

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

SPMT 430.002—Sport Communication (3)
Fall 2015

DAY/TIME:	M and W 3:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.	LOCATION:	Aquia Building 213
PROFESSOR	Dr. Morgan	EMAIL ADDRESS:	kvanders@gmu.edu
OFFICE LOCATION:	Nguyen Engineering Suite 4902	PHONE NUMBER:	703.585.3373 (texts welcome)
OFFICE HOURS:	By Appointment		

PREREQUISITES

60 hours, including SPMT 201, PHED 200, and the General Education communication requirement; or permission of instructor

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides a senior-level exploration of the role of sport communication in contemporary cultures. Readings and discussions will address questions about how communication about/in sports highlights the importance of sports, the cultural identities of those who engage in sport communication, and the pervasiveness of sport communication practices in industry.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Recognize the connections among sport communication practices and cultures;
2. Develop analytical abilities in application of theories and concepts to sport communication practices;
3. Watch, analyze, critique, and discuss the media's portrayal of the community of sport;
4. Analyze the discourses surrounding sports issues; and
5. Gain an awareness of the pervasiveness of sport communication in other venues.

COURSE OVERVIEW: POLICIES

1. **Participation.** Attendance and punctuality are essential for success in this class. Most of your work is based on information from the lectures and participation in class discussions. Your absences and/or tardiness will affect your general progress and that of your classmates. Zero to two absences will result in no penalty unless they occur on a day when you are assigned to turn in an assignment. **More than two absences will result in a 5-point deduction per absence from your final grade.** Students who arrive late or leave early without prior arrangements with me will be counted as absent. Some absences, such as university sports-related, may be excused provided **prior** arrangement is made with me. Other examples of excused absences may be for medical reasons or field trips in other courses and will be allowed only at my discretion. Students who stop coming to class without discussing it with me will receive a failing grade. Should you miss an assignment due to absence, you will be allowed to make it up provided that you have written documentation regarding the nature of the absence. If you miss an oral presentation, it is up to me as to how and/or if you will make up the assignment.
2. **Written Assignments.** Written assignments will be expected to demonstrate college-quality writing. All work prepared outside of class (papers and projects) will be assessed for content AND for presentation. Your assignments must clearly have been planned, researched, and proofread.
3. **Format.** Papers and projects submitted must be typed, and attention should be paid to form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance) as well as to content. Your work should be in

APA format. A helpful online guide can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

4. **Submission.** **No late work will be accepted, no exceptions.**
5. **Honor Policy.** George Mason University takes its honor policy quite seriously, and so do I. Papers, projects, and other assignments must be your own work. Further, only **you** may sign in for yourself on our class sign-in sheet. Having a friend sign you in or doing so for another student will result in an honor violation for both students.
6. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is representing another’s work as your own or recycling your work and representing earlier work as new work. I will be checking your work for originality. Remember to use proper source citations in citing the evidence you use in your research. Failure to do your own work, or not to give credit where necessary, will result in failing the course and a report to the honor committee. If you need assistance with citation rules beyond the APA style guide or with determining if something should be cited, please ask me!
7. **Technology.** I welcome your use of computers or tablets to take notes during the lecture portion of our class; however, I will require that you put your computer/tablet away during our discussions. **Cell phones should be turned off or silenced.** I will offer you the same courtesy. Those who choose not to follow this policy will be asked to leave and given a 0 for the evening’s participation.

Upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards:

SMPRC: NASSM-NASPE Standards

Standard	Content
7	Interpersonal communication; small group communication; media and sport; electronic media; e-mail, web sites, graphics, desk-top publishing; print media; public speaking; mass communication and sport; computer application; customer service; team building; meeting management; sport journalism/broadcasting; ratings and shares; organizational communication; writing press releases.

Further, upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards:

National Flashes of Insight Association (NFIA)

8.21	Understanding of and the ability to analyze thought processes
8.22	Understanding of procedures and techniques for assessment

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

The class will have lecture, discussion, online, and group work formats and will require active participation of all students.

REQUIRED READINGS

Billings, A. C., Butterworth, M. L., & Turman, P. D. (2015). *Communication and sport: Surveying the field* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Brown, R. S., & O’Rourke, D. J., III. (Eds.). (2003). *Case studies in sport communication*. Westport, CT: Praeger.

Additional required readings (e.g., journal/magazine/newspaper articles) will be available via Blackboard.

EVALUATION

Final grades will be recorded with “plus/minus” letter grade annotations. Individual assignments will be marked with points. You will be able to track your grade progress in the Grade Center in Blackboard.

