The University of Iowa  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Department of Journalism and Mass Communication

Specialized Reporting and Writing: Sports Reporting and Writing / 019:120:003  
Spring 2012

Policies relating to this course are governed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

Building/time: AJB Room W340, Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-11:20 a.m.  
Website: ICON

Instructor: Dave Schwartz  
Office location and hours: Tuesdays 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; Wednesdays 11 a.m.-noon, AJB Room E346B. And by appointment.  
Phone: 335-3318  
Email address: david-schwartz@uiowa.edu  
DEO: David Perlmutter (AJB, Room E305B)  
Tumblr info:  
   Email: david-schwartz@uiowa.edu  
   Password: uisportswriting  
   URL: sportsmediaproject.tumblr.com

Description of Course  
This writing-intensive course helps students focus their skills by exploring sports writing, social networking and self-marketing online and in print. Using different story forms – web, magazine, narrative, blogs, etc. – students will learn how to write human-interest and socially significant stories, embrace the freedom and responsibilities of web journalism, and survive in a genre increasingly driven by rapid interaction with its audience. Students will survey all storylines of modern sports communications, including sports business, sports and crime, sports marketing, the evolution of nationally driven stories, and sports celebrity as cultural phenomenon. You will be critiqued by the instructor and each other. Expect to read the work of sports media’s past and present greats, and come ready to discuss and debate current events.

Objectives and Goals of the Course  
To learn how to function as a sports journalist in 2012 and beyond. Acquire basic, intermediate and advanced sports writing skills in terms of news gathering, writing and online incorporation. To improve your writing, interviewing and reporting skills. Using the basis that the way to learn to write and report is to write, report and read, expect this term to write and read at great length. You also will learn how to use current technologies to reach, communicate with and increase your audience.
Required Texts
• Entrepreneurial Journalism (available at IMU Bookstore)
• Those Guys Have All the Fun (available at IMU Bookstore)
• God Save the Fan (available at IMU Bookstore)

Recommended Text
• The Associated Press Stylebook
• Amusing Ourselves to Death (on Amazon)

All remaining texts ...

… On reserve on the class website, or as assigned from online sources.

Grading System and the Use of +/-
*Please note that the grade of A+ is very rarely given in this course and only in extraordinary situations.*

Assignments and Percentage of Final Grade
*Final grades are based out of 947 possible points, broken down as follow:*

300 Writings and stories (See Iowa Dozen – included – for standards)
• 75 - Feature story. 75 points – Feb. 2/9
• 75 - Narrative. 75 points – Feb. 21/23
• 50 - Game story. 50 points – March 8
• 30 - Bubba spot-news story. 30 points – March 29 (during class)
• 20 - First-person essay. 20 points – April 19 (during class; cannot be made up)
• 50 - Column. 50 points – April 24/26

165 Quizzes
11 scheduled at 15 points apiece. The instructor reserves the right to reduce or increase the total number of quizzes given this semester.

112 Tumblr Sports Media Project
Beginning the week of Jan. 23, each person in the class will update our Tumblr twice a week. That means, in theory, we’ll have 38 updates a week. Please keep in mind blog use by sports-media consumers drops significantly on weekends; there is little use in our Tumblr shooting out 38 posts on Sunday night at 11:50 p.m.

The direction of your blog entries as it relates to the analysis and criticism of sports media is entirely your decision, although I might from time to time “suggest” a post. The general focus will be creating content for events related sports media (e.g. “I don’t understand how the NCAA can let Texas’ news sports network be in bed with ESPN. It causes the following problems XYZ.” This is not the place for sports-bar talk: “I think the Bulls are better than the Heat.”)
a. Acceptable blog posts and comments: Tactful; educational; professionally argumentative; a couple of grafs in length to as long as you want to write; varying in length over the course of the semester
b. Unacceptable blog posts and comments: Personal attacks; demeaning comments; comments of a hurtful or harassing nature; comments that attack a person’s gender, race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnicity; comments that violate UI policies and procedures
c. Every time you update your blog – and I mean every time – shoot me an email saying it’s been updated and include the URL of the POST (not the blog). This is the best way for me to know whether you’re keeping up

170 Class participation
70 points (35 points apiece) for leading two discussions based on assigned readings. Some readings require a student need only to sign up for one. (*)
100 points for being engaged consistently in classroom discussions. That means …

Participate in daily discussions. … When you’re in the classroom, be in the classroom. … Engage in daily current-event discussions as well as those born from the reading. … Use social media to promote your classmates’ Tumblr posts. … Come prepared with questions for guest speakers, if applicable. You can learn more from them in 30–45 minutes than in a week’s worth of class. … A ringing cell phone amounts to a one-point class-participation deduction for each person in the class who hears it. There are about 20 people in the classroom. If your phone rings, that’s at least 20 points off, which is almost 2 percent of your final grade. … Text message at your own risk.

