

Sports Media & Society

MMC 6936

COURSE TIMES

Weimer 3020

W 2-3 (9:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.)

R 3-5 (11 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.)

INSTRUCTOR

Ted Spiker

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Office Hours:

E-mail for appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In this course, we will cover the relationships between sports, athletes, media, and audience. We will focus on current (and some historical) case studies that showcase professional and ethical issues of today to discuss and analyze effects for all of those involved. 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.

COURSE STRUCTURE: The course will consist of lectures, discussion, and guest speakers.

COURSE BLOG: The blog (sportsmediaUF.wordpress.com) will serve as the central hub for course-related material. You will be required to make comments on discussions there. Because this is a public blog, you're welcome to make your comments anonymous by using a username other than your real name (but if you do, please let me know what it is, and keep it consistent throughout the semester).

TWITTER: Though it's not required to use Twitter for this class, I will often tag posts or comments with #SportsMediaUF. If you'd like to weigh in or see something relevant to class, please feel free to use that hashtag when posting on Twitter.

GRADING: You can earn up to 500 points for the semester. Details of assignments below.

100 points: 25 Blog Comments
150 points: Case Study Presentation
50 points: Attendance/Participation
200 points: Final Project

A:	465-500	C-:	350-364
A-:	450-464	D+:	335-349
B+:	435-449	D:	320-334
B:	420-434	D-:	300-319
B-:	400-419	E:	299 and below
C+:	380-399		
C:	365-379		

BLOG COMMENTS: On the class blog, I will post discussion prompts based on reading, class, or current events. You do not have to comment on everything, but you do need to comment on 25 posts throughout the semester (with a minimum of three for every week). Your comments only need to be a few sentences, but they should be thoughtful, insightful, and further the conversation. You will earn up to 4 points for every post. (Going over 25 does not count as extra-credit.)

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: You are expected to attend every class and participate in discussions. Documented medical excuses and religious holidays will be accepted as excused absences.

CASE STUDY: You will present a 45-minute case study to the class. You must have your idea approved (obviously, no duplication with any of the topics listed below, or with your own final project). You may choose to focus on an individual, a team, a league, a news event, a policy, an issue, etc..., but the focus on sports media should be clear, and it should involve some gray areas in ethics/principles that are relevant for discussion. Each case study presentation should include:

Facts/background/timeline about the case, scope of criticism/analysis from outside sources, key media principles and issues raised by the case, questions for discussion, and references at the end. Please submit an electronic and printed copy of your presentation materials. **Presentations will be on 6/5 and 6/6.** How you will be graded:

25 points: Quality/originality of idea

25 points: Quality of presentation: Are slides/references useful and helpful?

Is it organized and professional?

75 points: Content of presentation: Have you presented relevant facts about the case, background/context, critiques/analysis from independent sources? Do we have a thorough understanding of the issue?

25 points: Did you lead a thoughtful and relevant discussion?

FINAL PROJECT: I want you to be able to work on a project that is most relevant to your career and educational goals. I am flexible and want you to come out of the class with something that is either an examination or practice of sports media. For example, you could do another case study as a paper. You could also do a piece of sports media (such as a long-form video or written story). Each project should have the approximate weight of a 20-page paper, and each grading rubric will be customized for the student. All ideas must be approved by May 23 (we can spend some time in class discussing ideas). **Due Wednesday, 6/19**, at start of class.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note that class schedule is subject to change, based on current events, guest speakers, etc....

Week 1 (5/15 and 5/16)

Introduction to Class
Case Study: Tiger Woods
Case Study: The Decision

Week 2 (5/22 and 5/23)

Gender in Sports Media
Principles of Narrative/Great Storytelling
Case Study: Sports Media in 9/11 and Boston Marathon Bombings

Week 3 (5/29 and 5/30)

Case Study: Criticisms of ESPN
Case Study: John Rucker
Twitter/Social Media in the Sports World

Week 4 (6/5 and 6/6)

Case Study Presentations

Week 5 (6/12 and 6/13)

Case Study: The Penn State Scandal
Case Study: Manti Te'o
Case Study: Media Issues and Olympic Coverage

Week 6 (6/19 and 6/20)

Case Study: Coverage of Lance Armstrong
Sports Media: Past, Present, Future

REQUIRED READINGS: While there are no tests, you are expected to read the following material and weigh in either in class and/or on the class blog. Please have the readings done before we meet on Wednesday (the exception being the first week, of course). All readings will be available on the course blog (or as handouts). Additional non-required readings may be passed along via the blog. The reading schedule:

Week 1:

“In defense of an ‘annoying’ profession,” sportsjournalism.org, Dave Kindred
“The Death of the Sports Interview,” ESPN, Tim Keown
“How Sportswriting Lost Its Game,” Utne Reader, Michael Rowe
“The King of the Sports Page, Sports Illustrated, Rick Reilly
“The ‘Decision’ dilemma, ESPN, Don Ohlmeyer

Week 2:

“Ali and His Entourage,” Sports Illustrated, Gary Smith
“The Worldwide Leader in Dong Shots,” GQ, Gabriel Sherman
“Get used to it: Women cover sports,” ESPN, Christina Kahrl
“Hype,” Sports Illustrated, Bruce Newman
“CBS drops the ball in coverage of murder-suicide tragedy,” SI, Richard Deitsch

Week 3:

“Can Bill Simmons Win the Big One,” New York Times, Jonathan Mahler
“How ESPN Ditched Journalism and Followed Skip Bayless...” Deadspin, John Koblin
“My team, my publisher,” Nieman Journalism Lab, Justin Ellis
“Is Social Media a Broadcast Right?” socialmedia today, Chris Syme
“Social-media savvy grows...” CBSSports.com, Bruce Feldman
“2012 Media Awards,” Sports Illustrated, Richard Deitsch

Week 4:

NONE

Week 5:

“Silent Season of a Hero,” Esquire, Gay Talese
Excerpt from *ESPN: Those Guys Have All the Fun* (TBD)

Week 6:

“Sportswriter is One Word,” Frank Deford speech

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*. 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