

# RTV 4959C: SPORTS CAPSTONE

**SPRING 2024**

**T | Period 6-8 (12:50 PM - 2:45 PM)**

**3324 Weimer Hall**

**Professor Ryan Hunt**

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**Office: Weimer Hall #3040D**

**Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs, 10am-12pm OR [by appointment](#)**

**Office: (352) 392-6303; Mobile: (908) 967-2560**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This sports capstone course is designed to get you ready for employment in your desired field within the sports industry. Usually taken in the last year of study, this course integrates material from previous courses and requires each student to prepare a final project and a comprehensive portfolio to assist the student in a job search. Students who complete this course will demonstrate progress in their written, oral and communication skills, and they will be prepared to perform well in entry-level sports media and communication positions.

## **COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Understand the current issues affecting the sports industry and how they relate to careers;
- Enhance their understanding of the ethics and values in the sports industry;
- Learn, develop and practice the most marketable skills required in a job search;
- Improve their résumé, personal brand and any supplementary materials;
- Produce a portfolio to showcase examples of student's best work to professional audiences
- Execute and implement the skills and knowledge they have obtained throughout their undergraduate career to produce a final "capstone" multimedia project

## **READING MATERIALS**

There is no textbook for this course. Readings and resources will be posted online, including:

- *How to Prepare for Your Sports Job Search*, Brian. Clapp. eBook. [Download link available in Canvas.](#)

## **COURSE GRADES**

The following table outlines the point-accruing components of the course. The total points earned from each component will be summed and divided by the total points possible in the course.

<b>Evaluation Components</b>	<b>Points Per Component</b>	<b>% of Total Grade</b>
<b>Sports Industry Events Discussions (14)</b>	10 pts each = 140 pts	7%
<b>Your Sports Job Search Assignments (7)</b>	15 pts each = 105 pts	5.25%
<b>Résumé Development Project (4)</b> Current Résumé = 25 pts    Cover Letter = 50 pts Future Résumé = 25 pts    Final Résumé = 100 pts	200 pts	10%
<b>Professional Branding (10)</b>	25 pts each = 250 pts	12.5%
<b>Social Media Branding</b>	100 pts	5%
<b>Mock 1-on-1 Job Interview</b> Pre-Interview Questionnaire = 25 pts 1-on-1 interview with Professor Hunt = 100 pts	125 pts	6.25%
<b>Electronic Portfolio Project (3 parts)</b> Portfolio Check 1 = 50 pts    Portfolio Check 2 = 50 pts Final Portfolio = 200 pts	300 pts	15%
<b>Capstone Project (6 parts)</b> Pitch = 25 pts    Pre-reporting = 50 pts Sources = 25 pts    Draft 1 = 50 pts Draft 2 = 50 pts    Final Project = 300 pts	500 pts	25%
<b>Attendance and Class Participation (14)</b>	20 pts each = 280 pts	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2000 pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **GRADING**

You will be graded on a 2,000-point scale. Grades can be rounded up to the nearest percentage point at the professor's discretion.

A: 93.5-100% (1,870-2,000 total points)	C+: 76.5-79.9% (1,530-1,599)
A-: 90-93.4% (1,800-1,869)	C: 72.5-76.4% (1,450-1,529)
B+: 86.5-89.9% (1,730-1,799)	C-: 70-72.4% (1,400-1,499)
B: 82.5-86.4% (1,650-1,729)	D: 60-69.9% (1,200-1,399)
B-: 80-82.4% (1,600-1,649)	E: 59.9% and below (Under 1,199)

## **ELIGIBILITY**

Students must have received a grade of C or better in Sports Reporting (JOU4313C) and/or Sports Communication (PUR3463).

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

### **— *SPORTS INDUSTRY CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSIONS* (140 TOTAL POINTS)**

Each week of the semester, we will hold discussions surrounding various topics in the sports industry, sports careers, or our guest speakers. You will be required to post your thoughts and respond to classmates as well. There will be a rubric for you to follow to ensure you participate and complete it properly. These weekly discussions (14) are worth 10 points each.

### **— *YOUR SPORTS JOB SEARCH ASSIGNMENTS* (105 POINTS)**

You will read specific chapters from the provided PDF How to Prepare for Your Sports Job Search and respond to different prompts related to the chapter. These assignments will help you develop a plan of action searching for your job so that you will be more successful in finding a job that fits your needs and skills. These assignments are worth 15 points each.

**— *PROJECTS*** - This course includes six different projects, all designed to help you better prepare for your post-graduate job search. All projects will be expected to be of high-quality work. On days projects are due, students will present a report on their work in class and receive feedback from the instructor and classmates. Projects will be posted on the course website.

