

**JOU 4930 SPORTS PLAY-BY-PLAY/ON AIR**  
**UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA**  
**Spring 2026**

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<b>Meets:</b>	Online via Zoom, Mondays, Periods 3-5 (9:35 a.m.-12:35 p.m.)
<b>Course Website:</b>	<a href="https://elearning.ufl.edu">https://elearning.ufl.edu</a>
<b>Instructor:</b>	Glenn Geffner
<b>E-Mail:</b>	glenn.geffner@ufl.edu
<b>Cell Phone:</b>	(954) 614-8811
<b>Office Hours:</b>	2-4 p.m., Fridays via Zoom (other times available by appointment)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION/OBJECTIVE**

This course will introduce students to the fundamentals of sports play-by-play, which serve as the foundation for calling games on radio or television for any sport. There will be an emphasis on the broadcaster's simultaneous responsibilities to report, to inform and to entertain with a focus on preparation and the development of a comfortable and conversational on-air style. Through lectures, the study and analysis of industry-leading professionals and their work, guest speakers, as well as hands-on assignments that will be carefully reviewed and thoroughly critiqued, students will receive a thorough look at the play-by-play craft.

**COURSE FORMAT**

Course meetings will be conducted live online via Zoom. Our classes will generally include a lecture by the instructor, class-wide discussions on weekly and recurring topics, an in-class assignment and a quiz taken via Canvas that will cover timely news in the world of sports as well as topics discussed in previous class meetings. Many class sessions will also feature a guest speaker of local or national prominence in sports broadcasting.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**  
(Subject to revision)

<b>CLASS DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC OF THE WEEK</b>	<b>OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS DUE BY 9:35 A.M.</b>
Week 1 (January 12)	Welcome, Introduction	
Week 2 (January 19)	No Class (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)	
Week 3 (January 26)	Fundamentals of Play-by-Play	Play-by-Play #1 (10 min), Listening Summary #1
Week 4 (February 2)	Preparation	Play-by-Play #2 (15 min), Listening Summary #2
Week 5 (February 9)	Game Opens/Scene Setters	Preparation #1, Preparation Video Recap
Week (February 16)	Sideline Reporting	Game Opens (2, 60-90 sec each), List. Summary #3 (TV)
Week 7 (February 23)	Personal Style	Sideline Reports #1 (2, 60-90 sec each), List. Summary #4
Week 8 (March 2)	Pre-Game Show	Play-by-Play #3 (15 min), Listening Summary #5
Week 9 (March 9)	Building Drama	Pre-Game Show, Listening Summary #6 (TV)
Week 10 (March 16)	No Class (Spring Break)	
Week 11 (March 23)	Criticism	Play-by-Play #4 (15 min), Listening Summary #7
Week 12 (March 30)	Storytelling	Sideline Reports #2 (2, 60-90 sec each), List. Summary #8
Week 13 (April 6)	Interviews	Play-by-Play #5 (15 min), Listening Summary #9 (TV)
Week 14 (April 13)	Wearing Many Hats	Preparation #2, Listening Summary #10
Week 15 (April 20)	Job Search	Play-by-Play #6 (20 min), Listening Summary #11

**\*Out-of-class assignments--both your weekly recorded or written assignments and your weekly Listening Summary--must be submitted via Canvas by 9:35 a.m. on the day on which they are due.**

**ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR**

Glenn Geffner spent more than three decades in Baseball, including 26 seasons in the major leagues, as a senior-level communications executive and broadcaster with the San Diego Padres, the Boston Red Sox and the Miami Marlins. With the Padres (1996-2002), he served as Director of Public Relations before transitioning into the broadcast booth. With the Red Sox (2003-07), he served as Vice President of Communications before making the full-time move to the radio booth and was part of Boston's World Series championship clubs in 2004 and 2007. In 2008, he returned to his native South Florida and spent 15 seasons as radio voice of the Miami Marlins (2008-22). A graduate of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, Glenn has taught Sports Broadcasting at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL since 2021 and has taught at the University of Florida since the fall of 2025. Learn more about Glenn at [www.GlennGeffner.com](http://www.GlennGeffner.com).

## SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

**ALL OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA CANVAS BY 9:35 A.M., THE START OF CLASS, ON THE DATE ON WHICH THEY ARE DUE.**

**PLAY-BY-PLAY:** You will **record** yourself broadcasting a segment of radio-style play-by-play from a current sporting event of your choice (the length for each assignment is specified on Canvas and on the syllabus). You may call a live or recently recorded game off of TV or an online stream. You may attend an event in person and record your call at the venue. You may record your play-by-play in the new play-by-play room in the INC. And, if you work for Orange & Blue Sports Network, you may submit a segment of a live broadcast you did, as long as the broadcast was done within a week of the date on which the assignment is due.

You may call any team sport (including but not limited to football, basketball, hockey, soccer, baseball, softball, volleyball and lacrosse). If you would like to call any other sport, please discuss with the instructor in advance.

Your play-by-play will be evaluated based upon your ability to incorporate specific skills and lessons we discuss in class. These skills and lessons include--but are not limited to--preparation, description, pacing, energy and vocabulary. **There will be an emphasis placed upon your continued development over the course of the semester and how you apply specific recommendations made to you by the instructor.**

**\*\*\*When you finish recording this assignment, you will go back and listen to what you're preparing to submit and, in the Assignment Comments box on the Canvas page from which you'll submit your recording, you will do a brief SELF-CRITIQUE. In just a couple of sentences, you will write 1) What you think you did well and 2) What you think you need to improve for the next assignment. Your assignment is not complete until you have completed this part of the exercise in addition to submitting your audio recording.**

**PREPARATION:** You will choose a game during the week leading up to the assignment due date and do some preparation as though you were broadcasting that event. You will submit the following (all to be discussed in detail in class) for that specific event in writing via Canvas:

- **THREE big-picture storylines for the game**  
Over-arching themes for the game. "This game matters because..." "This match-up is interesting because..."  
These storylines are likely introduced in your game open or very early in the game, and are significant enough that you'll likely come back to them during the game to follow up.
- **THREE anecdotal stories related to the game that you can weave into your broadcast**  
Stories related to the teams, players or coaches involved that are unique and interesting. This could include direct quotes from players or coaches that help tell a story related to the game. Remember: Anecdotal stories ARE NOT statistical. They rarely will have anything to do with numbers. The best anecdotes are fun or interesting stories that humanize players or give the viewer or listener a different perspective on the game. Sometimes you're using your access to take viewers or listeners behind the scenes. Information told to you by respected and trustworthy sources or things that you witness with your own eyes also qualify as anecdotal. While often shared by play-by-play broadcasters, many anecdotal stories also make for great sideline reports.
- **THREE statistical nuggets related to the game that you can work into your broadcast**  
Interesting "next-level" numbers that help tell a story. We will discuss what sets "next-level" statistics apart from mere "numbers for the sake of numbers" in class. There's a difference that the best broadcasters understand.

**(To receive credit, you must include sourcing if you read or heard the information somewhere or identify the research tool you used if you researched it yourself.)**

**PREPARATION VIDEO RECAP:** You will watch the one-hour video posted on Canvas--a November 2025 National Sports Media Association panel discussion among sports broadcasters on the Process of Play-by-Play-Prep--and submit in writing **ONE key lesson** about play-by-play preparation you took **from EACH of the three guests**—Brandon Gaudin (Braves TV, Fox College Football and Basketball), Ryan Radtke (Westwood One NFL, College Basketball, Olympics) and Jason Ross Jr. (a variety of sports for ESPN, Fox, Big Ten Network, Westwood One and the WNBA).

## **SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS (Cont.)**

**GAME OPENS/SCENE SETTERS:** You will **record** two 60-90 second game-opening scene setters, one for each of two different upcoming sporting events of your choice. You'll welcome fans to the broadcast, introduce yourself, tell us who's playing and set the stage for the match-up with some interesting context for the game. You'll then wrap up the segment by sending us to a commercial break, but don't forget to make sure we know kickoff, faceoff, first pitch, tipoff or whatever it may be is coming up next! Bring energy. This is your sales pitch to convince a viewer or listener to spend the next two or three hours with you.

