.
- If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.
- If you prefer to speak with someone outside of the course, Joanna Hernandez, CJC director of inclusion and diversity, is an excellent resource. You can email her at jhernandez@jou.ufl.edu.
- If something was said in class (by anyone, including me) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

Please reach out any time. My email and phone numbers are above. I'm here to help you learn and explore sports, social issues and journalism. And I'll do whatever I can to help you do that.

GRADING & EVALUATION

Grading of stories will take into account various components, including but not limited to quality of writing, copy editing, use of sources, pertinence of sources and quotes, originality and creativity, relation to the assignment, depth of discussion of social issue, etc....

Letter grades will be given to each story:

A = Outstanding work that demonstrates originality, excellent story structure, engages the reader in unique perspective and meets professional publishing standards.

B = Good work but still needs additional revising; achieves the objectives but lacks some elements that would make it an outstanding piece.

C = Acceptable but requires significant revising; story meets minimum requirements but may have problems with story structure, with appeal to target audience, lacking originality or advancement of the conversation or issue.

D = Unsatisfactory; work does not display a grasp of basic writing skills; story has significant problems with structure and mechanics or appeal to target audience; Does not satisfy the assignment.

F = Unacceptable; story has flaws in research, structure, basic reporting, writing elements, and comprehension of target audience. (Any plagiarism or falsification of information earns an F and a failing grade for the course.)

Students are encouraged to turn in a “first draft” of their story (could be a full draft, partial draft or outline) before the final due date. Anyone who turns it in five days ahead of the due date will receive within 48 hours a cursory review of the piece with limited notes about direction, sources and overall quality.

Grading scale used for overall course grade / stories:

A 100.00-93.00 / 95

A- 92.99-90.00 / 92

B+ 89.99-87.00 / 88

B 86.99-83.00 / 85

B- 82.99-80.00 / 82

C+ 79.99-77.00 / 78

C 76.99- 73.00 / 75

C- 72.99-70.00 / 72

D+ 69.99-67.00 / 68

D 66.99-63.00 / 65

D- 62.99-60.00 / 62

F 59.99 and below / 0-50

If the submission does not meet the minimum requirements of the assignment, it is subject to a numerical grade of zero.

Grades for the course will be weighted as follows:

- 40% - Quizzes
- 20% - Single-source story
- 40% - Multi-source story
- 1-3 points – Optional Op-Ed

DEADLINES

Each student is expected to deliver the assignments on time. A late submission is subject to a downgrade of a full grade (e.g., a B+ becomes a C+). However, in rare circumstances extensions will be granted. It is incumbent upon the student to

communicate their needs well ahead of time, and to communicate about unexpected emergencies at their earliest convenience. Documentation may be requested to confirm. The student's need for an extension. Potentially acceptable reasons may include:

- Religious holiday observance
- Doctor-excused illness
- Jury duty
- Military service
- Death in the family
- Participations as athlete, coach or media member in live sporting event

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Academic integrity

UF students live by an honor code that prohibits academic dishonesty such as (but not limited to) cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, engaging in unauthorized collaboration, reusing a paper from another class, writing a similar paper for two classes, and having someone else write your paper or do your class projects <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

If you use someone else's words, image(s), artwork or video, permission must be obtained in writing (i.e. email) from an author/publisher and submitted to the professor along with your project (though quoting from another media source must simply be sourced in the article). You must abide by the university's honor code as well as the Department of Journalism's policy on academic honesty found at <http://www.jou.ufl.edu/academic/jou/honesty/>.

Students with disabilities

Students requesting accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when making a request for accommodations. I am more than happy to work with anyone needing such accommodations, but please do not wait until the last minute to request accommodations, see me as soon as possible.

Grading policies

All information related to grading can be found in UF's undergraduate catalog: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Help with Coping

The UF Counseling and Wellness Center is a free resource for all UF students who need help managing stress or coping with life or classes. The center is located at 3190 Radio Road and is open for appointments and emergency walk-ins from 8 a.m.

to 5 p.m. Monday - Friday. To receive after-hours assistance or make an appointment, call 352-392-1575 <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>.

UF Police

The UF Police can be reached at 352-392-1111 or, in an emergency, by dialing 911.6 Student Nighttime Auxiliary Patrol (SNAP): If you are on campus at night and need an escort to your car or on-campus residence, SNAP is a free service that operates 7 days a week, 6:30 p.m. – 3:00 a.m. during the fall and spring semesters and 8:30 p.m. – 3:00 a.m. during the summer semesters. www.snap.ufl.edu or 352-392-SNAP (7627)

Evaluations

Students can provide feedback on the instructor and the course itself at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or threeweeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Privacy Statement

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.