

Special Topics in Journalism: Covering the Olympics

JOUR 4802.6802-201

Summer 2016

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Designed to help students become faster and more knowledgeable sports news writers by giving them real hands-on experience covering an international sports event.

UNDERGRADUATES PREREQUISITES:

JOUR 3120 and JOUR 3150 or permission from the instructor.

GRADUATE STUDENTS TEXTBOOKS:

Horne, J. & Whannel, G. (2016). *Understanding the Olympics* (2nd edition). Routledge.

ISBN-10: 1138890251, ISBN-13: 978-1138890251

This book's release date is June 4, 2016.

OBJECTIVES:

Through this course, you will build on skills learned in previous courses to:

- Gain practical experience in advanced and specialized news coverage;
- Strengthen your competence in writing clear, concise, accurate and interesting sports news stories in a fast-paced environment;
- Produce stories based on information obtained from primary sources;
- Work through and hone your problem-solving skills.
- Enhance your capacity to judge the newsworthiness of events and ideas;
- Hone key skills, such as gathering, assessing and developing rapport with sources;
- Deepen your understanding of journalistic ethics;
- Develop your skills of verification and fact-checking;
- Expand your professional network.

EXPECTATION:

As a student in this course, you will gain firsthand experience as a sports news reporter covering the most prestigious of all multi-sport international competitions. You will be in Rio not only as a student, but also as a representative of your department and of the University of Memphis. It is important that you act professionally.

You will be immersed in a professional setting for a month, integrated into the Olympics organizing committee's workforce program. As such, you are expected to behave in a professional manner, including appropriate dress (provided on site), punctuality, and adhering to deadlines.

Studying Abroad

As a student in this course, you will gain firsthand experience as a sports news reporter covering the most prestigious of all multi-sport international competitions. You will be in Rio not only as a student, but also as a representative of your department and of the University of Memphis. It is important that you act professionally. You have all gone through study abroad orientation. You have been provided with the Study Abroad Student Handbook. If you have any questions or doubt, you should speak up and ask either a study abroad advisor or me. Any misconduct will not be tolerated.

GRADING:

The course will be graded on the work you complete before we travel to Rio and while we are there. The pre-Rio work will be completed online. You will be tested on four equally-weighted items (25% each): (1) your knowledge of important documents (including the Rio 2016 Code of Ethics and Conduct and the Study Abroad Student Handbook), (2) your knowledge of the style guide provided by Rio, (3) your writing of a few assigned stories related to the sport you will be covering in Brazil, and (4) your behavior and conduct before and in Rio.

It is extremely important you take ALL assignments seriously in order to perform well in Rio.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and mass communications. Assignments turned in late will not be graded and be given a 0. This is practice for Brazil, where you will be in a professional setting and have no second chance to turn in a story.

Assignment Format

All assignments are to be submitted electronically via eCourseware. 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. This includes self-plagiarism. If you have any doubt at all about what plagiarism and self-plagiarism are, contact me.

SCHEDULE:

July 5-July 28: Pre-Rio work (online)

July 29: Departure from Memphis.

July 30: Arrival in Rio.

August 1-August 4: Training from the Press Operations team of the Rio 2016 Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games

August 5-August 21: Covering the 2016 Rio Olympic games

August 22: Departure from Memphis.

August 23: Arrival in Memphis.