

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Sport Management

SPMT 430.003– Sport Communication
3 Credits, Fall 2021
MW 10:30 – 11:45a Distance Learning

Faculty

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Prerequisites/Corequisites

General COMM course (recommended).

University Catalog Course Description

Provides a senior-level exploration of the role of sport communication in contemporary cultures. Readings and discussions 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. Offered by School of Sport/Rec/Tour Mgmt. Limited to three attempts.

Course Overview

Not Applicable

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using a synchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available on Monday, August 23, 2021.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/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.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#supported-browsers

To get a list of supported operation systems on different devices see:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Getting_Started/Browser_Support#tested-devices-and-operating-systems

- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students will need a headset microphone for use with the Blackboard Collaborate web conferencing tool.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - Windows Media Player:
<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week:
Our course week will begin on the day that our synchronous meetings take place as indicated on the Schedule of Classes.
- Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 2 times per week. In addition, students must log-in for all scheduled online synchronous meetings.
- Participation:
Students 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.
- Technical Competence:
Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.
- Technical Issues:
Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

- Workload:
Please be aware that this course is **not** self-paced. Students are expected to meet *specific deadlines* and *due dates* listed in the **Class Schedule** section of this syllabus. It is the student’s responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.
- Instructor Support:
Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.
- Netiquette:
The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their 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. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.
- Accommodations:
Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

Learner Outcomes or Objectives

This course is designed to enable students to do the following:

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 [Commission of Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA)]

Upon completion of this course, students will have met the following professional standards:

Principle 3.2: Common Professional Component

According to COSMA (2016, p. 12):

Excellence in sport management education at the undergraduate level requires coverage of the key content areas of sport management – the Common Professional Component (CPC). The CPC topic areas . . . should be adequately covered within the content of undergraduate sport management programs. Evaluation of the “balance” within the sub-areas is based on the sport management academic unit’s mission to allow maximum flexibility.

Regarding sport communication, it “includes fostering two-way communication with key stakeholders. Such communications include, but are not limited to: social media, all aspects of media guides, press releases,

websites, statistical archives, record keeping and game-day obligations” (p. 13).

For more information, please see:

Commission of Sport Management Accreditation. (2016, May). *Accreditation principles manual & guidelines for self-study preparation*. Retrieved November 30, 2016 from <http://www.cosmaweb.org/accreditation-manuals.html>

Required Texts

Billings, A. C., & Butterworth, M. L. (2018). *Communication and sport: Surveying the field* (4th ed.). Sage.

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

Hacker, D., & Sommers, N. (2018). *A pocket style manual: APA edition* (8th ed.). Bedford/St. Martin's.
[recommended text]

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 in the manner outlined by the instructor (e.g., Blackboard, VIA, hard copy).

- **Assignments and/or Examinations**

Grades will be assigned on the basis of two tests, both at 20%; an in-class or Kaltura Media Capture presentation based on one of the discussion units at 20%; a Kaltura Media Capture discussion of a contemporary sport-related topic weighted at 15%; and a final term paper/project makes up the remaining 25%. You will be notified about any additional readings. Specific guidelines pertaining to presentation and paper content will be provided.

- **Other Requirements**

- **Participation.** Attendance and punctuality are essential for success in this class. Much 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 present a project or complete an assignment. Students who arrive late or leave early will be counted as absent. Some absences may be excused provided prior arrangement is made with me. 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 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.
- **Written Assignments.** Written assignments will be expected to demonstrate college-quality writing. In-class writing will not be stringently evaluated, but ALL work prepared outside of class (papers) will be assessed for content AND for presentation. While a variety of qualities

may pass for “college level,” at a minimum it means writing is appropriately concise and clear; words are properly spelled; punctuation is appropriate; sentences are complete; and subject/verb, pronoun/antecedent agree.

- Papers submitted to the instructor must be typed, and attention should be paid to form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance) as well as to content. Use standard APA documentation consistently.
- Papers/abstracts/written assignments not turned in on the specified day will be given a grade lower than the one deserved. For example, an “A” assignment submitted late will be given a grade of “B.” No written work will be accepted later than one week after it is due.
- **Honor Policy.** George Mason University takes its honor policy quite seriously. Examinations, papers, and other assignments must be your own work (except where you hire a typist or proofreader) with only the exception of group projects.
- **Plagiarism** is representing another’s work as your own or recycling your work and representing earlier work as new work. 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, may result in failing the course and a report to the honor committee.