- **Capstone Project** (500 points) - This assignment allows you to produce a new project according to your major option and interests. Eligibility: (1) You may not complete a project in a genre unless you have completed specific coursework for that genre. (2) Your capstone cannot be a rehash or improvement on a previous project, whether produced for class or not. It needs to be a new project. Your pitch must be approved prior to beginning your project, and not all project ideas will be approved. The final project is worth 250 points. The other 250 points are distributed throughout the semester for checkpoints during the composition of the project.

- **Professional Branding** (250 points)- Knowing your personal brand can not only help you market yourself to future employers, it can help you find organizations that are a good fit for you. As a result, it is important to be able to articulate your personal brand before you begin your job search. In this project you will use multiple in-class activities to summarize your personal brand. This project is done over the course of the semester in 10 25-point assignments.

- **Résumé Development Project** (200 points) - 1-2 pages, for the purpose of submitting to potential employers. Must be designed to the specifics of the assignment. The purpose of the resume assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to take an inventory of your skills and experiences as you begin to think about your professional career. This assignment includes your current résumé (25 points), a more richly designed 'future résumé' (25 points), a cover letter (50 points) and your final ready-to-use résumé (100 points).

- **Mock 1-on-1 Job Interview** (125 points) - Before you land any job, you almost certainly will have a job interview (or multiple) to determine your fit for the role (professionally and organizationally). In this assignment, you will have a 1-on-1 mock interview with Professor Hunt that will last 15-20 minutes. As a reminder, I hired dozens of people – from interns, to entry-level staffers to senior management – at *Sports Illustrated*. There are keys to excelling in any job interview. This assignment will help you prepare for what the process is like. Before the interview, students must complete one pre-interview questionnaire (worth 25 points).

- **Social Media Branding** (100 points) - Always be aware that professional contacts might search for you online. Plus, one thing hiring managers will do when scouting job candidates is peruse your social media accounts. Are you happy with what they will discover? While there are many places to interact and promote yourself online, the primary websites that stand out as essential venues for personal branding are LinkedIn, Facebook, and X/Twitter (and don't overlook Instagram). Do you have a LinkedIn page? Does it accurately represent the work you've done to date? Are your other social media accounts a good representation of the professional you're aspiring to be?

- **Portfolio Site Project** (350 points) - Each student will accumulate items for their portfolio. This portfolio should help prepare you for the opportunities and responsibilities of a college graduate. It will be graded on its quality and completeness, meaning that it should provide excellent artifacts of student learning, as well as a sufficient quantity of such works. Your portfolio must include your capstone project and all "portfolio-required" assignments. The portfolio is designed to house your work done in various classes and/or experiences and must be available online.

### ***ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION*** (280 POINTS)

We only meet once a week. Attendance in the class is required, and your active participation will ensure you get the most out of this class. Excused absences include approved UF attendance exceptions. In all instances of excused absences, the instructor and student will work out a plan for completing missed assignments. Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Please turn off cell phones prior to class. Sports reporting is a deadline-based profession, so you are expected to arrive on time for each class.

In case of illness, the instructor should be notified in advance and a physician's note may be required. Unexcused absences will result in deductions from the students final percentage score. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with [UF policies found here](#).

Attendance is recorded and you WILL lose attendance and participation points for each absence (**20 points per class**), unless you have a note and it is excused. This could affect nearly 15% of your final grade. *There are NO free absences from class.*

## **CLASS OUTLINE**

*Specific weekly schedule elements subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Guest speakers to be added throughout the semester. Classes will include module discussions plus explanation of the weekly Professional Branding and/or Sports Job Search assignments.*