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**SIDELINE REPORTS:** You will **record** 2 sideline reports (60-90 seconds each) that could air on a current sporting event of your choice. Your sideline reports will be evaluated based upon your ability to effectively tell a unique and interesting story or share a piece of news that is relevant to the game you have chosen as well as on how smooth and conversational you are in your delivery. If you directly quote a player or a coach in your report, it is preferred that, if possible, you insert actual sound (presumably found online) into your piece, rather than just reading a quote. Remember, your sideline report is not a game preview or recap. It is you telling a story related to the game.

**\*\*\*When you finish recording this assignment, you will go back and listen to what you're preparing to submit and, in the Assignment Comments box on the Canvas page from which you'll submit your recording, you will briefly write 1) What you think you did well and 2) What you think you need to improve for the next assignment. Your assignment is not complete until you have completed this part of the exercise in addition to submitting your audio recording.**

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**PRE-GAME SHOW:** You will **record** a 4-segment, 8- to 10-minute pre-game show as part of "your" team's broadcast network. Elements to consider including will be discussed in class. You must use at least 3 pieces of audio. Exercise news judgment in telling your viewers or listeners what they need to know to be ready for the game. Think about how you organize your segments. What elements fit well together? How do you transition from one piece to the next? Bring energy as you get us ready for the game.

**\*\*\*When you finish recording this assignment, you will go back and listen to what you're preparing to submit and, in the Assignment Comments box on the Canvas page from which you'll submit your recording, you will do a brief SELF-CRITIQUE. In just a couple of sentences, you will write 1) What you think you did well and 2) What you think you need to improve for the next assignment. Your assignment is not complete until you have completed this part of the exercise in addition to submitting your audio recording.**

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**LISTENING SUMMARY:** Beginning with our 2<sup>nd</sup> class meeting, you will listen to at least 30 to 60 minutes of a **RADIO BROADCAST** of a college or professional sporting event of your choice most weeks between classes. You will then submit via Canvas prior to the start of our next class a brief **written** summary of things you found interesting on the broadcast. **Start by telling me what game you chose and who the broadcasters are who called the game.** Some of the things to look for could include what stood out to you about how the play-by-play broadcaster painted the picture of the game for a radio listener. Were there specific words or phrases used that you found interesting. How did the broadcasters let their personalities shine through? A unique home run call? A joke? Did the play-by-play broadcaster do anything in particular you really liked? Anything you didn't like? What else stood out to you that you heard by **listening to the game as a broadcaster would, not necessarily as the typical fan would?**

**Remember: You are studying and summarizing your observations of THE BROADCAST, NOT THE GAME.**  
For the purposes of this assignment, what happened in the game is irrelevant. I want to hear your observations regarding the performance of the broadcasters.

**I will ask you to briefly share the highlights of your summary during our class meeting many weeks, and I would like for you to listen to a different broadcaster each week, so as to be exposed to as many different and new voices as possible.**

**You can access games on over-the-air radio, satellite, team or league web sites and apps, the Varsity app (many major college broadcasts) or apps like ESPN, iHeartRadio, Audacy and more. If you chose to listen to a college game, please listen to a national network or "team" broadcast rather than a student broadcast.**

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**QUIZ:** Beginning with our 2<sup>nd</sup> class meeting, we will start each class by taking a 10-question quiz on Canvas at 9:35 a.m. The quiz will cover current sports news and topics discussed in previous class sessions. Students should be on Canvas at 9:35 when the quiz will unlock. You'll have 10 minutes to complete the quiz and then you'll enter our Zoom waiting room to start class at 9:45. The quiz will lock at 9:45.

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**FINAL EXAM:** An end-of-semester final project will be assigned in April. Details to come.