Requirement for leading discussions:

• At least 24 hours before class begins, e-mail me five study questions for your assigned reading, which I will forward to the class. I will do my best to remember to remind you. It is, however, ultimately your responsibility to remember which date and assignments you signed up for. If you select a reading with an asterisk (*) next to it, send me 10 questions instead of five.

200 Final project: Plan, market and launch your own sports blog
You pick the platform. You pick the content. You launch your site – a sports blog based on your sports interests. We’ll be talking about this throughout the semester. Please note important dates throughout the syllabus.

The version of your blog that will be graded is how it looks and feels on Wednesday of finals week at noon. By this point, you will need to have your site full of compelling content and open to interaction and community building.

Again, we will talk extensively about this throughout the semester.
Course Policies

Course attendance and timeliness
Except in cases of death in the family, illness serious enough to keep you home, or other genuine emergencies or crises, you are expected to attend all class meetings. If you have a valid reason for an absence, notify the instructor by e-mail ahead of time, and provide relevant documentation. Missing classes greatly reduces your opportunity for scoring an above-average grade in the course. Showing up late to class corrupts discussions and the general flow of things.

Participation in class discussions
This is essential both to the function of the class and to your final grade. In addition to discussing current events and readings, students will break into groups to exchange, discuss and critique stories they have written. Open mouth. Talk.

Timely completion of assignments
Except in cases of death in the family, illness serious enough to keep you home, or other genuine emergencies or crises, you are expected to complete all assignments as scheduled. If you have a valid reason for not completing something on time, notify the instructor by e-mail ahead of time, and provide relevant documentation.

Confirmed guest speakers
Dates to follow
Wayne Dreh, senior writer, ESPN.com
Will Leitch, New York Magazine and founder of Deadspin
Stephen Spiewak, CBS MaxPreps.com
Nick Pietruszkiewicz, Page 1 editor, ESPN.com
Dan Parr, NFC South and Bears reporter, Pro Football Weekly
Scott Miller, senior researcher, ESPN The Magazine

Calendar of Course Assignments
(subject to change)

WEEK ONE
Tuesday, Jan. 17
• Introductions
• Class expectations
• Your expectations
• Tumblr introduction
• READING (in class): Gisondi, Chapter 1, From Sports Fan to Sports Reporter (ICON, content)
• READING (in class): The Ultimate Assist. L. Jon Wertheim (ICON, links)
Thursday, Jan. 19
• Discussion of final projects
• In-class QUIZ: On Briggs preface-chapter 2
• READING (in class): Richard Deitsch, *And Now a Few Words on First Take*, Sports Illustrated
• FEATURE STORIES: An introduction

WEEK TWO
Tuesday, Jan. 24
• Interviewing exercise #1
• READING: Jason Fagone, *The Dirtiest Player*. *GQ*. (ICON, links, WEEK 2)
• READING: Michael Weinreb, *Bo Knows Best*, ESPN.com. (ICON, links, WEEK 2)
• DUE: Bring two examples to class of blogs you admire or would like to emulate

Thursday, Jan. 26
• READING: Chapters 4-5, *Entrepreneurial Journalism*, Briggs.
• In-class QUIZ: On Briggs chapters 4-5
• READING: Introduction only, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*, Miller and Shales

WEEK THREE
Tuesday, Jan. 31
• READING: Wright Thompson, *Father Bear*, ESPN.com. (ICON, links, Week 3)
• READING: Wright Thompson, *Shadow Boxing*, ESPN.com. (ICON, links, Week 3)
• IN-REVIEW: Feature stories
• Interviewing Exercise #2

Thursday, Feb. 2 – NO CLASS
• READING: Chapters 7-8, *Entrepreneurial Journalism*, Briggs.
• QUIZ (can be taken at home during class time): On Briggs chapters 7-8
• DUE FOR WORKSHOPPING: Feature story
• In-class writing exercise #1

WEEK FOUR
Tuesday, Feb. 7
• READING: Bill Simmons, *Now that Jocks Talk to Us Directly, Press is Boxed Out*, *ESPN The Magazine* (ICON, links, Week 4)
• READING: Chapter 1, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*, Miller and Shales
• In-class QUIZ: Chapter 1, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*
Thursday, Feb. 9
• Interviewing exercise #2
• READING: Wayne Drehs, *Ray of Hope*, ESPN.com. ON RESERVE (ICON, links, Week 4)
• READING, etc.: Wayne Drehs, *Charlie Wittmack: The World Triathlon*, ESPN.com. (ICON, links, Week 4)
• DUE FOR ASSIGNMENT: Feature story

