

Sports Media & Society



MMC 3703: Section 1A32
MMC 6936: Section 8904 (Graduate)

Times & Location

Weimer Hall 1064
Tuesday Period 3
Thursday Period 3-4

Instructor: Ted Spiker

Office: 3054/2070 Weimer Hall

E-mail: tspiker@jou.ufl.edu

Phone: 392.6990

G-Chat/Skype: ProfSpiker (appointment)

Twitter: @ProfSpiker

Office Hours: Appointment/drop-in

TA: Annelie Schmittel

Office: 2040 Weimer Hall

E-mail: aschmittel@ufl.edu

Twitter: @ItsMeAnnelie

Office Hours: T 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

or drop by

Required Texts

Miller, A.M. & Shales, T. (2011) *Those Guys Have All The Fun: Inside The World of ESPN*. New York, NJ: Little, Brown and Company.

Links will be provided on the blog for additional readings.

Prerequisites

None

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The Course

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 Twitter. 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. The course will consist of lectures, discussion, and guest speakers (live and via Skype). Please use professional courtesy when instructor, fellow students, and guests are talking.



Twitter/Social Media

You are not required to have a Twitter account, but you are encouraged to be familiar with the social-media platform, because many current sports-media issues are played out on Twitter. The instructor and TA will use Twitter to extend discussion, post relevant links, or give exam hints. If you do weigh in on any class issues on Twitter, please use the hashtag #SportsMediaUF, so everyone can search discussions. Every week, tweets using #SportsMediaUF will be eligible to win Tweet of the Week, which will earn the student extra-credit points on an exam (no limit to how many times you can win). #boom

The Blog

The blog <http://sportsmediauf.wordpress.com/> will serve as the central hub for course-related material (we also have a Canvas account for posting grades). On the blog, you will find links to the syllabus, discussions, and some readings. For questions about class, please check the blog first to see if your question has been addressed there (under FAQs). Because we will not be able to cover all issues during class, you are encouraged to continue discussions on the blog. You are required to make 15 insightful comments about posts during the course of the semester (see more below). If you use a username different than your own to make a comment, email the instructor and teaching assistant your name, UFID number, and username (and use the same username for the entire semester).

The image is a screenshot of a WordPress blog page for #SportsMediaUF. At the top, there's a navigation bar with "#SportsMediaUF", "Follow", and "New Post" buttons. Below that is the site title "#SportsMediaUF" and the subtitle "MMC 3703 Sports Media & Society, University of Florida, Prof. Ted Spiker". The main content area has a menu with "HOME", "ABOUT", "FAQS", "READING", and "SYLLABUS". There are three featured posts: one with a football player, one with a man speaking at a microphone, and one with a woman speaking. Below the posts, there's a section titled "Exam 3 Scores Up" with a date of December 3, 2013, and a date range of December 3rd, 2013. There's also a "MMC3703" section with a date range of December 3rd, 2013.

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The Grading

You will have the opportunity to accumulate 1,000 points for the semester.



- 200: Exam 1
- 200: Exam 2
- 200: Exam 3
- 150: Blog Comments
- 50: Reading Quiz 1
- 50: Reading Quiz 2
- 50: Reading Quiz 3
- 100: Google Hangout

Exams: Only cover material from lectures and guests

Quizzes: From assigned reading (not readings on blog)

Blog Comments: You must make 15 blog comments during the semester, 2 comments every 2 weeks (more below)

Google Hangout: Attend one scheduled hangout during the semester and write a 1-page paper summarizing the speaker's comments and what you learned (more below)

The Dates

IN CLASS

OUT OF CLASS

- Sept. 16: Quiz 1
- Sept. 30: Exam 1

- Oct. 21: Quiz 2
- Nov. 4: Exam 2

- Nov. 18: Quiz 3
- Dec. 9: Exam 3

Google Hangout: Choose one Google hangout to "attend." these will feature various speakers in sports media (announced in class and on blog). Write a one-page, single-spaced summary of the talk. The paper is due 48 hours after the end of the hangout you attend. Submit through Canvas.

Blog Comments: You must make 15 comments of 75 to 100 words on the course blog during the semester at a rate of 2 per week (only 1 the final week). No extra-credit for more than 15 comments. Deadline dates (each week ends Sunday at 6 p.m.):

2 comments by Sept. 7 at 6 p.m.

2 comments by Sept. 21 at 6 p.m.

2 comments by Oct. 5 at 6 p.m.

2 comments by Oct. 19 at 6 p.m.

2 comments by Nov. 2 at 6 p.m.

