

MMC 3703/MMC 6936
Sports Media and Society
#SportsMediaUF
Fall 2025
T period 3, R periods 3-4: Weimer 1064



PROFESSOR

Ted Spiker @ProfSpiker
1060 Weimer
352-392-1124
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OFFICE HOURS

Drop-in, 1060 Weimer: Monday, 3 to 5 p.m. (door locks at 4:30; please email me to be let in)
Or email for appointment at other times

TEACHING ASSISTANT

Alex Volonte
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LEAD UNDERGRAD TAs

Caroline King king.caroline@ufl.edu
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In addition, several other undergraduates are assisting with the administration of the course.

OVERVIEW

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. Major emphasis on case studies and current events.

OBJECTIVES

- >> Demonstrate critical-thinking skills to analyze issues involving sports and media
- >> Identify critical case studies, examples, historical moments, and issues involving sports and media
- >> Assess current events in sports media for critical media issues that are involved
- >> Create small sample of content that is professionally acceptable in sports-media industries

COURSE FORMAT: IN-PERSON

We will meet in-person during the assigned class times. Slides will be available on Top Hat (see below) if you miss class. I advise you to team up with people in class to share notes if you need to miss class. We will remain in-person with no during-class Zoom option unless the situation and UF rules change (i.e. extreme weather).

GRADING

You will be graded on a 1,000-point scale:

A:	925–1,000	C:	725–774
A-:	900–924	C-:	700–724
B+:	875–899	D+:	675–699
B:	825–874	D:	625–674
B-:	800–824	D-:	600–624
C+:	775–799	E:	0–599

ASSIGNMENTS

450 points: 4 lecture assessments (125 points for first three, 75 for last one)

150 points: 4 reading assessments (50 points each, drop lowest)

100 points: Reply to 4 discussion posts (25 points each)

150 points: Attendance/participation/engagement (Top Hat)

100 points: HOT TAKE assignment

50 points: 2 Sports Media assignments (25 points each)

Exams: Exams will cover material from lecture/guests only (no reading). They will be taken in Canvas during class periods on the dates assigned. **Do not come to class on exam days.** You may use your notes and Top Hat slides but not other people or AI. Honorlock will be used to monitor this. Makeup exams are in accordance with UF policy and can be given with a penalty at the instructor's discretion. Exam dates:

Tuesday, 9/23, 9:35 a.m.

Tuesday, 10/14, 9:35 a.m.

Thursday, 11/6, 9:35 a.m.

Tuesday, 12/2, 9:35 a.m.

Reading Quizzes: Reading quizzes will cover the selected readings for that quiz. You may use your notes and the readings but not other people or AI. Honorlock will be used to monitor. Quizzes are open for 12 hours from after class until midnight). Makeup exams are in accordance with UF policy and can be given with a penalty at the instructor's discretion.

By 9/11, 11:59 p.m.

By 10/9, 11:59 p.m.

By 10/30, 11:59 p.m.

By 11/20, 11:59 p.m.

Discussion Posts: You must reply to 4 discussion posts of your choosing throughout the semester.

Deadlines:

1 reply by 9/11, 11:59 p.m.

1 reply by 10/9, 11:59 p.m.

1 reply by 10/30, 11:59 p.m.

1 reply by 11/20, 11:59 p.m.

Note: You do not get extra credit for replying to more than the minimum. And you must do one in each of the time periods above (not four from Sept. 1-19 for example). I will post several options for you to respond to—**you only need to respond to one in each time period.** Each post is worth 25 points. To get full credit, your responses should be about 75-100 words with clear and original thoughts and correct mechanics. Use of AI will result in a 0 for the assignment and reporting to the Honor Court. If you miss the deadline, you may submit a response for partial credit (max of 10 points).

Sports Media Assignments: Throughout the semester, you will be given two small assignments that will help facilitate discussion. Check Canvas for due dates.

HOT TAKE assignment: You will submit a 1-minute video giving an on-camera opinion about a current event in the sports world. Details of the assignment and the rubrics are available on Canvas. Late assignments will include a 20-point deduction for every 24-hour period that it is late.

Attendance/participation/engagement: We will be using Top Hat (www.tophat.com) for class participation. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or through text message. For instructions on how to create a Top Hat account and enroll in our Top Hat Pro course, please refer to Top Hat's Getting Started Guide (<https://bit.ly/31TGMIw>).

If you already have a Top Hat account, go to app.tophat.com/e/235205 to be taken directly to our course. If you are new to Top Hat, follow the link in the email invitation you received or...

- Go to <https://app.tophat.com/register/student>
- Click "Search by school" and input the name of our school
- Search for our course with the following join code: 235205

If a paid subscription is required, it will be listed at checkout when you enroll in our Top Hat Pro course. Should you require assistance with Top Hat at any time please contact their Support Team directly by way of email (support@tophat.com), the in-app support button, or by calling [1-888-663-5491](tel:1-888-663-5491). Specific user information may be required by their technical support team when troubleshooting issues.