Assignment	Due Date	Points Possible
Participation	Every class	280
Weekly readings quizzes on Blackboard	Every Monday, 2:59pm (starting 9/9 – that’s a Wed. for just this first one)	225
Blog set up with a title/link submitted to kvanders@gmu.edu	Monday, 9/9, 2:59pm	10
Short paper on your understanding of Sport Communication	Monday, 9/14, 2:59pm – submitted on Blackboard	100
Weekly blogging project	Every Monday, 2:59pm (starting 9/14)	240
Midterm Exam on Blackboard – covers all material from Weeks 1-6	Monday, 10/19, 2:59pm – submitted on Blackboard <i>This exam opens on Wednesday 10/7</i>	50
Sport advertisement brief presentation	Monday, 12/9 in class	25
Final Exam on Blackboard – covers all material from the semester	Monday, 12/14, 12:00pm (Noon) – submitted on Blackboard <i>This exam opens on Monday, 12/2</i>	50
Term paper	Monday, 12/14, 12:00pm (Noon) – submitted on Blackboard	200
Total		1180

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

- 1. Participation (10 points per class, 280 points possible):** A significant portion of our class is discussion. Each class, you will be expected to participate in discussion, showing that you are prepared (have read the material) and engaged. You will learn a lot from each other, and I ask that you be generous with sharing your knowledge and experience with the class.
- 2. Weekly readings quizzes (15 points per quiz, 225 points possible):** You are responsible for completing weekly quizzes on Blackboard that help you with the assigned reading in our main text, Billings et al., and our case studies/articles. Our quizzes will be due every Monday by 2:59pm, and they open a week prior to their due date. The quizzes are open book, but they are timed, which means you need to be familiar with the chapter content so you can flip to that section of the textbook if you need help answering a question. Once the quizzes close on Blackboard, they will not be re-opened.
- 3. Blog set up/link submitted (10 points):** Create your blog using the platform of your choice. Be sure that it is named. Send the link to me at kvanders@gmu.edu.
- 4. Short paper on your understanding of Sport Communication (100 points):** You will write a 2-4 page paper on what sport communication is and how it applies to your interests, due **9/14 through Blackboard**. APA style is REQUIRED. If you are not proficient, find help from someone who is. This paper must have:
 - Title page ****This does not count in the 2-4 pages**
 - Section 1: Describe your understanding of sport communication from the readings (45 points)
 - At a minimum, you should cite (1) the Pederson et al. article from 2/2 and (2) our textbook, Billings et al. You are welcome to cite additional sources.
 - If your information in this section is guided closely by the readings, lecture, and class discussion, you will have no trouble answering this correctly.
 - Section 2: Applying sport communication to yourself (45 points)

- This section is all your original thoughts.
- This may include the benefits of learning about sport communication in your (future) career or social life and topics that especially interest you within the realm of sport communication (PR, fantasy sports, coaching, etc.). Anything is fair game.
- A references page citing all of your sources. At a minimum, you will have the textbook and the article. (10 points) **This does not count in the 2-4 pages

You will be graded on your thoughtfulness, your use of the readings, how well the paper is written, and correct format. Please do not turn in a paper that you have not proofread.

5. **Weekly blogging project (10 points per entry, 20 points per week, 240 points possible):** This is your main project for the semester. It will allow you to take your sport communication knowledge and put it into practice. **You may NOT combine this with an existing blog – it must be a new blog set up specifically for this assignment.** You may choose your blogging platform. I suggest Blogger because it is easy to use, but this is your choice. The blog must be set up and named by **9/14**. You will write two posts per week (posted between the end of the previous week's class and 2:59pm the following Monday), which should be 200-250 words each. Posts can be about anything sport-related; for example, sports news, a personal story, or your commentary on a game. I will check for these weekly and will be actively following your blog. Your posts will be graded based on the thoughtfulness of your work, the ability to relate your post to sport communication, and for the assigned length (200-250 words).
6. **Midterm Exam (50 points):** This exam will consist of 5 short answer questions that include concepts from your readings and from class from Weeks 1-6. This is an opportunity for you to make some connections and dazzle me with what you know. This exam is open book and open note and will be completed on Blackboard. The exam opens on 10/7 and closes at 2:59pm on **10/19**.
7. **Sport ad presentation (25 points):** Select an example of an advertisement that uses sport to sell a product. This may be an athlete endorsement, sport product, or anything else in advertising that uses sport, an athlete, sport imagery, and/or sport mythology. You may use any media – print, online, etc. You do not need to turn this in. You will give a **brief, informal** presentation to the class describing the ad, the message, and the effectiveness. The ad and presentation are due in class on **12/9**.
8. **Final Exam (50 points):** Like your midterm exam, this final exam will consist of 5 short answer questions that include concepts from your readings and from class over the entire semester. You will have the freedom to answer the questions in a way that draws on your knowledge from this class, other classes, and your own experience. This exam is open book and open note and will be completed on Blackboard. The exam opens on 12/2 and closes at **NOON on 12/14**.
9. **Term paper (200 points):** Your final paper will be a scholarly study of a sport communication topic of your choice. Your paper should be between 10-12 pages long (**not counting title, abstract, and references**). You may go longer if you would like to. The paper should be written in a formal tone using APA style throughout. This paper is due through Blackboard by 12:00pm (Noon) on **12/14**.