## GRADING

Your grade in this course will be cumulative, based upon your performance on a variety of out-of-class and in-class assignments throughout the semester as well as on the final exam.

<b>DUE DATE</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>	<b>MAX. POINT VALUE</b>
January 26	Play-by-Play #1	20 points
January 26	Listening Summary #1	10 points
January 26	Quiz #1	20 points
February 2	Play-by-Play #2	30 points
February 2	Listening Summary #2	10 points
February 2	Quiz #2	20 points
February 2	In-Class Assignment	10 points
February 9	Preparation #1	20 points
February 9	Preparation Video Recap	10 points
February 9	Quiz #3	20 points
February 9	In-Class Assignment	10 points
February 16	Game Opens/Scene Setters	20 points
February 16	Listening Summary #3 (TV)	10 points
February 16	Quiz #4	20 points
February 16	In-Class Assignment	10 points
February 23	Sideline Reports #1	30 points
February 23	Listening Summary #4	10 points
February 23	Quiz #5	20 points
February 23	In-Class Assignment	10 points
March 2	Play-by-Play #3	30 points
March 2	Listening Summary #5	10 points
March 2	Quiz #6	20 points
March 2	In-Class Assignment	10 points
March 9	Pre-Game Show	30 points
March 9	Listening Summary #6 (TV)	10 points
March 9	Quiz #7	20 points
March 9	In-Class Assignment	10 points
March 23	Play-by-Play #4	30 points
March 23	Listening Summary #7	10 points
March 23	Quiz #8	20 points
March 23	In-Class Assignment	10 points
March 30	Sideline Reports #2	30 points
March 30	Listening Summary #8	10 points
March 30	Quiz #9	20 points
March 30	In-Class Assignment	10 points
April 6	Play-by-Play #5	40 points
April 6	Listening Summary #9 (TV)	10 points
April 6	Quiz #10	20 points
April 6	In-Class Assignment	10 points
April 13	Preparation #2	20 points
April 13	Listening Summary #10	10 points
April 13	In-Class Assignment	10 points
April 13	Quiz #11	20 points
April 20	Play-by-Play #6	40 points
April 20	Listening Summary #11	10 points
April 20	Quiz #12	20 points
	Final Exam	200 points
		1,000 points

### FINAL GRADING SCALE

<b>A</b>	= 925 points – 1,000 points
<b>A-</b>	= 900 points - 924 points
<b>B+</b>	= 875 points - 899 points
<b>B</b>	= 825 points - 874 points
<b>B-</b>	= 800 points - 824 points
<b>C+</b>	= 775 points - 799 points
<b>C</b>	= 725 points – 774 points
<b>C-</b>	= 700 points – 724 points
<b>D+</b>	= 675 points – 699 points
<b>D</b>	= 625 points - 674 points
<b>D-</b>	= 600 points - 624 points
<b>F</b>	= Fewer than 600 points

## HELPFUL RESEARCH/PREPURATION RESOURCES

This is not intended to be a complete list. There are thousands of web sites from which you can compile information like feature stories or statistics. What this list includes are some sites upon which I rely heavily and others that have been recommended to me by friends and colleagues in the industry.

These sources provide a good **starting point** for your preparation to call games, a way to gather information that **supplements (but does not replace)** the information you collect from first-hand conversations with players, coaches, executives, scouts and others, which are always the foundation of preparation for the best broadcasters.

### LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

\*Even as the newspaper industry struggles to maintain relevance, most papers continue to offer in-depth coverage of hometown teams

### THE ATHLETIC (subscription)

\*Long-form feature stories and in-depth coverage of sports and teams  
\*Individual beat writers for most NFL, NBA, MLB and NHL teams and many major college programs as well as extensive coverage of soccer and other sports  
\*League insiders  
\*Columnists

### LEAGUE SITES

\*For example: NFL.com, NBA.com, MLB.com, NHL.com, MLSSoccer.com

### COLLEGE SPORTS SITES

\*NCAA.com for most college sports (team and individual stats)  
\*SECSports.com...theACC.com...BigTen.com...Big12Sports.com (news, features and stats for individual conferences and conference members)  
\*On3.com (subscription site that houses sub-sites for most major college teams...news, features, recruiting updates)

