

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Sport Management

SPMT 430DL—Sport Communication
3 Credits, Spring 2020
Distance Learning
Duration: January 21, 2020 – May 10, 2020

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

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

University Catalog 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 Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online using a format via the Blackboard learning management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on January 17, 2020.

Under no circumstances, may students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Learner Outcomes or 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.

Professional Standards

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 |

Required Texts

Billings, A. C., Butterworth, M. L., & Turman, P. D. (2015). *Communication and sport: Surveying the field* (3rd 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.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time though Blackboard.

| Assignment | Due Date | Points Possible |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Weekly Billings readings quizzes on Blackboard | Every Sunday, 11:59pm (starting Week 2) | 150 |
| Weekly case studies/articles readings quizzes on Blackboard | Every Sunday, 11: 59pm (starting Week 2) | 55 |
| Blog set up with a title/link submitted to Blackboard (there is a quiz for it) | Sunday, 2/2, 11: 59pm | 10 |

| Assignment | Due Date | Points Possible |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Short paper on your understanding of Sport Communication | Sunday, 2/9, 11: 59pm | 100 |
| Weekly blogging project | Every Sunday, 11:59pm (starting Week 3) | 240 |
| Discussions and wiki assignments | Sundays, 11:59pm on weeks assigned | 361 |
| Midterm Exam – covers all material from Weeks 1-6 | Sunday, 3/22, 11: 59pm <i>This exam opens Week 6</i> | 50 |
| Sport advertisement discussion | Sunday, 5/3, 11: 59pm | 25 |
| Final Exam – covers all material from the semester | Sunday, 5/10, 11: 59pm <i>This exam opens Week 14</i> | 50 |
| Term paper | Sunday, 5/10, 11: 59pm | 200 |
| Total | | 1241 |

Assignments and Examinations

- Weekly Billings readings quizzes (10 points per quiz, 150 points possible):** You are responsible for completing weekly quizzes that help you with the assigned reading in our main text, Billings et al. These quizzes will be due every **Sunday by 11:59pm**. 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.
- Weekly case studies/articles readings quizzes (5 points per quiz, 55 points possible):** You are responsible for completing weekly quizzes on Blackboard that help you with the assigned reading in our case studies/articles. These quizzes will be due every **Sunday by 11:59pm**. The quizzes are open book, but they are timed, which means you need to be familiar with the content so you can flip to that section if you need help answering a question. Once the quizzes close on Blackboard, they will not be re-opened.
- Blog set up/link submitted (10 points):** Create your blog using the platform of your choice. I find Blogger to be simple to use if you are looking for an option. Be sure that it is named. Complete the quiz for it to submit the link. The quiz's only question is your blog link!
- 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 through Blackboard. APA style is REQUIRED. If you are not proficient, find help from someone who is. 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. 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 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**
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. You will write two posts per week (posted between 12:00am (midnight) on Monday and 11:59pm the following Sunday), 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. You do not need to submit anything on Blackboard or let me know what you've posted.** 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. **Discussions and wiki assignments (30 points each, 1 for intros, 361 points possible).** These assignments vary and are related to the content during the week. You should use these like you would a class discussion where you have an open mind and a willingness to play with ideas.
7. **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. It is not timed, and you can save and return to it.
8. **Sport ad discussion (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 video or image. You'll post this in a discussion.
9. **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. It is not timed, and you can save and return to it.
10. **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. 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 papers accepted.

Grading

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.

Grading Scale

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

Professional Dispositions

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

1. Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday at 11:59pm.
2. Log-in Frequency: You must actively check the course Blackboard site and your GMU email for communications from me, class discussions, and access to course materials at least once per week.
3. Participation: You are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.
4. Workload: Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. ***You are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates listed in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. It is your responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due. ***No late work will be accepted. It is your responsibility to keep up in this course and to use the syllabus provided.***
5. Written Assignments: Written assignments will be expected to demonstrate college-quality writing. All work will be assessed for content AND for presentation. Your assignments must clearly have been planned, researched, and proofread.
6. Format: Papers and projects submitted must be in proper, college-level form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance). Your content is obviously expected to be your best work. **Your work should be in APA format.** **A helpful online guide can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
7. Instructor Support: You may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content, or other course-related issues. Email me to schedule a one-on-one session and include your preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
8. 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.
9. 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!
10. Technical Competence: You are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. If you are struggling with technical components of the course, I expect you to seek assistance from me and/or College or University technical services as early-on as possible.
11. Technical Issues: You should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget your time accordingly. ***Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues. Start your submission well before the 11:59 pm deadline.***
12. Etiquette: The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Always re-read your responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. *Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words.* Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. I will also be respectful in all communications.
13. Accommodations: If you require effective accommodations to insure accessibility, you must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Class Schedule

