

# PUR 3463 Sports Communication

Spring 26

College of Journalism and Communications  
University of Florida

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Instructor: Eric Esterline  
Classroom: Online

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E-Mail: [eeesterline@jou.ufl.edu](mailto:eeesterline@jou.ufl.edu)

Twitter: [@ericesterline](https://twitter.com/ericesterline)

Office Hours: Tuesdays (11a-noon), Wednesdays (11a-noon)

Office: Weimer Hall 3045

Phone: (352)846-0172

Course Site: <https://ufl.instructure.com>

Course Text: [\*-Sport Public Relations. G. Clayton Stoldt, Stephen W. Dittmore, Mike Ross and Scott E. Branvold. Human Kinetics, 3rd edition\*](#)

[\*-Media Relations in Sport. Brad Schultz, Phillip H. Caskey and Craig Esherick. FiT Publishing. 5th edition\*](#)

\*\*\*Textbooks are **RECOMMENDED, NOT REQUIRED**\*\*\*

\*\*\*Additional Readings will be posted and available online.\*\*\*

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## Overview and Objectives

PUR 3463 offers instruction, analysis, and training in the principles and practice of public relations in sports organizations. Emphasis is on media relations and skills essential for sports communication professionals, including handling media interactions across platforms, problems, crises, and integration of positive communications strategies with strategic goals of sports organizations.

## Course Learning Objectives

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

- (1) Demonstrate an understanding of the basic skills necessary to effectively carry out day-to-day responsibilities in sports communications and sports information professions
- (2) Demonstrate ability to generate content, including effective writing, from a sports perspective
- (3) Demonstrate ability to effectively integrate communications strategies with a sports organization's goals

- (4) Distinguish between sports communication perspectives and sports journalism
- (5) Distinguish in and among sports communication operations, issues and challenges in professional, intercollegiate and Olympic sports
- (6) Demonstrate understanding and skill strategies in handling negative publicity and communications crises in sports organizations
- (7) Demonstrate skill for assisting athletes, coaches, sports executives and owners to effectively handle media interviews
- (8) Demonstrate ability to manage use of social media by the organization, staff members and athletes
- (9) Demonstrate understanding of the ethics and values of sports communications

### **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.

### **Office Hours**

Office Hours: Tuesdays (11a-noon), Wednesdays (11a-noon) - These are pop-in hours and cannot be scheduled. [You can schedule time with your professor throughout the week at this link.](#)

### **Course Communication**

Your instructor or TA will reply to e-mail as soon as possible but the maximum is 48 hours not including weekends or holidays.

## **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> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Assignments (12)                | 15-20 pts each = 200 pts    | 18.2%                   |
| Writing Assignments (5)         | 50 pts each = 250 pts       | 22.8%                   |
| Online Discussions (10)         | 25 pts each = 250 pts       | 22.8%                   |
| Midterm (1)                     | 100 pts each = 100 pts      | 9.1%                    |
| Sports Organization Project (1) | 150 pts each = 150 pts      | 13.67%                  |
| Final Exam (1)                  | 150 pts each = 150 pts      | 13.67%                  |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>1100 pts</b>             | <b>100%</b>             |

## **Assignment Descriptions**

**Team Assignments (12 assignments, 15-20 pts per assignment)**– Team assignments will include research topics related to your final project. Each week you will be assigned a specific research task to complete towards building content for you final Sports Organization project and paper.

**Writing Assignments (5 writing assignments )**– Students will rely upon their research, analytical, writing, interviewing, and multimedia skills to produce press releases for six different sports events. Two of these must be attended live. Students will be graded on grammatical, form, multimedia, engagement, and story focus elements. Stories will be posted on the course WordPress site.

**Online Discussion (11 discussions, drop lowest)** - Through our class portal on Canvas we will hold online discussions surrounding various topics in sports communication. You will be required to post your thoughts and respond to classmates as well. There will be a rubric for you to follow to insure you participate properly.

| <b>Points</b>                   | <b>14-15</b>  | <b>10-13</b>  | <b>5-9</b>  | <b>1-4</b>   | <b>0</b>   |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|--|------------|
| <b>Quality of Post (10 pts)</b> | Appropriate comments: thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of others postings | Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to others postings | Responds with average effort providing obvious information without further analysis | Responds, but with minimum effort. (e.g. "I agree with Bill) | No Posting |

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| <b>Relevance of Post (10 pts)</b>                     | Post topics related to discussion topic; prompts further discussion of topic                                  | Posts topics that are related to discussion content   | Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content              | Makes short or irrelevant remarks  | No Posting                                |
| <b>Contribution to the Learning Community (5 pts)</b> | Aware of needs of community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic | Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely | Makes little effort to participate in learning community as it develops | Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops | No feedback provided to fellow student(s) |

**Midterm (1 test; 100 points) and Final Exam (1 test; 150 points)** – Students will be tested on material covered in the course with an assortment of multiple choice, true/false and essay questions.

