

Sports Writing and Reporting

JOUR 4150-001

Spring 2018

TR 3:55-5:10 p.m., Meeman 208

Dr. Roxane Coche

Office: Meeman 324

Office Hours: T-TH, 1-2:15 p.m.; TH, 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.; and by appointment.

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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.

PREREQUISITES:

JOUR 3526 and 3120

TEXTBOOK:

- Gisondi, J. (2017). Field Guide to Covering Sports Second Edition. Washington: CQ Press. / ISBN-13: 978-1506315683 / ISBN-10: 1506315682.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

One Flash Drive (At least 2GB capacity)

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. All out of class writing assignments must be accompanied by one of the following multi-media components: Infographic, photograph, photo slideshow, video, audio or podcast.

GRADING:

Your course grade is based on your involvement and participation in the course, stories written throughout the semester, your online portfolio 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	20%
Assignments	45%
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. The first is for you to email me a picture of a soccer ball as soon as you finish reading this syllabus. Note that all ungraded exercises and activities are taken into consideration for your participation grade.

Online Portfolio (20%)

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.

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

Assignments (45%)

Assignments include a thematic feature paper to be written in pairs, a video profile of an interesting person in the sports world, live tweeting of games, an opinion column, and short one-minute radio updates about Tiger sports. All 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 15 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.

Project (30%)

You will team up for a semester-long multimedia journalism project about Negro Leagues in the Memphis area. The project requires professionalism, historical research, critical thinking, creativity, and multimedia skills, including video, graphics, photos, and text. More details will be given in class and on eCourseWare.

Online Portfolio (20%)

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Research Paper (20%)

As a graduate student, you must complete an extra 10-page research paper about sports journalism. I must approve the topic in the beginning of the semester. Please speak with me in person so we can agree on a topic. The first draft of the paper is due in early March. The final paper is due in early April.

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 tardiness of 10 minutes or less counts as half an absence. Any tardiness of more than 10 minutes counts as an absence.

OTHER ISSUES:

Late work: You are 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).

Assignments: If you do not follow every single instruction on any given assignment, you will receive a grade of zero. Detailed instructions are available on eCourseWare.

Diversity: You 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, 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.

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 4150-001 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: Reminders: Leads, Story structure & Interviewing. Quiz 2.

Week 4: Social media. 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: *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: Ethics. Quiz 11.

Week 14: Final project & online portfolios. Quiz 12.

Week 15: Final project & online portfolios.

FIVE PILLARS OF JOUR3526

- *Professionalism:* Students learn the professional standards and routines of the photography industry by discussing and preparing photo projects, using DSLR and video cameras, and learn industry vocabulary. Students learn the ethical guidelines for editing photographs for photojournalism, as well as for other forms of mass communication. Students learn legal issues associated with photography and videography. Finally, students will develop a professional portfolio of their photographic and video work.
- *Writing:* JOUR3526 addresses writing skills related to cutlines and descriptions. In addition, students write artist statements for creative work.
- *Multimedia:* Students prepare photographic media for print, web and digital applications, and video media for web, television and digital applications.
- *Critical Thinking:* Students must demonstrate an understanding of the audience that will consume visual work, and explain this connection in artist statements.
- *Media Literacy:* JOUR3526 addresses media literacy by exposing students to the vocabulary and tools of media production. Students learn how visual media is researched, planned, and created visually through multiple photographic projects.

ASSESSMENT

PROFESSIONAL VALUES AND COMPETENCIES FOR JOUR3526:

- 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;
- Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- 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):

- Learn the basic elements of digital cameras – their capabilities and limitations.
- Learn to think visually and communicate in visual terms.
- Understand spatial relationships, including the importance of depth, scale and the elimination of distracting elements.
- To understand the relationship of people to their situation and surroundings as well as to be able to read their body language in order to capture insightful, significant movements.
- To work within the digital computer framework and process images to their maximum potential while taking care not to alter fact or otherwise create unethical representations.

Performance standards to be met (demonstrable skills, abilities, techniques, applied competencies):

- Complete a series of photographic assignments which include people in various news and feature situations both posed and candid
- Demonstrate the ability to capture and process an image with a digital camera to make it suitable for presentation
- Demonstrate proficiency with image editing software
- Demonstrate the ability to capture and process video with a digital camera to make it suitable for presentation
- Demonstrate proficiency with video editing software

HOW ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING WILL BE MET IN JOUR3526:

This class is designed to develop the skills needed to capture and edit digital images.

Awareness:

- Becoming aware of photo and video development and ethics of visual communication.

Understanding:

- Process of photography and editing, including the presentation requirements for multiple media.

Application:

- Creation of at least five photo projects addressing different strategies in photography; creation of at least two video projects addressing video capture and editing; to show proficiency in Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Premiere.

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. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 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 because of 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 and Strategic Media 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 your instructor 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.

