



# **RTV 4959C: SPORTS CAPSTONE**

**SPRING 2026**

Thursday | Period 5-7 (11:40 PM - 2:45 PM) | 3020 Weimer Hall

**Professor Ryan Hunt**

**Office Hours: Tue. & Wed, 1pm-3pm OR [by appointment](#). Weimer Hall #3040D**

[ryanhunt@ufl.edu](mailto:ryanhunt@ufl.edu) Office: (352) 392-6303; Mobile: (908) 967-2560

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This sports capstone course prepares students for entry into the sports industry by integrating skills developed throughout the program. Taken in the final year, the class centers on producing a polished professional portfolio, a major final capstone project while also incorporating a range of job-focused materials, including résumés, cover letters and evidence of strong interviewing skills. By the end of the course, they will be equipped with the practical experience, industry awareness and professional tools needed to compete for entry-level roles in sports media and communication.

## **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;
- 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 students' best work to professional audiences
- Execute and implement the skills and knowledge they have obtained throughout their undergraduate career to produce a final "capstone" project

## **READING MATERIALS**

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

- Sign up for the free [WorkInSports.com](http://WorkInSports.com) Sports Career Game Plan course: [ufl.workinsports.com](http://ufl.workinsports.com)
- *How to Prepare for Your Sports Job Search*, Brian Clapp. eBook. [Download link available in Canvas](#).

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

The following table outlines the point-accruing components of the course. Grading rubrics and specific deadlines for each assignment will be handed out separately and will be available in Canvas.

<b>Evaluation Components</b>	<b>Points Per Component</b>
<b>Preparing: Sports Career Game Plan (5)</b>	50 pts each = 250 pts
<b>Branding: Branding and Tactics (6)</b>	25 pts each = 150 pts
<b>Networking: Connecting With Alums/Class Guests</b>	25 points
<b>Mentoring: Gator-to-Gator</b> Enroll = 10 pts Reflections after first conversation = 25 pts	35 pts
<b>Promoting: LinkedIn Profile</b>	50 pts
<b>Interviewing: Mock 1-on-1 Job Interview</b> Pre-Interview Questionnaire = 25 pts 1-on-1 interview with Professor Hunt = 100 pts	125 pts
<b>Résumé Development Project (4)</b> Current Résumé = 20 pts      Cover Letter = 50 pts Targeted Résumé = 50 pts      Final Résumé = 100 pts	220 pts
<b>Portfolio Project (3 parts)</b> Portfolio Website Link = 10 pts      Portfolio Check 1 = 20 pts Portfolio Check 2 = 20 pts      Final Portfolio = 100 pts	150 pts
<b>Capstone Project (6 parts)</b> Pitches = 25 pts      Pre-reporting = 50 pts Sources = 25 pts      Draft = 50 pts Presentation = 50 pts      Final Project = 100 pts	300 pts
<b>Attendance and Class Participation (13)</b>	15 pts each = 195 pts
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,500 pts</b>

## **GRADING**

You will be graded on a 1,500-point scale. Grades can be rounded up to the nearest percentage point at the professor's discretion.

A: 93.5-100% (1,402-1,500 points)	C+: 76.5-79.9% (1,148-1,198)
A: 90-93.4% (1,350-1,401)	C: 72.5-76.4% (1,088-1,146)
B+: 86.5-89.9% (1,298-1,348 )	C-: 70-72.4% (1,050-1,086)
B: 82.5-86.4% (1,238-1,296)	D: 60-69.9% (900-1,048)
B-: 80-82.4% (1,200-1,236)	E: 59.9% and below (899 and below)

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

This course features elements that will prepare you for life after college. The first will be elements related to helping you with a successful job search. The second will be signature projects for the completion of the Sports Capstone course.