2 comments by Nov. 16 at 6 p.m.

2 comments by Nov. 30 at 6 p.m.

1 comment by Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. (Wednesday, the last day of classes)



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The Required Reading

For all readings not in text, links will be on the blog. Recommended: Do not wait until night before to read them.

For Quiz 1

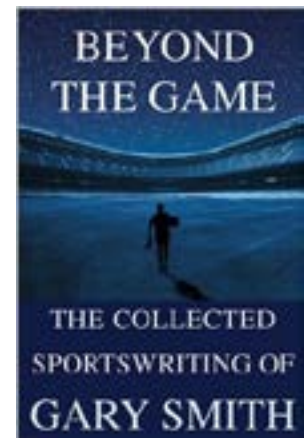
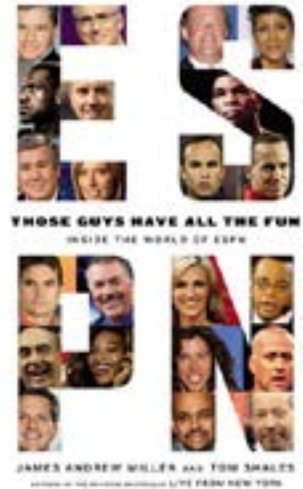
- >> ESPN book (all pages correspond with paperback edition):
From Chapter 3 (pages 139-157; 178-190; 198-209)
- >>“The Worldwide Leader in Dong Shots,” GQ, Gabriel Sherman, February 2011.
- >>“How ESPN Ditched Journalism,” Deadspin, November 11, 2012

For Quiz 2

- >>ESPN book:
From Chapter 4 (pages 224-252; 322-329), From Chapter 5 (pages 445-468)
- >>“King of the Sports Page,” Sports Illustrated, Rick Reilly, April 21, 1986.
- >>“Damned Yankee,” Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith, 1997.

For Quiz 3

- >>ESPN book:
From Chapter 6 (pages 469-495; 510-557)
From Chapter 7 (pages 609-631)
From Chapter 8 (pages 707-714; 726-751)
- >>“Can Bill Simmons Win the Big One?” New York Times Magazine, Jonathan Mahler, May 31, 2011.



The Grading Breakdown

925–1000	A	725–774	C
900–924	A-	700–724	C-
875–899	B+	675–699	D+
825–874	B	625–674	D
800–824	B-	600–624	D-
775–799	C+	0-599	E

Graduate students enrolled in the MMC section of this course should see the document on the blog for adjustments to the grade distribution regarding graduate requirements.



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The Topics

Note: The order of topics covered in class is subject to change based on the availability of guest speakers, as well as current issues in the sports media. But this will serve as a rough order for the topics we'll cover.

Introduction: An Overview of the Sports Media & Basic Journalistic Principles

A look at the media landscape of today. Plus, a quick primer on journalism ethics and law.

Case Study: The Decision

We look at the ground-breaking (and often-criticized) event revolving around LeBron James's decision to go to Miami—and the relationship between his camp and ESPN. Has news now become an event?

Case Study: Media Coverage of Tiger Woods

A classic case of who's controlling whom: We look at the pre-scandal era of Tiger, in which he worked diligently to preserve privacy, and how that all changed.

America's Best Sportswriters, Historical and Modern

We'll look at the great early sports writers—Red Smith, Grantland Rice—what they meant to sports coverage and fans. We'll also explore how the role of newspaper sportswriters has changed because of TV, radio, and the Internet, and take a look at some of today's most talented writers.

Case Study: How Sports Handled 9/11

When the world stopped, what did the sports media do?

Case Study: John Rocker's Mouth

John Rocker, controversial Braves pitcher, makes inflammatory comments in Sports Illustrated. How it went down, and how Rocker's career changed forever.

Sports Radio: From Play-by-Play to Talk Radio

The great voices of sports radio—and how radio has evolved from game coverage to talk radio. The precursor to message boards and blogs, radio gives fans their say.

TV Coverage and the Power of ESPN

History of ESPN and how it changed the sports landscape forever. Now, though, specialty networks with a niche (NFL Network and MLB Network) may be changing the game again.

The Business of Sports Media

What is the financial structure of media companies? What is the relationship between sports leagues and media, and how does that influence coverage?

Case Study: Gary Smith, America's Best Sports Writer?

It's the merging of sports and literature, as the nation's most gifted sports writer dissects the human element of the games we watch.

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The Topics (cont.)

