

Sports Writing and Reporting

JOUR 3150-001

Spring 2016

MW 11:30 a.m.-12:55 p.m., Meeman 206

Dr. Roxane Coche

Office: Meeman 324

Office hours: Monday 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Tuesday 1:30-4:30 p.m.

Wednesday 9:30-11 a.m.,

and by appointment.

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Development of advanced writing, reporting and professional skills specific to sports media. Emphasis on practice of game reporting, feature stories, column and opinion writing and multimedia.

PREREQUISITE:

JOUR 3120

CLASS INSTRUCTION:

This course is designed to develop writing, reporting, and professional skills specific to sports media. You will learn about writing strategies for stories produced in print and online. Further, we will discuss opportunities on television and radio for sports. Additionally, we will discuss sports publicity and promotion through team in-house communications. Some sessions will require students to leave the classroom, in which case conduct will be governed by the rules of the classroom and the rules of the venue in which the class is meeting. A typical class session will consist of a lecture, discussion, and assignment/lab time. Students are required to complete multiple writing and media projects throughout the semester, as well as a final project.

TEXTBOOKS:

- Gisondi, J. (2011). *Field Guide to Covering Sports*. Washington: CQ Press
- Ryan, S. (2015). *Slaying the Tiger*. New York: Ballantine Books.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

One Flash Drive (At least 2GB capacity)

GRADING:

Your course grade is based on your involvement and participation in the course, stories written throughout the semester, a final exam and a semester-long team project. Detailed descriptions of those are below. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

Involvement and participation	5%
Online Portfolio	10%
Assignments	40%
Final Exam	15%
Project (using Print, Web and Video)	30%

NOTE: Evaluation/grading of writing assignments will be weighted toward individual progress and improvement.

Involvement and Participation (5%)

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You should consider this class your “job” in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. Furthermore, my role is to efficiently guide the class throughout the semester, but it is your responsibility, as a class, to bring all projects to fruition. This course will be successful only if all of you participate. Thus, part of your overall grade will be determined by your active involvement in class, group activities and discussions. This includes online activities.

Online Portfolio (10%)

At the end of the semester you will have developed a professional website that includes your updated resume, any other pertinent skills, and, most importantly, your resume reel. This resume tape will contain three stories of your choosing (at least one of your two packages).

Important deadlines:

- February 1 by 12:55 p.m.: Website set up with tabs ready. (10 points)
- March 23 by 12:55 p.m.: Website updated with current resume, new stories (including from this class), an about page and contact information. (30 points)
- April 27 by 12:55 p.m.: Final online portfolio (60 points)

Refer to the Online Portfolio Instructions document on eCourseWare for more details.

Assignments (40%)

Assignments will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Depth and accuracy of reporting;
- Strength of your lede, nut graph and overall story structure;
- Grammar and AP Style;
- Brevity of your writing (don’t use four words when you can use only one);
- Clarity of your writing;
- Strength of your multimedia components;
- Timeliness;
- Thoroughness of your analysis.

Note: Errors of fact will lower the grade for each story by 4 points each with the exception of proper names, which will cost 10 points **each** time they appear incorrect in a story. This deduction is not an arbitrary punishment. Such errors go to the heart of credibility for you and your organization. Errors can also have serious legal ramifications, such as libel suits.

Easily avoidable mistakes (missing words, typos, basic spelling errors) will cost 4 points each.

Refer to the appropriate instructions documents on eCourseWare for more details.

Final Exam (15%)

The exam will be graded based on the same criteria as the assignments you will write during the semester. It will be on Monday, May 2nd from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. More detail will be given as the end of the semester approaches.

Project (30%)

You will team up for a semester-long multimedia journalism project about adult sports leagues in the Memphis area. The website is already online at <https://grownupgames901.wordpress.com>. You will, as a class, develop this website and update it throughout the semester. More details will be given in class and on eCourseWare.

ATTENDANCE & CLASS CONDUCT

Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the beginning of each class session. You are allowed three unexcused absences; after three, additional unexcused absences will drop your final grade by one letter grade for each absence. Missing a total of seven classes will result in the student failing the course. University policy for excused absences applies to this course. Tardiness will not be tolerated. After two tardies, one percentage point will be deducted from your final grade for each additional tardy. No exception.

DEADLINES

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will not be graded. Exceptions may be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the deadline.

DIVERSITY

You will be required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, you are expected to consider your work through a diverse mind.

WEATHER POLICY

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, you may still be responsible for that day's work. Check your emails.

WRITING

As a journalism student, you are required to write an extensive amount and adhere to the Associated Press style guide.

When writing an email to the instructor, you should always follow the basics of email etiquette (see eCourseWare), I may not respond otherwise. Emailing is not texting.

ASSIGNMENT FORMAT

All assignments are to be submitted electronically via eCourseware.

Generally, each assignment will come with unique guidelines. Be sure to follow these guidelines exactly. Work that does not comply to these guidelines, as well as the production specifications indicated for the assignment, may receive a grade of 0.

Note that plagiarism is unforgivable in journalism. It essentially ends a journalist's career and could also end a student's career. Any plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and the responsible student may be referred to the university's Academic Integrity Committee for discipline.

**TENTATIVE TIMETABLE:
JOUR 3150-001 Class Schedule for Spring 2016**

Note: What follows is a tentative schedule. The syllabus is a general plan for the course; the instructor reserves the right to make changes as the semester progresses. If there are any changes, you will of course be notified in a timely manner.