### ***— JOB SEARCH PREPARATION***

- Preparing: Your Sports Job Search Assignments*** (250 points)

Students will complete the Sports Career Game Plan, a sequence of five digital modules designed to prepare them for professional success. Through this program, you will learn to research in-demand skills and chart a plan for gaining experience, build a meaningful professional network and develop polished application materials that showcase a strong personal brand. Each module, which includes a quiz at the end, is worth 50 points. Students must upload certificates to verify module completion.

- Branding: Telling Your Personal, Professional Story*** (150 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. It is important to be able to articulate your personal brand before you begin your job search. There will be six assignments worth 25 points each.

- Interviewing: Mock 1-on-1 Job Interview*** (125 points)

In this assignment, you will have a 1-on-1 mock interview with Professor Hunt that will last 20 minutes. This assignment will help you prepare for what the process is like. Before the interview, students must complete a pre-interview questionnaire (worth 25 points).

- Promoting: Improving Your LinkedIn Profile*** (50 points)

One thing hiring managers will do when scouting job candidates is peruse your social media accounts, starting with your LinkedIn profile. Are you happy with what they will discover? Is it a good representation of the professional you're aspiring to be? In this task, you'll make sure your LinkedIn profile is where it needs to be.

- ***Mentoring: Gator-to-Gator Connection*** (35 points)

The CJC's Gator-to-Gator Coaching Program pairs graduating seniors and recently graduated students with alumni for a virtual coaching session. Each student and coach commit to a one-time virtual coaching session. Signing up for the program will be worth 10 points; another 25 points can be earned by writing a short reflection piece on the insights you gained from the conversation.

- ***Networking: Connecting with Alums/Class Guests*** (25 points)

This class will feature weekly guests from across the sports media landscape. Most of them will be UF alums. These are the best people to start building connections with. Your task will be to follow up with at least one of the class guests for an additional conversation. Follow-up must include scheduling and completing an additional conversation — not simply connecting or messaging.

### **— PROJECTS**

This course includes three different projects, all designed to help you better prepare for your post-graduate job search,

- **Capstone Project** (300 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. The final project is worth 100 points, plus a five-minute in-class presentation (50 points) at the end of the semester. The other 150 points are distributed throughout the semester for checkpoints during the composition of the project.

- **Résumé/Cover Letter Development** (220 points) - This assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to take an inventory of your skills and experiences as you think about your professional career. This assignment includes uploading your current résumé (20 points), developing a targeted résumé based on a specific job/internship posting (50 points), writing a cover letter for the same job (50 points) and finalizing your résumé based on instructor feedback. (100 points).

- **Portfolio** (150 points) - This portfolio should help prepare you for the opportunities and responsibilities of a college graduate. The portfolio is designed house and showcase to house your work done in various classes – including your capstone project – and/or experiences and must be available online. It will be graded on its quality and completeness.

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION (195 POINTS)**

Attendance in the class is mandatory – we only meet once a week, after all – and your active participation will ensure you get the most out of this class. Unexcused absences that do not follow the University's attendance policies will be an automatic 15-point deduction. In case of illness, the instructor should be notified and a physician's note may be required. This overall score also takes your class participation into account.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

This class adheres to all University academic and attendance policies. For more detail on specific policies – including grading, accommodations, evaluations and honor code – plus a list of available academic resources, [please see this link](#).

## **CLASS OUTLINE**

*Specific weekly schedule elements subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Guest speakers to be added throughout the semester.*