### INDIVIDUAL TEAM WEB SITES

\*For example: Jaguars.com, Heat.com, TBRays.com, TampaBayLightning.com, InterMiamiCF.com

### ESPN.COM

\*Feature stories  
\*League insiders  
\*Columnists

### RealGM.COM

\*Sites with the latest news, notes and rumors from NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL and international soccer

### The33rdTEAM.COM

\*In-depth NFL analysis by former club executives, coaches, scouts and players

### RESEARCH YOUR OWN STATISTICS

<https://www.sports-reference.com/> (free...but Stathead subscription takes in-depth research to another level at \$9/month or \$80/year for one sport or \$16/month and \$160/year for all sports)...50 percent discount for students  
<https://www.pro-football-reference.com/> (NFL)  
<https://www.sports-reference.com/cfb/> (College Football)  
<https://www.basketball-reference.com/> (NBA)  
<https://www.sports-reference.com/cbb/> (College Basketball)  
<https://www.baseball-reference.com/> (MLB)  
<https://www.hockey-reference.com/> (NHL)  
<https://fbref.com/en/> (Most major international soccer leagues and MLS)

<http://cfbstats.com/> (in-depth national and team-by-team statistics for College Football)

<https://kenpom.com/> (College Basketball analytics)

<https://baseballsavant.mlb.com/> (MLB analytics and stat-driven features)

<https://www.fangraphs.com/> (MLB analytics and stat-driven features)

## UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES

The university's Academic Policies and Resources are available at <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

### CLASS POLICIES/EXPECTATIONS

#### **ATTENDANCE: It is expected that students will attend ALL classes and arrive on Zoom on time each week.**

We only meet 13 times all semester. Think of play-by-play as a puzzle. We will fill in pieces of that puzzle every week. Any class you miss means you will not have all of the pieces to complete your puzzle at the end of the semester. We will have prominent guest speakers many weeks, each of whom will have valuable lessons to impart. You will have the opportunity to ask them questions. But not if you're not in attendance. Details of upcoming assignments will be discussed in class. If you are not in attendance, you will miss that information. Because we meet online, and you don't even have to leave home to attend class, even most illnesses should not prevent you from attending.

#### **If you do not notify the instructor of an absence in advance, your absence will be considered unexcused, and 5 points will be deducted from your end-of-semester grade for each unexcused absence.**

In the event you have to miss a class for a valid extenuating circumstance, please notify the instructor in advance, and arrangements will be made for you to complete any in-class work you may miss prior to the next class meeting. Otherwise, those grades will go down as a ZERO. Because you have a full week to work on them, out-of-class assignments are expected to be submitted on-time even in the event of an excused or unexcused class absence.

#### **LATE WORK: Any out-of-class work turned in after 9:35 a.m. on the day it is due without advance permission from the instructor will only be eligible to receive half credit.** For example, an assignment worth up to 20 points will be eligible to receive a maximum of 10 points. A grade that would have been a 18 becomes a 9.

#### **ZOOM POLICY:** Out of respect for the instructor, your classmates and guest speakers, students should have their cameras on during all class instruction and any time we have a guest speaker. Once class begins after our weekly quiz, the only time it will be permissible to turn off your camera is during the period of time we are working independently on in-class assignments.

#### **TECHNICAL ISSUES WITH CANVAS:** If, at any time, you have a technical issue and are unable to submit an assignment via Canvas, email the instructor BEFORE THE CLASS WHEN THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE at [glenn.geffner@ufl.edu](mailto:glenn.geffner@ufl.edu) to make him aware of the issue. You may then try to email the assignment to [glenn.geffner@ufl.edu](mailto:glenn.geffner@ufl.edu); however, this email should be separate from the email explaining your technical issue as some audio files may be too large to transmit via email, and your email may not be received. You may also try to share the assignment via Google Drive after emailing the instructor.