**Sports Organization Project (1 project)** – Students will complete a project detailing the communications operations of a professional baseball, basketball, hockey, football, or soccer organization. All organizations must be pre-approved by the instructor. Reports will provide a summary of the staffing of the communications office along with responsibilities, examples of positive and negative publicity handled over the past two years pertaining to the organization, and examples of media coverage of the publicity. Students will be expected to provide an outside analysis of the effectiveness of communications operations with respect to the overall goals of the sports organization, incorporating concepts and principles from course discussions, readings and guest speakers. The project will require students to provide suggestions as to how the organization could have met those goals more effectively.

### Course Outline

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| <b>MODULE WELCOME</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome, Introductions, Textbook, Syllabus, Canvas, ETC.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 1</b><br>INTRO TO SPORTS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intro to Sports Communication and Relations</li> </ul>  |
| <b>MODULE 2</b><br>INTRODUCING SPORT PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introducing Sport Public Relations Lecture and Activity</li> </ul>  |
| <b>MODULE 3</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PR as a management tool, stakeholders and constituents, issues management, organizational reputation</li> </ul> |

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| INTEGRATING PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT   |   |
| <b>MODULE 4</b><br>DEVELOPING WRITING AND INTERVIEWING SKILLS  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forms of Writing, Types of Releases</li> <li>• Audience Awareness, Common Errors and Distribution</li> <li>• Before and After the Interview</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 5</b><br>THE PRINT MEDIA, BROADCAST MEDIA, SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print media history, relating with content providers for athletes</li> <li>• Relating with content providers for audiences, old and new models of covering a story</li> <li>• Radio and TV (national, regional and local)</li> <li>• Social and New Media</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 6</b><br>SPORTS INFORMATION SPECIALISTS  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CoSIDA, Essential Skills</li> <li>• Responsibilities of SID, Pros and Cons</li> <li>• Creating Promotional Guides</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 7</b><br>MIDTERM EXAM  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MID-TERM EXAM</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 8</b><br>EVENT MANAGEMENT AND MANAGING THE SPORT ORGANIZATION-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Basics and Mandatory Content, Production Schedule and Game Day Programs</li> <li>• Game Management, Game Day Media Ops, Do's and Don'ts in Press Box</li> <li>• Press Conferences, Media Days and Special Events</li> <li>• Identifying influential media, serving media at events, developing media policy and maximizing media exposure</li> </ul> |
| <b>MODULE 9</b><br>PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Stage of Campaign Development</li> <li>• Continuing the Campaign and Ethical Considerations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 10</b><br>CRISIS MANAGEMENT  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of crisis and need to plan, preparing for crisis and managing a crisis, assessing crisis response</li> <li>• Creating a Crisis Management Plan</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 11</b><br>EXPLORING UNMEDIATED COMMUNICATION TACTICS AND DEMONSTRATING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nature of crisis and need to plan, preparing for crisis and managing a crisis, assessing crisis response</li> </ul>  |
| <b>MODULE 12</b><br>GLOBAL SPORT MEDIA RELATIONS & LAW AND ETHICS                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global Mega Events, Expanded Coverage, National Sports Orgs</li> <li>• Law and Media Relations</li> </ul>  |
| <b>MODULE 13</b><br>FINAL PRESENTATIONS  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations</li> </ul>   |
| <b>MODULE 14</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FINAL EXAM</b></li> </ul>   |

# Academic Policies & Resources

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<https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

## **Late Work**

You are responsible for all material covered or assigned. Your grade on late assignments will drop to a “C” immediately and then 10% more each day for every day after the initial 24 hours. **If a technical problem occurs that prevents the timely submission of an assignment, you should first contact your instructor and/or TA and then the UF Help Desk.** Follow up with an email to the instructor that includes an update and Help Desk Ticket #.

**\*NOTE: Topic schedule subject to change based on guest availability and other factors. There will be no change in the project due date or the midterm and final examinations.**