| WEEK | TOPICS | ITEMS DUE BY SUNDAY, 11:59PM OF THAT WEEK |
|---------------|--|--|
| 1 – 1/21-1/26 | Course Overview Introduction Defining Sport Communication Cleveland Browns as an Example of Sport Communication | Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1 lectures • Browns Documentary Assignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction discussion post • Brown’s Documentary reflection |
| 2 – 1/27-2/2 | Community in Sport Information Democracy in Sport | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 1 and Ch. 2 • Pederson et al. article (Bb>Articles) • Clark article (Bb>Articles) • Gay article (Bb>Articles) Quizzes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 2 • Articles Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog set up/submit link through “quiz” in Blackboard |
| 3 – 2/3-2/9 | Sports Media Television Coverage of Men’s and Women’s Basketball | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 3 • Brown & O’Rourke Ch. 2 Quizzes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 3 • Brown & O’Rourke Ch. 2 Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Short Paper submission (Bb>Assessments) |
| 4 – 2/10-2/16 | Sports Fan Cultures Team and City Identity | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 4 • Brown & O’Rourke Ch. 4 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 4 • Brown & O’Rourke Ch. 4 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Discussion posts |
| 5 – 2/17-2/23 | Sports and Mythology NBA Draft as Ritual | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 5 • Brown & O’Rourke Ch. 10 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 5 • Brown & O’Rourke Ch. 10 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Myths and Rituals wikis |
| 6 – 2/24- | Gender in Sport | <i>FYI: Your midterm exam opens today on Bb</i> |

| WEEK | TOPICS | ITEMS DUE BY SUNDAY, 11:59PM OF THAT WEEK |
|-------------------|--|---|
| 3/1 | Announcer Bias | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 6 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 3 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 6 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 3 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Common Descriptors wiki |
| 7 - 3/2- 3/8 | Race and Ethnicity in Sport The Continuing Redskins Debate | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 7 • Headbloom article • Jensen article • Connolly article Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 7 • Articles Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Redskins discussion |
| 3/9-3/15 | SPRING BREAK | Have fun! |
| 8 – 3/16- 3/22 | Politics and Nationalism in Sport Sport and Moral Controversy | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 8 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 6 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 8 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 6 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Athletes and Politics discussion Exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your midterm exam closes today at 11:59pm |
| 9 – 3/23- 3/29 | Performing Identity in Sport Sport and Disability | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 9 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 5 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 9 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 5 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Skills wiki |

| WEEK | TOPICS | ITEMS DUE BY SUNDAY, 11:59PM OF THAT WEEK |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 10 – 3/30-4/5 | Sport Communication in Parent-Child Interactions Why Children Need Sports | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 10 • Straight Talk article • Wallerson article Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 10 • Articles Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Perfectionism and Motivation discussion |
| 11 – 4/6-4/12 | Player-Coach Relationships in Sports Coach Talk | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 11 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 8 • Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success (Bb>Articles) Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 11 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 8 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Coach talk wiki |
| 12 – 4/13-4/19 | Small Groups/Teams in Sport Communication Cultures Cohesion and the Meaning of Teams | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 12 • Teehan article • Cox article • Clements article Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 12 • Articles Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Cohesion discussion |
| 13 – 4/20-4/26 | Crisis Communication in Sports Organizations Sport Apologia | Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 13 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 1 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 13 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 1 Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Tiger Woods full-class discussion |
| 14 – 4/27-5/3 | Sports Gaming/Image and Name Use The Commodification of Sport | <i>FYI: Your final exam opens today on Bb</i> Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 14 • Billings Ch. 15 • Holthaus article |

| WEEK | TOPICS | ITEMS DUE BY SUNDAY, 11:59PM OF THAT WEEK |
|---------------|--------|--|
| | | Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 14 • Billings Ch. 15 Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 blog posts • Sport ad full-class discussion |
| 15 – 5/4-5/10 | | Exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final closes Sunday at 11:59pm. Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Term paper submission no later than 11:59pm. NO LATE PAPERS. |

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary, with notification to students.

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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>)
- 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 Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Religious Holidays - A list of religious holidays is available on the University Life Calendar page (<http://ulife.gmu.edu/calendar/religious-holiday-calendar/>). Any student whose

religious observance conflicts with a scheduled course activity must contact the Instructor at least 2 weeks in advance of the conflict date in order to make alternative arrangements.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://coursessupport.gmu.edu/>.
- The Writing Center 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/>).
- The 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 Student Support & Advocacy Center staff helps students develop and maintain healthy lifestyles through confidential one-on-one support as well as through interactive programs and resources. Some of the topics they address are healthy relationships, stress management, nutrition, sexual assault, drug and alcohol use, and sexual health (see <http://ssac.gmu.edu/>). Students in need of these services may contact the office by phone at 703-993-3686. Concerned students, faculty and staff may also make a referral to express concern for the safety or well-being of a Mason student or the community by going to <http://ssac.gmu.edu/make-a-referral/>.
- Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:
- As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu/>.