

JOU4930: Fantasy Sports, Betting & The Media

SPRING 2026

Online Synchronous

Tuesdays (12:50pm – 1:40pm) and Thursdays (12:50pm – 2:45pm)

Instructor: David Bearman, (B.S. in Telecommunications Journalism; M.S. in Sports Management, both at University of Florida)

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10-11a

Bio: David Bearman spent 18 years with ESPN in various content roles, the last four overseeing Sports Betting content for ESPN.com and Daily Wager. A graduate of the University of Florida's School of Journalism and Communications, Bearman also spent 14 years in ESPN's Stats & Information department and 10 years with the Florida Marlins and their minor league affiliates. From 2023-25, he served as Chief Content Officer of Pro Football Network, overseeing all content, including coverage of Super Bowls 58 and 59. He is also a Sports Betting Consultant for FanDuel Sports Network and the Founder of Betting with Bearman, a 3x a week betting newsletter and weekly podcast on Bleav Podcast Network.

Course Description:

This course explores the dynamic intersection of sports entertainment, data analytics, and digital media through the lens of fantasy sports and sports betting. Students will examine how fantasy leagues and legalized wagering have reshaped fan engagement, media coverage, and the business of sports.

The class will cover the evolution of fantasy sports and betting markets, the role of data and technology in storytelling, and the ethical and regulatory challenges facing media outlets.

Through networking with industry veterans, students will gain insight into how to build a career in fantasy sports or sports betting and how media professionals leverage these fast-growing sectors to engage audiences and drive innovation.

Course Objectives:

- Gain a complete understanding of the evolution of fantasy sports and sports betting from the beginnings to the major changes, including the legal points, and to the market explosions of sports betting and fantasy sports.
- Learn how data and modeling have helped turn both fantasy sports and sports betting into big business.
- Examine how the two fields have changed fan engagement among sporting events and how media coverage has shaped them.
- Meet and learn from industry veterans on how they built careers in the two fields.

Required Software and Materials:

- Textbooks:
 - 1) The Logic of Sports Betting (Ed Miller, Matthew Davidson)
 - 2) The History of Fantasy Sports: And The Stories of the People Who Made it Happen
- Additional Articles will be provided on Canvas
- Access to a computer with internet and camera

Assignments and Grading:

Participation: This is a discussion-based course with open conversations to create a robust environment and conversation. Students will be graded on the frequency and quality of their contributions to our conversations.

List of Assignments and Points:

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| • Participation | 100 Points (15 pct) |
| • Sports Betting module assignment/presentation | 100 Points (25 pct) |
| • Fantasy sports module assignment/presentation | 100 Points (25 pct) |
| • Final Sports Betting/Fantasy career-based assignment | 100 Points (35 pct) |

Grading Scale:

A	94 and above
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	67-69
D	64-66
D-	60-63
E	59 and below
I	Incomplete
W	Withdrawn

Note: See the following website for University grading policies:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Note: Grades will be rounded to the nearest point (e.g., 89.5 rounds to 90, but 89.4 rounds to 89)

Academic Policies and Resources

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

Course Policies:

Attendance: There is no official attendance requirement for the course. However, excessive absence will affect your participation grade, and it also could (but not necessarily) diminish the quality of your work.

Participation: The participation grade is not merely an attendance grade. Rather, students must earn the grade through active participation in course activities. Regular attendance is necessary to achieve this goal, but not sufficient.

Late and Missing Coursework: There is no official policy limiting the timeframe in which students can turn in or complete late and missed coursework. Rather, late and missing coursework will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Please notify me as soon as possible if you know you will be late or miss coursework.

Electronic Devices: There is no official prohibition on the use of electronic devices for personal reasons during class. However, I reserve the right to prohibit the use of devices on a case-by-case basis.

Disability: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/>) 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 procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Religious Accommodations: The University mandates reasonable accommodations for the religious observances, practices, and beliefs of individual students in regard to class attendance and the scheduling of examinations and work assignments. Please notify me as soon as possible if you know you will seek accommodation. The official university policy can be found here: <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-052/>

Mental Health and Wellness: The University has robust resources for student mental health and wellness. Please contact the Counseling and Wellness Center to seek help when needed: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575.

Honor Code: All students enrolled at the University have tacitly agreed to follow the university's honor code. You can review UF's academic honesty guidelines at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code>

Cheating and Plagiarism: Students are expected to complete coursework on their own and not in collaboration with others inside or outside of the class unless explicitly authorized to do so by the instructor. Students are also expected to observe intellectual property rights and to comply with copyright laws. Finally, students should not plagiarize the words, designs, concepts or ideas of others. Plagiarism is defined as "...taking someone's words or ideas as if they were your own."

Artificial Intelligence: The use of AI in this course is permissible, particularly as a study aid and/or strategy assistant. However, students should use caution when turning in work that is wholly generated by AI. If they do use AI tools to generate coursework, students are strongly encouraged to take an active role in shaping both the input and output of AI prompting.

Non-Discrimination/Harassment: The University is committed to nondiscrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations, genetic information and veteran status as protected under the Vietnam Era Veterans' Readjustment Assistance Act. It is the policy of the University that each employee and student be allowed to work and study in an environment free from any form of discrimination or harassment as defined in University regulations or law. You can review the University's policy on non-discrimination and harassment at <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/1-006/>.

Outline of Course: *Specific weekly schedule elements subject to change at the instructor's discretion.*

Module	Week	Topic	Major Assignments
Course Introduction	Week 1 (Jan. 13/15)	Welcome to the Course	Read first two parts of Logic of Sports Betting (pgs 1-134) – By Jan. 20
Sports Betting	Week 2 (Jan. 20/22)	Sports Betting Basics & History	
	Week 3 (Jan. 27/29)	Impact of PASPA Law/ League Involvement	
	Week 4 (Feb. 3/5)	Post PASPA and the Sports Betting Boom	
	Week 5 (Feb. 10/12)	The Future of Sports Betting	How will Sports Betting look next 5/10 years and Why? – Due Feb. 17 (present Feb. 19)
	Week 6 (Feb. 17/19)	Sports Betting – Guest Lecture	Guest Lecture – Feb. 17 Presentations – Feb. 19 Read TBD for Fantasy by Feb. 24
Fantasy Sports	Week 7 (Feb. 24/26)	Early History – Baseball/Football	
	Week 8 (March 3/5)	FanDuel, DraftKings and the DFS Boom	
	Week 9 (Mar. 10/12)	Monetizing of Fantasy Business + Information Overload	
	Week 10 (Mar. 24/26)	DFS vs. Sports Betting – the Law	If you were to start a Fantasy business tomorrow, what would it look like and why? – Due Mar. 31 (present April 2)
	Week 11 (Mar. 31/Apr. 2)	Guest Lecture	Guest Lecture – Mar. 31 Presentations – April 2
Media	Week 12 (Apr. 7/9)	Fantasy, Betting in Media Coverage, Fan Engagement – Then and Now	
	Week 13 (Apr. 14/16)	Careers in Fantasy Sports, Sports Betting	

	Week 14 (Apr. 21/23)	Follow the Data-Modeling + Guest Lecture	Final project: Your Five-Step Plan to a Career in Sports Betting or Fantasy Due Apr. 28 (present April 28/30)
	Week 15 (Apr. 28/30)	Conclusion of Course	Final Project Presentations