WEEK FIVE
Tuesday, Feb. 14
• READING: Chapter 2, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*, Miller and Shales
• In-class QUIZ: Chapter 2, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*
• DISCUSSION: The Narrative
• In-class writing exercise #2

Thursday, Feb. 16
• PODCAST (in-class): Bill Simmons and John Walsh, ESPN.com
• IN-REVIEW: Narratives
• DUE: Bring in a couple of ideas for your final project – what you might want your blog to focus on. This is not due in ICON, just bring it to class for us to discuss

WEEK SIX
Tuesday, Feb. 21
• DUE FOR WORKSHOPING: Narrative: Must be an athlete, coach, mascot, or member of a spirit organization from a UI varsity or club team

Thursday, Feb. 23
• READING: Chapter 3, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*, Miller and Shales
• In-class QUIZ: Chapter 3, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*
• DUE FOR ASSIGNMENT: Narrative: Must be an athlete, coach, mascot, or member of a spirit organization from a UI varsity or club team
• WORK DAY (in-class): For your final project
WEEK SEVEN
Tuesday, Feb. 28
• READING: Chapters 3 and 6, *Entrepreneurial Journalism*, Briggs.
• DISCUSSION: Story evolutions and final projects

Thursday, March 1
• READING: Chapter 4, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*, Miller and Shales
• In-class QUIZ: Chapter 4, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*
• GAME STORIES: An introduction

WEEK EIGHT
Tuesday, March 6
• READING: Chapter 5, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*, Miller and Shales
• In-class QUIZ: Chapter 5, *Those Guys Have All the Fun*
• IN-REVIEW: Game stories
• WORK DAY (in-class): For your final project

Thursday, March 8
• DUE in-class: Game stories
• DUE (before class, uploaded to ICON): Detailed outline of final project. Should include:
  Your blog’s focus (One strong paragraph)
  Which platform, and why?
  Elements you intend to include
  Networking plans
  What will be live on soft launch?
  What will be live on announced launch?
  Sustainability outlook: why? Site examples. Income opportunities? Audition?

SPRING BREAK

WEEK NINE
Tuesday, March 20
• READING: Pages 149-190, *God Save the Fan*, Leitch
• In-class QUIZ: Pages 149-190, *God Save the Fan*
• Discussion: Story evolution
• WORK DAY (in-class): For your final project

Thursday, March 22
• READING: Jeanne Marie Laskas, *Game Brain, The Best American Sports Writing 2010*. (ICON, links, Week 9)
• READING: Robert Sanchez, *This is Ted Johnson’s Brain, The Best American Sports Writing 2010*. (ICON, links, Week 9)
• READING: David Haugh, *The Final Days of Dave Duerson, Chicago Tribune* (ICON, links, Week 9)
WEEK 10
Tuesday, March 27
• READING: Pages 191-196, God Save the Fan, Leitch
• READING: Gabriel Sherman, The Worldwide Leader in Dong Shots, GQ (ICON, links, Week 10)
• In-class QUIZ: Daulerio/Deadspin
• PODCAST (in-class): Jason Whitlock and A.J. Daulerio

Thursday, March 29
DUE (in-class): Bubba Story.

WEEK 11
Tuesday, April 3
• READING: Matthew Teague, Inside the Mind of a … Genius?, Philadelphia Magazine. (ICON, links, Week 11)
• WORK DAY (in-class): For your final project

Thursday, April 5
• READING: Pages 207-210, God Save the Fan, Leitch
• READING: Will Leitch, The Impossible, Inevitable Redemption of Michael Vick, GQ, 2011. (ICON, links, Week 11)
• READING: Mike Sager, Scito Hoc Super Omnia (or, Kobe Bryant Doesn’t Want Your Love), The Best American Sports Writing of 2008 (ICON, links, Week 11)

WEEK 12
Tuesday, April 10
• READING: Mike Freeman, Can’t We Cut Your Good-Bye from 45 Seconds to 30?, from ESPN: The Uncensored History (ICON, content)
• DISCUSSION: Our media Tumblr
• DISCUSSION: Story evolution

Thursday, April 12
• READING: Charles Robinson, Renegade Miami football booster spells out illicit benefits to players, Yahoo! Sports, 2011 (ICON, links, Week 12)
• READING: Dan Wetzel, Miami Scandal is Symptom of NCAA flaws, Yahoo! Sports, 2011 (ICON, links, Week 12)
• READING: Tommy Craggs, My Correspondence With Yahoo!’s Charles Robinson, Deadspin. (ICON, links, Week 12)
• INTRO: Column writing
WEEK 13
Tuesday, April 17
• DISCUSSION: Column writing
• READING: Reinardy and Wanta, pages 157-165 (ICON, content)
• READING (in-class): Columns TBD