WEEK 1 (1/9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Introduction to Professor Hunt and the Class</li><li>● Syllabus Review and Orientation Module</li><li>● The Industry and Imagining Life After College</li><li>● Discussion of effective capstone pitch and project (with examples)</li></ul>
WEEK 2 (1/16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Capstone Pitches presented to class</li><li>● Next Steps<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Discuss Pre-Reporting</li></ul></li><li>● Career Development</li><li>● Introduction to Portfolio project, websites</li></ul>
WEEK 3 (1/23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Capstone Pre-Reporting Questions Due</li><li>● Project Next Steps<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Communicating with and securing sources</li></ul></li><li>● What Makes A Résumé Stand Out</li></ul>
WEEK 4 (1/30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Job Search Strategies</li><li>● Current Résumé Due</li></ul>
WEEK 5 (2/6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Résumé Development</li><li>● Capstone Sources Due (discuss and critique)</li></ul>
WEEK 6 (2/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Creating an Impactful Cover Letter</li><li>● Networking; Resume Development Project</li><li>● Portfolio Project Check 1</li></ul>
WEEK 7 (2/20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Cover Letter Due</li><li>● Requirements for Portfolio Website-Work Content<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Video, written and social, best way for displaying</li></ul></li></ul>
WEEK 8 (2/27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Updates on Capstone Project<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Include sharing content gathered with peer, guest evaluations</li></ul></li><li>● Portfolio Project Check 1</li></ul>
WEEK 9 (3/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Final Résumé Due</li><li>● Capstone Draft 1 Due Instructor and Peer Critiques</li><li>● Written and interpersonal communication</li><li>● Discussion of effective portfolio site</li></ul>
WEEK 10 (3/12)	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11 (3/19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Social Media Branding: Making a Good Impression <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Strategies for LinkedIn, X/Twitter; what not to do</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Capstone and portfolio workshop</li> <li>● Requirements for Portfolio Website-About Me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Resume, social, home page</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
WEEK 12 (3/26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Using LinkedIn to your advantage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Connecting with appropriate professionals</li> <li>○ UF Sports Alumni Network</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Social Media Branding Assignment Due</li> </ul>
WEEK 13 (4/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Elevator Pitch: How to Sell Yourself</li> <li>● Portfolio Site Draft Due</li> <li>● Job Search Questionnaire</li> </ul>
WEEK 14 (4/9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Job Interview Process</li> <li>● Capstone Draft 2 Due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Instructor and Peer Critiques via Canvas</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Schedule your 1-on-1 interview with Professor Hunt</li> </ul>
WEEK 15 (4/16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Job Interview Advice and Strategies</li> <li>● Scheduled 1-on-1 20-minute mock interview with Professor Hunt</li> </ul>
WEEK 16 (4/23)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capstone Final Draft Due</li> <li>● Capstone and Portfolio Presentations</li> <li>● GatorEvals</li> </ul>

### **EXTRA CREDIT**

There may be select opportunities to earn extra credit during the course of the semester. Details to come in specific classes. Class attendance is required to participate in that extra-credit assignment.

### **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

This is a workshop-style class in which we will all contribute ideas and critiques of others' work and ideas. Please use professional courtesy. Turn cell phones off. No texting (or checking your phone) in class. If you need to use your phone, please leave the room to do so. Bring laptops to class.

### **COURSE GUESTS**

The class will also include guest speakers who cover prep, college and professional sports on a local and national level, including reporters and editors from The Athletic, ESPN, Fox Sports, Sports Illustrated, The Ringer, Yahoo! Sports, On3, 247Sports and additional media outlets.

In the interest of honest and frank discussions, my lectures and comments of guest speakers are strictly off-the-record, unless otherwise noted. This means that they may not be published in any format, either in a print publication or on a web site, personal blog or social media.

## **DEADLINES AND DEDUCTIONS**

Journalism is a deadline business. This course is designed to mirror the expected behavior of a professional newsroom. They're called deadlines for a reason.

Failure to meet assignment deadlines will result in up to a 10% deduction in the first 24-hour period it's late. Late assignments beyond 24 hours may not be accepted, and could be graded as a zero, unless an emergency can be documented. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, written documentation will be required ASAP.

Fact errors will result in deductions at instructor's discretion, depending on the error and assignment.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/HONOR CODE**

Plagiarism is one of the biggest sins in journalism. Do your own work.

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources, using artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT), fabricating material or using any work done by another person for a class assignment. Even copying photos from the internet could lead to a copyright claim in the real world. See the Department of Journalism website, as well as UF guidelines (including the [UF Student Honor Code](#)), for specific outline of violations.

Any violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. Failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action compliant with the UF Student Honor Code Procedures.

If you have **any** degree of uncertainty, please ask.

## **COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES**

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- 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 basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world

### **EVALUATIONS**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or [via this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are [available to students here](#).

### **CLASSROOM NEEDS**

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to the instructor.

### **DIVERSITY STATEMENT**

The University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications Department embraces a commitment toward an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, class and religion. We expect each of our journalism courses to help foster an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this process as early as possible in the semester. Course Evaluations Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on a minimum of 10 criteria. These evaluations are



conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last three weeks of the semester, but announcements will be made giving specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the evaluations website URL above. Course Grading Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points as articulated in the link that follows.

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### **U MATTER, WE CARE**

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

### **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Ryan Hunt is a Sports Lecturer at the University of Florida. A 1997 graduate of UF's College of Journalism and Communications, Ryan spent 25 years at *Sports Illustrated*, including the last four as its co-Editor-in-Chief. Ryan managed SI's editorial staff, leading a team of experienced reporters and editors and overseeing the digital strategy – from daily content planning to major event coverage to franchise development..

At SI, Ryan started as an entry-level Associate Producer in Atlanta before climbing the ranks – Homepage Editor, News Director, Associate Managing Editor to Executive Editor – to become one of only 11 people to hold the top editorial title at the brand. Hunt won a Sports Emmy in 2017 for Outstanding Digital Innovation for his involvement on the SI/Life VR 'Capturing Everest' project, the first ever bottom-to-top climb of Mount Everest captured in virtual reality.

He grew up in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* during his time at UF. Nearly 30 years ago, I was in the same position as you are today.