

Sports Media & Society

JOU 4930 Section 4293
MMC 6936 Section 8904

FALL 2012

COURSE TIMES AND LOCATION

T: period 3
R: periods 3-4
Weimer 1064

INSTRUCTOR

Ted Spiker
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G-Chat/Skype: ProfSpiker (available by appointment)
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Office Hours:
 M: 1:30-3:30 p.m.
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TEACHING ASSISTANT

Sarah Gibson
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PREREQS: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION: 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 even ethical implications. Ultimately, this course is about developing literacy and critical-thinking skills about the sports industry and its relationship with the media.

COURSE STRUCTURE: 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.

COURSE BLOG: The blog <http://sportsmedia4930.wordpress.com/> will serve as the central hub for course-related material (we also have a Sakai 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 10 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).*

TWITTER: You are not required to have a Twitter account, but you are encouraged to get familiar with the social-media platform, because many current sports-media issues are played out on Twitter. The instructor will occasionally 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.

GRADING

You will have four 50-question multiple-choice exams that will cover lectures, guest speakers, and reading (blog postings will **not** be on exams).

<i>Exam 1:</i>	Tuesday 9/18	(20%)
<i>Exam 2:</i>	Tuesday 10/16	(20%)
<i>Exam 3:</i>	Thursday 11/8	(20%)
<i>Exam 4:</i>	Tuesday 12/4	(20%)
	Blog comments (10 for semester):	(20%)

Blog comments

10 comments = score of 100; 9 comments = 90; 8 comments = 80, etc...

****Your 10 comments must be made in at least six separate weekly periods (a week will be considered Monday to Sunday). If you do not post in at least six separate weeks, three points will be deducted from your score for each week short of six. (Example: If you post 10 relevant comments in 4 different weeks, your score will be 94.)**

You will get full credit for adding to the discussion, posting relevant links or contributing to the discussion in some other way. Comments do not need to be long (a couple sentences is fine), but they must be more than a simple reply (“right on, LeBron!”)

Keep track of how many comments you make. The instructor will read all comments, but if you want to verify how many you have, please ask the teaching assistant.

Deadline for last comments accepted will be 12/5 at noon.

REQUIRED READINGS:

Required Book:

ESPN Those Guys Have All the Fun, Miller and Shales (paperback)

Links will be provided for additional readings on the blog

For Exam 1

ESPN book:

All of Chapter 1 (pages 1-58)

From Chapter 3 (pages 139-157)

"The Worldwide Leader in Dong Shots," GQ, Gabriel Sherman, February 2011.

For Exam 2

ESPN book:

From Chapter 3 (pages 178-190; 198-209)

From Chapter 4 (pages 224-252; 322-329)

"King of the Sports Page," Sports Illustrated, Rick Reilly, April 21, 1986.

For Exam 3

ESPN book:

From Chapter 5 (pages 445-468)

From Chapter 6 (pages 469-495; 510-557)

"Damned Yankee," Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith, 1997.

For Exam 4

ESPN book:

From Chapter 7 (pages 609-674)

From Chapter 8 (pages 690-705; 707-714; 726-773)

"Can Bill Simmons Win the Big One?" New York Times Magazine, Jonathan Mahler, May 31, 2011.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

93–100 avg	A	73–77 avg	C
90–92 avg	A–	70–72 avg	C–
88–89 avg	B+	68–69 avg	D+
83–87 avg	B	63–67 avg	D
80–82 avg	B–	60–62 avg	D–
78–79 avg	C+	59 avg or less	E

GRADUATE STUDENTS

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

CLASS TOPICS

Note: Dates and order of topics are 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.

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 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: 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.

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.

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?

Women in the Locker Rooms

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

Swimsuits in Sports: Sex and the Sports Media

The sports industry is like any other industry when it comes to moving a product: Sex sells. That applies to media (SI swimsuit issue) and it also extends to athletes. We'll look at sex in sports and discuss ethical issues for media companies and athletes.

Case Study: The Media Spectacles of Tebow and Linsanity

What role does the media play in coverage of often-polarizing stars? Who drives the messages—the media, the fans, the athletes?

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?

The Branding of Athletes: Endorsements, Dancing with the Stars, and More

Ochocinco on Dancing with the Stars. T.O with his own reality shows, Peyton Manning on SNL. Tiger, Lance, Danica and their endorsement deals. More than ever, being an athlete may also mean being an entertainer.

Case Study: Brett Favre Sexting

Deadspin.com break news of lewd photos—a subject traditional media may not have initially covered, but eventually did. What is news? What is public and private when it comes to athletes?

The 24-7 Cycle: Journalists as Multimedia Experts (and Pontificators)

What is the role of today's sportswriters? They're not just writers anymore. They're radio personalities, TV experts, opinion-makers, showmen, and brands in and of themselves.

Fictional Portrayals of Sportswriters

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

PLUS (lectures, speakers, discussion...):

Issues of Race
Team Media
Sports Photography
The Art and Craft of the Sports Interview
Big-Game Coverage
Careers in Sports Media
Local Media: Booster or Watchdog?

UF'S GRADING POLICIES

Please read:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

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/studentrights.php#academichonestyguidelines>

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/>

ABOUT THE INSTRUCTOR

Associate Professor Ted Spiker heads the magazine sequence in the journalism department at UF. He came to UF in 2001 after being articles editor at *Men's Health*. He's currently a contributing editor to *Men's Health* and a freelance magazine writer. 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.

Twitter: @ProfSpiker

Web site: www.tedspiker.com