Your paper must include:

- Abstract (100-200 words max)
- Introduction
- Hypothesis or Research Question (i.e., what are you studying?)
- Literature Review (i.e., the actual research or what the readings said)
- Analysis (i.e., your take on the research and application, if appropriate)
- Conclusion
- References

This paper should answer a question that you feel is important to sport communication as a study. Examples of appropriate paper topics include, but are not limited to: an analysis of the portrayal of women in sport communication, a review of the evolution of sport communication, and case studies of positive and negative examples of sport communication. Remember, this is a sport communication paper, so your topic must relate to **communication and how it has been used in sport**.

You must use at least 10 sources as references in your paper. Use *quality* sources, such as textbooks, academic articles, and reputable newspaper articles. If you need help with where to find sources or whether a source is of acceptable quality, do not hesitate to ask me.

You will be graded on your thoughtfulness, your use of the readings, how well the paper is written, and correct format. Please do not turn in a paper that you have not proofread. There will be absolutely no late paper accepted.

Grading Scale (in %)

A = 94 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A- = 90 – 93	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE (*I reserve the right to alter the schedule as necessary*)

WEEK		ASSIGNMENT	ITEMS DUE ON WEEK LOSTED
1	M 8/31	Introduction/Defining Sport Communication Part 1	
	W 9/2	Defining Sport Communication Part 2	Read Billings Ch. 1
2	M 9/7	LABOR DAY – NO CLASS	
	W 9/9	Community in Sport Information Democracy in Sport	Read Billings Ch. 2 Read Pederson et. Al article (Bb>Articles) Read Clark article (Bb>Articles) Read Gay article (Bb>Articles) Quiz: Billings Ch. 2 and articles (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: Reading response on Bb Assignment: Blog set up/email link to kvanders@gmu.edu
3	M 9/14	Sports Media	Read Billings Ch. 3 Quiz: Billings Ch. 3 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 2 (Bb>Assessments) 2 blog posts Assignment: Short Paper submission (Bb>Assessments)
	W 9/16	Television Coverage of Men's and Women's Basketball	Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 2
4	M 9/21	Sports Fan Cultures	Read Billings Ch. 4 Quiz: Billings Ch. 4 and Brown & O'Rourke

WEEK		ASSIGNMENT	ITEMS DUE ON WEEK LOSTED
			Ch. 4 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 9/23	Team and City Identity	Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 4
5	M 9/28	Sports and Mythology	Read Billings Ch. 5 Quiz: Billings Ch. 5 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 10 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 9/30	NBA Draft as Ritual	Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 10
6	M 10/5	Gender in Sport	Read Billings Ch. 6 Quiz: Billings Ch. 6 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 3 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 10/7	Announcer Bias	<i>FYI: Your midterm exam opens today on Bb</i> Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 3
7	***T 10/13	COLUMBUS DAY – CLASS MEETS TUES Race and Ethnicity in Sport	Read Billings Ch. 7 Quiz: Billings Ch. 7 and articles (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 10/14	The Continuing Redskins Debate	Read Headbloom article (Bb>Articles) Read Jensen article (Bb>Articles) Read Connolly article (Bb>Articles)
8	M 10/19	Politics and Nationalism in Sport	Read Billings Ch. 8 Exam: Your midterm exam closes today at 2:59pm Quiz: Billings Ch. 8 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 6 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 10/21	Sport and Moral Controversy	Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 6
9	M 10/26	Performing Identity in Sport	Read Billings Ch. 9 Quiz: Billings Ch. 9 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 5 (Bb>Assessments) 2 blog posts
	W 10/28	Sport and Disability	Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 5
10	M 11/2	Sport Communication in Parent-Child Interactions	Read Billings Ch. 10 Quiz: Billings Ch. 10 and articles (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 11/4	Why Children Need Sports	Read Straight Talk article (Bb>Articles) Read Wallerson article (Bb>Articles)

WEEK		ASSIGNMENT	ITEMS DUE ON WEEK LOSTED
11	M 11/9	Player-Coach Relationships in Sports	Read Billings Ch. 11 Quiz: Billings Ch. 11 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 8 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 11/11	Coach Talk	Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 8
12	M 11/16	Small Groups/Teams in Sport	Read Billings Ch. 12 Quiz: Billings Ch. 12 and articles (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 11/18	Cohesion and the Meaning of Teams	Read Teehan article (Bb>Articles) Read Cox article (Bb>Articles) Read Clements article (Bb>Articles)
13	M 11/23	Crisis Communication in Sports Organizations	Read Billings Ch. 13 Quiz: Billings Ch. 13 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 11/25	THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)	Eat. Watch football. Eat.
14	M 11/30	Sports Gaming	Read Billings Ch. 15*** Quiz: Billings Ch. 15 and Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 1 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 12/2	Sport Apologia	<i>FYI: Your final exam opens today on Bb</i> Read Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 1
15	M 12/7	The Commodification of Sport	Read Billings Ch. 14*** Quiz: Billings Ch. 14 (Bb>Assessments) Assignment: 2 blog posts
	W 12/9	Examples of Commodification of Sport	Assignment: Sport ad presentation in class
16	M 12/14	NO CLASS	Exam: Your final exam closes today at NOON. Assignment: Term paper submission (Bb>Assessments) no later than NOON. NO LATE PAPERS. NO EXCUSES. NO JOKE.

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code-2/>]
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].

- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu/>].

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT: The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