● **Grading**

Final grades and individual assignments will be recorded with “plus/minus” letter grade annotations. You can use the table below to do your own grade calculation. Convert letter grades to numerical equivalents using this scale: A=10, A-=9, B+=8, B=7, B-=6, C+=5, C=4, C-=3, D=2, F=1. Multiply the numerical equivalent by the weight to get the weighted value. Add the weighted values and use the conversion scale to convert the total back to a letter grade. (Note: No credit towards graduation accrues from a failing grade or from a grade that is replaced by a retaken course. For more information, please consult the current edition of the university catalog.)

	Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Weight	Weighted Value
Test 1			.20	
Test 2			.20	
Unit Discussion Presentation: a solo or group-led discussion of an assigned class reading. Minimal of 1 pp. overview to be distributed to class; choice of presentation method; evaluated on introduction, body, conclusion; must invite class participation.			.20	
Solo/Group/Team Discussion: an oral critique/analysis of a			.15	

	Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent	Weight	Weighted Value
current sport-related topic/controversy/concern				
Term Paper/Project: solo or group paper on a sport communication-based topic with an argumentative point of view; typed, double spaced with 12 Times News Roman font; must include an introduction/justification/thesis, mini review of literature, body/analysis, and conclusion.			.25	
TOTAL				

Grading Scale

A = 10.0-9.5	B+ = 8.9-8.0	C+ = 5.9-5.0	D = 2.9-2.0
A- = 9.49-9.0	B = 7.9-7.0	C = 4.9-4.0	F = 1.9-0.0
	B- = 6.9-6.0	C- = 3.9-3.0	

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Class Schedule

Date		Assignment	Reading
August	23	Introduction to sport communication; defining sport communication	<i>Sports on the Silver Screen</i> (Bb Course Content)
	25	Defining sport communication	Billings et al., chapter 1; Pedersen et al. (Bb); <i>Sports on the Silver Screen</i> (Bb Course Content)

Date		Assignment	Reading
	30	Defining sport communication	Billings et al., chapter 1; Pedersen et al. (Bb)
September	1	Community in sports	Billings et al., chapter 2
	6	LABOR DAY—NO CLASS	
	8	Mediating sport; Sports fans culture	Brookes (Bb); Billings et al., chapter 4
	13	Gendered media coverage of sport; gender in sport	Billings et al., chapter 6; Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 2, chapter 3
	15	Gendered media coverage of sport; gender in sport	Billings et al., chapter 6; Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 2, chapter 3
	20	Communication and the move of a sports franchise	Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 4
	22	Communication and the move of a sports franchise	Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 4
	27	Video: <i>Bleeding orange and brown</i>	Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 4
	29	Video: <i>Bleeding orange and brown</i>	Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 4
October	4	TEST 1	
	6	Sacred Saturdays*	Steffensmeier (Bb)
	11	FALL BREAK—NO CLASS (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)	
	12	Sport and personalities: CoachSpeak*	Brown & O'Rourke, chapter 8
	13	Sport and personalities: Player-as-NASCAR driver?*	Hugenberg & Hugenberg (Bb)
	18	Sport and personalities: Player-as-hero*	Vande Berg (<i>MediaSport</i> , Bb)
	20	Race, media, and sport; race and ethnicity in sport*	Rodgers & Drogin Rodgers (Bb); Davis & Harris (<i>MediaSport</i> , Bb); Billings et al., chapter 7
	25	Race, media, and sport; race and ethnicity in sport*; Sport and the media marketplace*	Rodgers & Drogin Rodgers (Bb); Davis & Harris (<i>MediaSport</i> , Bb); Billings et al., chapter 7; Bellamy (<i>MediaSport</i> , Bb)
November	1	Violence and media sports*	Bryant, Zillman, & Raney (<i>MediaSport</i> , Bb)

Date	Assignment	Reading
3	Erotic gaze in the NFL Draft*	Oates (Bb)
8	TBA	
10	Athletes and mediated image: Billie Jean King, George Foreman; crisis communication in sports organizations*	Nelson (Bb); Billings et al., chapter 12; Engen (Bb)
15	TBA	
17	Athletes and mediated image: Billie Jean King, George Foreman; crisis communication in sports organizations*; FINAL PREPARATION OF CASE STUDIES	Nelson (Bb); Billings et al., chapter 12; Engen (Bb)
22	FINAL PREPARATION OF CASE STUDIES	
24	THANKSGIVING BREAK (NO CLASS)	
29	FINAL PREPARATION OF CASE STUDIES	
December 1	ORAL PRESENTATION OF CASE STUDIES; CASE STUDIES DUE	
8	TEST 2 (WEDNESDAY) 10:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	

Chapters marked with an * are solo/group-led presentations.