Thursday, April 19
• READING: Rick Reilly, Taking One for the Team, Sports Illustrated, 2003 (ICON, links, Week 13)
• READING: Rick Reilly, Take Your Pick, ESPN.com, 2011 (ICON, links, Week 13)
• READING: John Canzano, A Lonely Olympics Experience, The Oregonian, 2008 (ICON, links, Week 13)
• READING: Eric Neel, The Saturday Game. The Best American Sports Writing 2007. (ICON, links, Week 13)
• In-class exercise

WEEK 14
Tuesday, April 24
• THE DECISION: Examining the media’s pursuit of LeBron James’ summer free agency.
• READING: Lisa Taddeo, LeBron James: Rise of the Super Athlete (ICON, links, Week 14)
• READING: Pages 740-745, Those Guys Have All the Fun, Miller and Shales
• READING: Buzz Bissinger, LeBron James, the Most Hated Athlete in America, Daily Beast, 2011 (ICON, links, Week 14)
• In-class QUIZ: LeBron readings
• DUE FOR WORKSHOPPING: Column on current topic from event or regional/national discussion that became news April 21 or later.

Thursday, April 26 – NO CLASS
• DUE FOR ASSIGNMENT (ICON, before 11:20 a.m.): Your column, revised.

WEEK 15
Tuesday, May 1
• WORK DAY: Getting your site ready for hard launch

Thursday, May 3
• READING: Chris Jones, The Things We Forget, ESPN The Magazine, 2008 – READ AT LEAST FOUR PARTS; YOU DON’T HAVE TO READ THEM ALL (ICON, links, Week 15)
• Course evaluations
• WORK DAY: Getting your site ready for hard launch
WEEK 16: FINALS WEEK, May 7-11

*** Final projects will be evaluated starting Wednesday, May 9 AT NOON. Blog URL emailed to me BY NOON or the assignment grade starts to drop.***

About your instructor
Prior to joining the UI in 2007, David Schwartz was a national leader in digital sports media innovation. He served as managing editor for news and photography for Shaw Suburban Media in Chicago, overseeing the news operations for three websites and two daily newspapers. Previous to that he was sports editor for three years, including 2007, when the Northwest Herald was one of nine news publications in the country to be named Top 10 nationally for daily coverage, Sunday coverage, and coverage in a special section. As editor of McHenryCountySports.com, he increased unique visitors by more than 120 percent in one year and later went on to present his work at the APSE national convention, where sports editors from the L.A. Times, Washington Post, Dallas Morning News and other publications attended Schwartz’s sessions to learn about online prep sports innovation.

Prior to becoming an editor, Schwartz was a beat writer in Chicago covering Major League Baseball, college football and basketball, and high schools, and he provided coverage in a supporting role for the NBA, NHL, NFL and PGA.

Schwartz earned his B.A. from the University of Iowa and his M.S. from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism. He held internships at the Dallas Morning News, Arizona Republic and Chicago Tribune and worked part time at The Washington Post before landing his first job at The Sporting News, where he worked as an editor for the publication’s weekly and annual publications as well as its fledgling online coverage. His current position at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication includes overseeing all of the school’s scholastic outreach efforts, including the Iowa High School Press Association, Iowa Summer Journalism Workshops, the Iowa Journalism Academies, and serving as the school’s liaison to UI Admissions. He is president of the board of directors for the Iowa Center for Public Affairs Journalism and is a contributor to Iowa City Patch and the Huffington Post.

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The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Policies and Procedures

Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be
addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the Academic Handbook. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml

Academic Fraud
Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and Services who enforces the appropriate consequences. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor and the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/ix.shtml#5

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should register with Student Disability Services and meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. For more information, visit this site: www.uiowa.edu/~sds/

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. Visit www.sexualharassment.uiowa.edu for definitions, assistance, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather
In severe weather, the class members should seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level, staying clear of windows and free-standing expanses. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. (Operations Manual 16.14. i.)

Important University of Iowa Deadlines for Off-Cycle Courses
(Note: Use only for off-cycle courses. To find the deadlines for a particular course, visit this Registrar site and type in the course number and title: www.registrar.uiowa.edu/more/coursedeadlines.aspx) Since this course begins or ends at a time different from other courses, please be aware of these deadlines:
Last day to add: Monday, Sept. 8
Last day to drop: Monday, Nov. 3

*The CLAS policy statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

The Iowa Dozen
As one of more than 100 programs in journalism and mass communication accredited by the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), we assess student learning to assure that each of our graduates meets the following standards.

We learn to ...

1. Write correctly, clearly and well.
2. Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
3. Edit and evaluate carefully.
4. Use media technologies thoughtfully.
5. Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value ...

6. Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
7. A diverse global community.
8. Creativity and independence.

We explore ...

10. Theories and concepts.
11. The history, structure and economy of media institutions
12. The role of media in shaping cultures.