If you have connection issues during class, write your answers down your answers on a piece of paper with your name and UFID. Hand that paper to a TA at the end of the class period. We will not accept any submissions outside of the class period or via email.

A perfect Top Hat score will be 150 points, but I will offer many more possible points than that throughout the semester. So if you are sick, you will not need to make up Top Hat points in order to get a high score. If you have an extended illness, we will use makeup policies in accordance with UF policies. Example: I may offer up to 175 Top Hat points in the semester, so missing a few classes can still result in a perfect attendance score. This differential accounts for the excused and unexcused absences that are bound to happen during the course of a semester—and serves as the “makeup” points for any points missed.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Graduate students enrolled in the MMC 6396 section of the course have an additional graded assignment. You will present a 10-minute lecture via Zoom about a case study in international sports. You must get your topic approved. The presentation will only be done in front of the instructor and other graduate students, but the recording will be viewed by undergraduate students for an exam. The date of the presentations will be determined during the semester. This presentation is worth 150 points, so your final grade will be calculated on a 1,150-point scale. Guidelines and rubrics will be sent separately.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The weekly course schedule can vary because of guest speakers and current events. This provides a rough outline of topics covered.

Week 1: 8/21

Sports Media Basics

Week 2: 8/26, 8/28

Sports Media Basics

Week 3: 9/2, 9/4

Sports Media Basics, Current Events

Week 4: 9/9, 9/11

Sports Media in Times of Crisis

Week 5: 9/16, 9/18

Case Studies of Conflict

Week 6: 9/23, 9/25

Exam 1: 9/23

Case Studies of Conflict

Week 7: 9/30, 10/2
Gender in Sports Media

Week 8: 10/7, 10/9
Gender in Sports Media

Week 9: 10/14, 10/16
Exam 2: 10/14
Sports Media and the Olympics

Week 10: 10/21, 10/23
Case Studies of Conflict

Week 11: 10/28, 10/30
Politics, Social Issues in Sports Media

Week 12: 11/4, 11/6
Case Studies of Conflict
Exam 3: 11/6

Week 13: 11/11, 11/13
No class: 11/11
International Sports Media

Week 14: 11/18, 11/20
Today's Issues: Social Media, Gambling, More...

Week 15: 11/25, 11/27
No class: Thanksgiving week

Week 16: 12/2
Exam 4: 12/2

READINGS

PDFs of these are in FILES in Canvas in case you have trouble accessing the links.

For Quiz 1

"The Worldwide Leader in Sextapes," GQ, January 19, 2011
<https://www.gq.com/story/aj-daulerio-deadspin-brett-favre-story>
The Yang Slinger: Vol. IV, Jeff Pearlman's Journalism Yang Yang, Nov. 1, 2021 (only "Dealing with Dicks" story)
<https://pearlman.substack.com/p/the-yang-slinger-vol-iv>

For Quiz 2

"For women in sports media, dealing with toxic masculinity is far from new," Washington Post, July 19, 2020.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2020/07/19/women-sports-media-dealing-with-toxic-masculinity-is-far-new/>

"Kaepernick Saga Raises Questions About the Media," The Undeclared/Andscape, September 1, 2016.
<https://theundefeated.com/features/kaepernick-saga-raises-questions-about-the-media-diversity/>

For Quiz 3

“Eyes of the Storm,” Sports Illustrated, March 1998. <https://vault.si.com/vault/1998/03/02/eyes-of-the-storm-when-tennessees-whirlwind-of-a-coach-pat-summitt-hits-you-with-her-steely-gaze-you-get-a-dose-of-the-intensity-that-has-carried-the-lady-vols-to-five-ncaa-titles>

For Quiz 4

“The Dave Portnoy Playbook,” New York magazine, Nov. 23, 2021.
<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/dave-portnoy-barstool-sports.html>

“Why Did ESPN Have to Cancel Around the Horn?” New York magazine, May 19, 2025.
[Why Did ESPN Have to Cancel ‘Around the Horn’?](#)

TWEETS OF THE WEEK

You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit through Tweets of the Week, using the hashtag #SportsMediaUF. I will also experiment with other engagement on social media, including giving exam hints and other extra-credit opportunities.

UF POLICIES

See UF policies on class recordings, attendance, grading, disability resources, honor code, and other campus resources.

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Professor Ted Spiker is associate dean for undergraduate affairs for the UF College of Journalism and Communications. He was the chair of the UF department of journalism for 10 years and has been a faculty member at UF since 2001. He was recognized as the University of Florida Teacher of the Year for 2016-17, and he was the Summer 2019 UF commencement speaker. A graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism and a former articles editor at *Men’s Health*, Spiker has had work published in *The Washington Post*, *TIME.com*, *Esquire.com*, *Outside*, *O the Oprah Magazine*, *Fortune*, *Men’s Health*, *Women’s Health*, *Runner’s World*, *Reader’s Digest*, and many others. He is also the author of one book and the co-author of 25+ books. He has moderated public interviews of Tim Tebow, Rob Gronkowski, Erin Andrews, Stephen A. Smith, Abby Wambach, Alex Rodriguez, Dave Portnoy, and more.