WEEK 1 (1/15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Introduction to Professor Hunt and the class expectations</li><li>● Syllabus Review; The Industry and Imagining Life After College</li><li>● Discussion of effective capstone pitches/projects (examples)</li><li>● Personal/Professional Branding Assignment #1</li></ul>
WEEK 2 (1/22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Career Development; Resources at the OCCP</li><li>● Introduction to Portfolio project, websites</li><li>● Current Résumé Submitted; Portfolio Link Due</li><li>● Sign up for Gator-to-Gator Coaching</li><li>● Sports Career Game Plan: Module 1 (Soft Skills)</li></ul>
WEEK 3 (1/29)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Capstone Pitches Due; In-Class Presentation</li><li>● Capstone Project First Steps<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Discuss Pre-Reporting</li><li>○ Communicating with and securing sources</li></ul></li><li>● Personal/Professional Branding Assignment #2</li></ul>
WEEK 4 (2/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Job Search Strategies</li><li>● Capstone Pre-Reporting Questions Due</li><li>● Sports Career Game Plan: Module 2 (Gaining the Right Experience)</li></ul>
WEEK 5 (2/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Telling and Selling Your Story</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><li>● Personal/Professional Branding Assignment #3</li><li>● Capstone Sources Due (discuss and critique)</li></ul>
WEEK 6 (2/19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Résumé Development; Targeting From Job Descriptions</li><li>● What Makes A Résumé Stand Out</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><li>● Sports Career Game Plan: Module 3 (Mastering Your Résumé)</li></ul>

WEEK 7 (2/26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating an Impactful Cover Letter</li> <li>● Written and interpersonal communication</li> <li>● Personal/Professional Branding Assignment #4</li> <li>● Portfolio Project Check 1</li> </ul>
WEEK 8 (3/5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Job Interview Process</li> <li>● Cover Letter Due</li> <li>● Schedule your 1-on-1 interview with Professor Hunt</li> <li>● Sports Career Game Plan: Module 4 (Interviewing For Jobs)</li> </ul>
WEEK 9 (3/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capstone and portfolio workshop</li> <li>● Targeted Résumé Due</li> <li>● 1-on-1 interview with Professor Hunt</li> <li>● Capstone Draft 1 Due: Instructor Feedback</li> </ul>
WEEK 10 (3/19)	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
WEEK 11 (3/26)	<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>● Requirements for Portfolio Website-About Me <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Resume, social, home page</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Personal/Professional Branding Assignment #5</li> <li>● Portfolio Project Check 2</li> </ul>
WEEK 12 (4/2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● How to use 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>● LinkedIn Profile Updates, Improvements Assignment Due</li> <li>● Sports Career Game Plan: Module 5 (Building Your Network)</li> <li>● Networking: Connecting with Alums, Class Guests</li> </ul>
WEEK 13 (4/9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Elevator Pitch</li> <li>● Job Interview Advice and Strategies</li> <li>● Personal/Professional Branding Assignment #6</li> <li>● Portfolio Website Due</li> <li>● Gator-to-Gator Coaching Reflections</li> </ul>
WEEK 14 (4/16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capstone In-Class Final Presentations</li> <li>● Capstone Final Draft Due</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.

## **COURSE GUESTS AND PROFESSIONAL COURTESY**

The class will also include guest speakers from across the media landscape. In the interest of honest and frank discussions, 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. Please use professional courtesy during our conversations. No texting (or checking your phone) during class.

## **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 — one letter grade — for each 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 an automatic 15% deduction.

## **A NOTE ABOUT AI**

Does AI belong in journalism? In this class, it does not. You are here to learn, improve and get more reps, so my No. 1 expectation for you is to simply do your own work. Don't take the easy way out.

In the real world, [you would be fired \(or be forced to resign\)](#) if you turned in a piece of work to your editors with your name on it that was written or had significant elements [generated by AI](#). Major companies [have been embarrassed](#) by using AI and [passing it off as human](#) work. And [jobs have been eliminated](#) across the industry.

In this class, I will randomly pick certain stories over the course of the semester and run them through [multiple AI checkers](#). AI detectors are one tool among several and will not be used as the sole basis for an academic misconduct decision. If assignments are flagged, the assignment will not be accepted. You may receive a 0 plus a half-letter grade deduction from your final grade.

Using AI in an unethical way is akin to plagiarism. And that is one of the biggest sins in journalism. The only AI we welcome here is Allen Iverson. 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

### **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.