019:169:EXV Sports Media Survey

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

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

Description of Course
Students will survey current and recent storylines in sports media. They will examine the coverage evolution of Michael Vick’s criminal charges; written media’s handling of Michael Jordan; coverage of Danica Patrick; and the series of events that led to LeBron James and “The Decision.” In this reading- and discussion-intensive course, students will be introduced to the work of sports media’s past and present greats (and not so greats). Students will engage in live online discussions and cordially debate current events in sports and sports media, as well as topics such as anonymous sources; the differences between covering college, professional and high school athletics; and online sports media, including blogs and social media.

Objectives and Goals of the Course
To attempt to discover why sports media is what it is and does what it does. To ask how sports media help shape public opinion, reflect public opinion, and spite it. To learn why media continue to roll out Brett Favre stories when it appears everyone -- including media producers -- have grown sick of the story. To follow shifts in the tone of media when discussing certain athletes, and to find a pattern in those shifts. And to explore how modern technologies, including social media, are influencing modern sports media. We will touch on sports media history only briefly, early in the semester. The majority of the stories we track originate in the 1980s, ‘90s and 2000s.

Required texts

No required books. All readings will be posted on ICON
• There are only two rules relating to readings. 1) Keep up, and 2) Discuss.
• Stories for each Wednesday’s class will be posted by noon the prior Friday.
Assignments & grades

Grading system and use of the +/-

Please note that the grade of A+ is very rarely given in this course and only in extraordinary situations. Grades are given as prescribed by CLAS: a ‘C’ represents average work, ‘B’ good, ‘A’ great, ‘D’ below average.

Assignments and Percentage of Final Grade

Final grades are based on a 780-point system, broken down as follow:

- **780** Total points (See Iowa Dozen – included – for standards)
- **280** Quizzes, every meeting day, on the assigned readings. Each worth 20 points. 14 total.
- **100** Midterm analysis. We will discuss as this gets closer.
- **200** Final analysis. We will discuss as this gets closer.
- **200** Class participation
  - 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 readings. … Come prepared with questions for guest speakers, if applicable. … Even though you’re online, the instructor can tell when you’re not engaged.

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 your team’s goals.

Participation in class discussions

This is essential both to the function of the class and to your final grade.

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.
Calendar of course assignments

Subject to change

Week 1
Aug. 24
Topic: How we got here. A survey of sports media up to this point (so we can spend the rest of the semester focusing on the present).
Readings: ICON (for this week only, readings will be done in class)

Week 2
Aug. 31
Topic: Tiger Woods: When a god becomes mortal.
Readings: ICON

Week 3
Sept. 7
Topic: The Death and Life of Michael Vick.
Readings: ICON

Week 4
Sept. 14
Topic: Why we just can’t quit Brett Favre.
Readings: ICON

Week 5
Sept. 21
Topic: Dan Patrick vs. Rick Reilly. Was it talent, or was it karma?
Readings: ICON

Week 6
Sept. 28
Topic: The Curious Case of Kevin Garnett.
Readings: ICON
Week 7
Oct. 5
Topic: Tim Tebow.
Readings: ICON

Week 8
Oct. 12
Topic: The athlete who started it all: Michael Jordan.
Readings: ICON
DUE: Midterm analysis, in ICON dropbox before the start of class.

Week 9
Oct. 19
Topic: Happy homecoming week. Let’s talk Iowa football, stereotyping and homerism.
Readings: ICON

Week 10
Oct. 26
Readings: ICON

Week 11
Nov. 2
Topic: How a 25-Year-Old Became Vilified for Wanting to Live in Miami Instead of Cleveland.
Readings: ICON

Week 12
Nov. 9
Topic: Fantasy sports: When make believe is better than real life.
Readings: ICON

Week 13
Nov. 16
Topic: Peyton Hillis is white. Also, Peyton Hillis is white.
Readings: ICON
Instructor: David Schwartz

Office hours: Wednesday 12:30-3:30 p.m., and by appointment
Office: AJB, Room E346B
319-335-3318
david-schwartz@uiowa.edu@daveschwartz

Nov. 23 - No class / Thanksgiving break

Week 14
Nov. 30
Topic: Crossover appeal: Sports starts as pop-culture celebrities.
Readings: ICON

Week 15
Dec. 7
Topic: When sources use media as a tool (but media don’t know it).
Readings: ICON

Week 16 - Finals week
Dec. 12-16

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 blogs about fatherhood for AOL’s network of Iowa Patch outlets.

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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, Jan. 31
Last day to drop: Monday, April 4

*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.