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://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

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/students/>.

Additional Course Readings

Other required readings should soon be available via Blackboard. Print versions *may* be available at the circulation desk. Ebook versions may also be available; check book listings at library.gmu.edu. Here are the citations:

- Bellamy, R. V., Jr. (1998). The evolving television sports marketplace. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 73-87). Routledge.
- Boyd, T. (1997). The day the Niggaz took over: Basketball, commodity culture, and Black masculinity. In A. Baker & T. Boyd (Eds.), *Out of bounds: Sports, media, and the politics of identity* (pp 123-142). Indiana University Press.
- Brookes, R. (2002). Mediating sport. In R. Brookes, *Representing sport* (pp. 19-48). Oxford University Press.
- Bryant, J., Zillman, D., & Raney, A. A. (1998). Violence and the enjoyment of media sports. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 252-265). Routledge.

- Butterworth, M. L. (2007). Race in “the race”: Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa, and heroic construction of whiteness. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 24(3), 228-244.
- Congalton, K. J. (2009). Competitive eating as sport: A simple recipe for everyone. In Barry Brummett (Ed.), *Sporting rhetoric: Performance, games and politics* (pp. 175-195). Peter Lang.
- Davis, L. R., & Harris, O. (1998). Race and ethnicity in US sports media. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 154-169). Routledge.
- Engen, D. E. (1995). The making of a people’s champion: An analysis of media representations of George Foreman. *Southern Communication Journal*, 60, 141-151.
- Harrison, K., & Fredrickson, B. L. (2003). Women's sports media, self-objectification, and mental health in Black and White adolescent females. *Journal of Communication*, 53(2), 216-232.
- Hugenberg, B. S., & Hugenberg, L. W. (2006). The NASCAR fan as emotional stakeholder: Changing the sport, changing the fan culture. In J. A. Vlasich (Ed.), *Horsehide, pigskin, oval tracks and apple pie: Essays on sports and American culture* (pp. 166-179). McFarland.
- Hutchins, B. (2011). The acceleration of media sport culture. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14 (2), 237- 257.
- Kassing, J. W., Billings, A. C., Brown, R. S., Halone, K. K., Harrison, K., Krizek, B., Mean, L. J., & Turman, P. D. (2004). Communication in the community of sport: The process of enacting, (re)producing, consuming, and organizing sport. *Communication Yearbook*, 28, 372-408.
- Matthews, G. (1995). Epideictic rhetoric and baseball: Nurturing community through controversy. *Southern Communication Journal*, 60, 275-291.
- McDaniel, S. R., & Sullivan, C. B. (1998). Extending the sports experience: Mediations in cyberspace. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 266-281). Routledge.
- Meân, L. J., & Halone, K. K. (2010). Sport, language, and culture: Issues and intersections. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 29(3), 253-260.
- Nelson, J. (1984). The defense of Billie Jean King. *Western Journal of Speech Communication*, 48, 92-102.
- Oates, T. P. (2007). The erotic gaze in the NFL Draft. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 4(1), 74-90.
- Pedersen, P. M., Laucella, P. C., Miloch, K. S., & Fielding, L. W. (2007). The juxtaposition of sport and communication: Defining the field of sport communication. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 2(3), 193-207.
- Rodgers, R. P., & Drogin Rodgers, E. B. (2006). “Ghetto Cinderellas”: Venus and Serena Williams and the discourse of racism. In D. K. Wiggins (Ed.), *Out of the shadows: A biographical history of African American athletes* (pp. 353-371, 423-428). The University of Arkansas Press.

- Steffensmeier, T. R. (2009). Sacred Saturdays: College football and local identity. In B. Brummett (Ed.), *Sporting rhetoric: Performance, games and politics* (pp. 218-234). Peter Lang.
- Vande Berg, L. R. (1998). The sports hero meets mediated celebrityhood. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 134-153). Routledge.
- Wenner, L. A., & Ganz, W. (1998). Watching sports on television: Audience experience, gender, fanship, and marriage. In L. A. Wenner (Ed.), *MediaSport* (pp. 233-251). Routledge.