

Sports Writing and Reporting

JOUR 3150-001

Spring 2017

MW 11:20 a.m.-12:45 p.m., Meeman 206

Dr. Roxane Coche

Office: Meeman 324

Office Hours: MW, 9-11; TH, 1:30-3:30; 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.

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%)

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. Note that all ungraded exercises and activities are taken into consideration for your participation grade.

Online Portfolio (10%)

At the end of the semester you will have developed a **Wordpress-based** professional website that includes your updated resume, any other pertinent skills, and, most importantly, work samples.

Important deadlines:

- February 1 by 12:45 p.m.: Website set up with tabs ready. (10 points)
- March 13 by 12:45 p.m.: Website updated with current resume, new stories (including from this class), an about page and contact information. (30 points)
- April 26 by 12:45 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 (including misspellings of proper names) will lower your grade by 10 points **each** time they appear 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. 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. More details will be given in class and on eCourseWare.

ATTENDANCE & DEADLINES

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time, make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider school to be your job and be on time just as you would for a “real” job.

To allow for illness and other unforeseeable misfortunes, you are permitted three absences in the semester. Any additional absence will result in a penalization of one grade level (e.g., from B+ to B for four total absences, from B+ to B- for five total absences, etc.). Missing a total of seven classes will result in the student failing the course. University policy for excused absences applies to this course. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to get in touch with me and/or your peers to ask about course content and possible assignments. Any lateness of 10 minutes or less counts as half an absence. Any lateness of more than 10 minutes counts as an absence.

OTHER ISSUES:

Late work: You're responsible for turning in all projects on the dates they're due. If you cannot make it to class that day, upload your project online and send me a link. In this day and age, there is no excuse. **No late work will be accepted**, regardless of the reason(s).

Equipment: A 24-hour notice is needed to check out broadcast equipment. Mr. William Johnston will go through the rules with us in class. You are expected to follow his instructions.

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.

Emails: 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, available on eCourseWare. I may not respond otherwise. Emailing is not texting. Your first assignment is to email me a picture of a soccer ball as soon as you finish reading this syllabus.

Plagiarism: 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

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:** Course Introduction, Study Abroad Opportunities.
- Week 2:** Intro to the field: From Sports Fan to Reporter. Quiz 1.
- Week 3:** Leads and Story structure. Quiz 2.
- Week 4:** Sports interviewing. Quiz 3.
- Week 5:** Play-by-play; game stories. Quiz 4.
- Week 6:** Feature Stories. Quiz 5.
- Week 7:** Mega-events. Quiz 6.
- Week 8 (03/07-09):** *Spring Break.*
- Week 9:** Columns and blogging. Quiz 7.
- Week 10:** High School and college sports. Quiz 8.
- Week 11:** Radio and podcasts. Quiz 9.
- Week 12:** Sports news and enterprise. Quiz 10.
- Week 13:** Social media. Quiz 11.
- Week 14:** Ethics. Quiz 12.
- Week 15:** Online portfolios.

Final exam on Monday, May 1, from 10 a.m. to 12 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 students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media 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 from every course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from his/her courses and/or professional experience and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in the capstone course for their majors.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. The department requires students to use WordPress to build their portfolio sites. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional life, via a common email service, such as Gmail or Yahoo.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files, and Storify pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

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 the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website 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. Others do not. Your instructor will set the policy for her/her specific class.

ATTENDANCE:

Class attendance is mandatory in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. You may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance, or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements, which are acceptable to your professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence due to illness or other catastrophic emergency such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). This is a professional program for journalists who are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. If you have some problem making it to class on time make arrangements to fix the problem or consider taking another class. You should consider this class your "job" in the educational process and be on time just as you would elsewhere.

CHEATING:

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, or a student receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on his/her own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. That may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the university.

Further, as this is a journalism/mass communication class, students are expected to comply with copyright law, and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

"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)

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.

DEADLINES:

Remember there's a reason "DEAD" makes up half the word "deadline." All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. If you get into trouble, talk to your instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

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.

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 Hall 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:

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, students will still be responsible for that day's work.