

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
Sport Management

SPMT 430—Sport Communication
3 credit hours, Spring 2024
Duration: January 16, 2024 – May 2, 2024
Tuesday/Thursday (T/R) 3:00-4:15pm in Planetary Hall 127

Faculty

Name: Dr. Kelly Morgan
Office Hours: By Appointment
Email Address: kvanders@gmu.edu

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 Delivery Method

This course will be delivered through in-person lectures as well contain content online 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 15, 2024**.

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/accreditationmanuals.html>

Required Texts

Billings, A. C. & Butterworth, M. L. (2021). *Communication and sport: Surveying the field* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 9781544393148

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 through Blackboard.

Assignment	Points Possible
Weekly Billings readings quizzes on Blackboard	150
Weekly case studies/articles readings quizzes on Blackboard	55
Blog set up with a title/link submitted to Blackboard (there is a quiz for it)	10
Short paper on your understanding of Sport Communication	100
Weekly blogging project	240

Assignment	Points Possible
Sport advertisement presentation	25
Term paper	200
Total	780

Assignments and Examinations

1. **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 **Tuesdays by 2:59pm**. 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.
2. **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 **Tuesdays by 2:59pm**. 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.
3. **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!
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 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 (20 points per week, 240 points possible):** This 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 one post per week, due on **Thursdays by 2:59pm**, 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. **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 video or image. You'll show us this in class.
7. **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
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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

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

1. **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.***
2. **Your work should be in APA format:** A helpful online guide can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
3. **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.
4. **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 deadline.*

Class Schedule

WEEK/ DAY	TOPICS	ITEMS DUE
1- T - 1/16	Course Overview Introduction Defining Sport Communication	
1- Th - 1/18	Cleveland Browns as an Example of Sport Communication	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 1

WEEK/ DAY	TOPICS	ITEMS DUE
2 - T - 1/23	Community in Sport	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings 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 • Pederson, Clark, Gay Articles
2 - Th - 1/25	Information Democracy in Sport	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog set up/submit link through “quiz” in Blackboard
3 - T - 1/30	Sports Media	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
3 -Th - 2/1	Television Coverage of Men’s and Women’s Basketball	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post • Short Paper submission (Bb>Assessments)
4 -T - 2/6	Sports Fan Cultures	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
4 -Th - 2/8	Team and City Identity	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
5 -T - 2/13	Sports and Mythology	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
5 -Th - 2/15	NBA Draft as Ritual	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
6 -T - 2/20	Gender in Sport	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

WEEK/ DAY	TOPICS	ITEMS DUE
6 -Th - 2/22	Announcer Bias	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
7 - T - 2/27	Race and Ethnicity in Sport	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 7 • Headbloom article • Connolly article Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 7 • Headbloom and Connelly Articles
7 - Th - 2/29	The Continuing Team Name Debate	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
3/4-3/10	Spring Break!	Have a lot of fun ☺
8 - T - 3/12	Politics and Nationalism in Sport	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
8 - Th - 3/14	Sport and Moral Controversy	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
9 - T - 3/19	Performing Identity in Sport	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 •
9 - Th - 3/21	Sport and Disability	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
10 - T - 3/26	Interpersonal Communication in Sport	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 10 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 8 • Straight Talk article • Wallerson article • Coach Wooden's Pyramid of Success (Bb>Articles) Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 10 • Straight Talk, Wallerson, Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 8

WEEK/ DAY	TOPICS	ITEMS DUE
10 - Th - 3/28	Why Children Need Sports	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
11 - T - 4/2	Small Groups/Teams in Sport Communication Cultures	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 11 • Teehan article • Cox article • Clements article Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 11 • Teehan, Cox, and Clements Articles
11 - Th - 4/4	Cohesion and the Meaning of Teams	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
12 - T - 4/9	Crisis Communication in Sports Organizations	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 12 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 1 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 12 • Brown & O'Rourke Ch. 1
12 - Th - 4/11	Sport Apologia	Assignment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post
13 - T - 4/16	The Commodification of Sport Image and Name Use	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 13 • NIL article Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 13
13 - Th - 4/18	Sport Ad Examples	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post • Sport ad presentation
14 - T - 4/23	Sports Gaming	Reading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 14 Quiz: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Billings Ch. 14
14 - Th - 4/25	NO CLASS MEETING	Assignments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog post • Work on your term paper
15 – 4/30-5/2	Finals Period NO CLASS MEETING	Due Thursday, 5/2 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, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking: As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Non-Confidential Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures 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/>.