Case Study: The London Olympics

They were called the Twitter Olympics, and NBC came under fire for its tape-delayed coverage. Still, ratings were the best in history. What media issues come into play during this international event.

Case Study: The Penn State Saga

Timeline of events and how the media managed this situation from the start. Media issues related to small media, ESPN, and crisis management on the part of Penn State.

The Cultural Importance of Sports Illustrated

Why it was born, how it was developed, the great journalism and photojournalism that has come out of it, and what role a weekly plays in the era of 24-7 sports cycle. Much of the focus will be on great sports photojournalism and in-depth reporting.

Balanced Coverage: Who Gets It, Why, and Is It Right?

Classic media debate: Who gets covered, how much coverage does a sport/athlete get, and what kind of play do they get in sports pages/broadcast? Popularity would seem to dictate those decisions, but who decides what's popular and can an argument be made that the media can influence that popularity by giving more coverage to lesser-known sports?

Portrayal of Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation in Sports

A look at the historical and current cases that have changed the way sports is covered. What is the media's role and responsibility when it comes to these and other social issues?

Women in the Locker Rooms

History of female sportswriters—the challenges of breaking into a male-dominated business and atmosphere. And we'll also discuss how the issues continue today.

Athletes in Control: The Twitter Effect

Perhaps tired of the media having control over messages, many athletes are taking matters into their own hands, whether it's through 140-character tweets, fan pages, or books. How has that changed the media's role and the fan's experience?

International Sports Media

How does it differ from the American media culture? And what problems or issues does it bring up in global competitions?

Fictional Portrayals of Sportswriters

A look at TV and movie characters and portrayals the sports-media business. Accurate or stereotypical?

PLUS MORE!

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The Fine Print

UF's Grading Policy

Please read: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulation-grades.html>

Academic Integrity

The College of Journalism and Communications at UF is committed to upholding the University's Academic Honor code as detailed on UF's website. Academic dishonesty of any kind is not tolerated in this course. The university's guidelines provide additional details, which you are expected to understand completely. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/student-trights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

Technology Devices (Phones & Computers)

We will incorporate technology in many of the class sessions, so you are encouraged to bring your laptop, smartphones or tablets to class. When using these devices you are expected to be on task; no texting, Facebook, Twitter or ESPN unless specified by the instructor. As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means you are affecting everyone's learning experience if your cellphone or laptop makes noise or is visually distracting during class. In short, turn your cellphone settings to silent/vibrate and use your laptop to take notes, not to watch funny YouTube videos (we'll do plenty of that in class).

Resources

The University of Florida is full of resources that can help you in your academic career. You are encouraged to make use of resources such as the library, tutoring, career resource center, etc. A list of useful UF resources can be found here: <http://www.ufadvising.ufl.edu/student-resources.aspx>

Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations will be made for any students with disabilities. If you have a disability, the Dean of Students Office will give you official documentation, which you will give to your instructor. More information is on the Disability Resource Center page from the Dean of Students Office. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Counseling & Mental Health Center

UF's Counseling and Wellness Center (CWC) offers support for students in need. CWC is located at 3190 Radio Road and is open from 8-5 Monday through Friday. Please refer to the CWC's website for more information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>



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The Instructors

The Instructor

Associate Professor Ted Spiker is the interim chair of the department of journalism at UF. He came to UF in 2001 after being articles editor at Men's Health. he heads the department's magazine sequence. A graduate of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, Spiker has had work published in Outside, O the Oprah Magazine, Fortune, Women's Health, Runner's World, Reader's Digest, and many other magazines. He is also co-author of a dozen books, including the YOU: The Owner's Manual series with Dr. Mehmet Oz and Dr. Mike Roizen. He is a Philadelphia sports fan, but has never once booed or thrown snowballs at Santa Claus. Twitter: @ProfSpiker
Web site: www.tedspiker.com



The Teaching Assistant

Annelie Schmittel is a third-year doctoral student at UF. Although she is a German native Annelie has called the US her home for the past 10 years. Annelie holds B.A. degrees in Mass Communication: Broadcast Journalism and German Literature & Language, as well as a M.S. in Sport Management. She received her degrees from Winona State University in Minnesota. Annelie's primary research area is the influence of social media technologies in the sports environment (sports organizations, athletes, fans, media outlets). She maintains secondary research interests in crisis communication in sports, athlete development and sport management; she is currently writing her dissertation entitled "Athletes caught in personal failing: Does winning take care of everything?" She will attempt to work the words "Germany" and "soccer" into every fourth sentence of lecture. Twitter: @itsmeannelie