- Week 1 (01/20):** Course Introduction, Study Abroad Opportunities
- Week 2 (01/25-27):** Intro to the field: From Sports Fan to Reporter
- Week 3 (02/01-03):** Leads and Story structure
- Week 4 (02/08-10):** Sports interviewing
- Week 5 (02/15-17):** Play-by-play; game stories
- Week 6 (02/22-24):** Feature Stories
- Week 7 (02/29-03/02):** 2016: an Olympic year
- Week 8 (03/07-09):** Spring Break
- Week 9 (03/14-16):** Columns and blogging
- Week 10 (03/21-23):** High School and college sports
- Week 11 (03/28-30):** Radio and podcasts
- Week 12 (04/04-06):** Sports news and enterprise
- Week 13 (04/11-13):** Social media
- Week 14 (04/18-20):** Ethics
- Week 15 (04/25-27):** Beats

Final exam on Monday, May 2nd, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

FIVE PILLARS OF JOUR 3150

- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional skills and attitudes necessary to work in sports media today. JOUR 3150 reinforces basic principles of media writing, interviewing and reporting. Students also learn what makes sports unique.
- *Writing:* Students continue to work on writing mechanics and AP style, developing both basic news stories and more complex reports about the world of sports.
- *Multimedia:* Most assignments in 3150 include a multimedia component to bring added value to written work. Students will be in charge of running a news and information website dedicated to the local sports scene in Memphis, using social media to build an audience. Additionally, students build an online portfolio to showcase their professional skills, work experience, and writing samples.
Critical Thinking: Students work independently and as a team to develop story ideas and to target stories for publication. They develop skills to give (and receive) criticism by their peers when stories are reviewed collectively in class. They also learn how to cultivate an audience with particular news-making decisions and strategies.
- *Media Literacy:* Students learn about the complex interrelationship of sports and the media, including ethical and social questions raised through mediated sports.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR 3150:

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- 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.
- 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 tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

HOW PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES WILL BE MET:

Cognitive Objectives To Be Mastered (Ability To Explain, Analyze, Understand, Think Critically):

- Acquire an awareness of the various kinds of sportswriting
- Deepen knowledge of sportswriting skills
- Understand the professional routines of sportswriters
- Understand the role and application of multimedia skills in sports

Performance Standards To Be Met (Demonstrable Skills, Abilities, Techniques, Applied Competencies):

- Write various kinds of sports stories for print and web.
- Create multimedia sports projects.
- Cover live sports events with digital media.
- Prepare and participate in radio sports programming.

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication requires that, irrespective of their particular specialization, all graduates should be aware of certain core values and competencies and be to

- Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances;
- 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 tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING FOR JOURNALISM PROGRAM:

The Council seeks to promote student learning and encourages experimentation and innovation. Assessment is a system of evaluation of student learning at the course or unit level (as opposed to grading at the individual level). Three criteria should guide assessment of student learning:

- *Awareness*: familiarity with specific information, including facts, concepts, theories, laws and regulations, processes and effects.
- *Understanding*: assimilation and comprehension of information, concepts, theories and ideas.
- *Application*: competence in relating and applying skills, information, concepts, theories and ideas to the accomplishment of tasks.

DEPARTMENT POLICIES

PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENT:

All Department of Journalism undergraduate students are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Students are to begin the portfolio in JOUR 2121 and contribute to it during every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their concentrations.

EMAIL:

You must have your UM email account activated. If you are using another provider, such as Google, you are required to have your UM email forwarded to that account. Go to <http://iam.memphis.edu> to implement forwarding of UM email. You are required to check your email daily. You are responsible for complying with any email sent to you by your professor or the university.

MOBILE PHONES AND LAPTOPS:

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone to be used during class or to complete class assignments. Others do not allow them. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. Students are permitted three total unexcused absences without penalty. After three absences, the student's final grade will be deducted one letter grade for each absence. After seven unexcused absences, the student will fail the course. Absences for illness and other catastrophic emergencies, such as a death in the family, must be documented (e.g. doctor's note or obituary) to be excused from the total absence count. Students with excessive unexcused absences are encouraged to withdraw from the course prior to the drop deadline.

DEADLINES:

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will NOT be graded. Late work is not accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Students are NOT permitted to make up assignments, quizzes, tests, etc. that occurred during an unexcused absence. Students who will miss class and/or a deadline because of an excused absence are expected to notify the instructor immediately upon knowing the absence will occur; exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances. Students who are absent during the final exam are not permitted to make up the exam and will earn a grade of 0, which might result in failure of the course.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

In addition to university-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses, a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, and violations of copyright law as acts of academic dishonesty punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Penalties might include grade reductions or dismissal of the student from the university.

“Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for an evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of sources. As part of this process, you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your written work, or be given other instructions to follow. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com’s restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.” (Office of Legal Counsel, October 17, 2005)

Intellectual property and copyright guidelines

1. Ideas cannot be copyrighted, but the way they are described can.
2. Anything set down in a tangible form, i.e., written, is by law copyrighted.
3. If, in a paraphrase, your work is “substantially similar” to a copyrighted work, you are guilty of copyright infringement.
4. A citation indicates where you got material. However, that portion you do not show as a direct quote must be “substantially original” to you. In other words, you can’t just paste in something from another’s work, put a citation at the bottom and call it your own. You need a full rewrite in your own words and syntax so the unquoted material is “substantially original” to you.

Plagiarism: From UM Student Handbook: The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

ONLINE SETEs:

You are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once your instructor has posted your grade, you can immediately see that grade, provided you completed a teacher evaluation for that class. How to access your evaluation forms: Log in using your UUID and email password; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. It will only take a few minutes of your time. We take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Your feedback is essential and will be appreciated.

DISABILITY:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

DIVERSITY:

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Mass communications reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

WEATHER POLICY:

Check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the university is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

AP STYLE AND GRAMMAR:

All written work in this class should follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. If you don't know the style for a particular phrase, look it up or ask your classmates or the instructor.