Sports media never simply represent content. They also package it for consumption through sophisticated processes that court sponsors, cater to specific audiences, and compete for market share. These commercially driven efforts play a key role in shaping sport’s cultural meanings. Divorced from business considerations like marketing, branding, and public relations, sport would look very, very different. This course provides a critical and practical introduction to the business of contemporary sport communication. We will seek to understand the intimate relationship between sport’s meaning and commodification. Building upon this foundation, we will engage our own projects that creatively and strategically participate in this relationship. Moreover, our analysis of and participation in the business of sports communication will offer vehicles through which to consider this area of mass communication’s history, ethics, multicultural elements. It will also sharpen our media literacy and storytelling skills through different platforms and for multiple audiences.

Required Texts:
- All other course readings are available on our course ICON website

The Classroom
I have two major goals for this course. First, I want to build an environment where we are both challenged and compelled to develop our writing and critical thinking skills. Second, I want to create a comfortable and encouraging climate. Neither of these goals can be met without everyone’s cooperation. I promise to do my best as an instructor this term and I expect the same commitment, motivation, and enthusiasm from all of you. I also expect frequent and thoughtful participation. I realize this aspect of the course may be both refreshing and daunting. So, as a basic rule for our class meetings I would like us all to treat our peers with kindness and respect. Each class member brings a unique perspective and background to the course that will aid us in grasping the materials covered and developing our skills as writers, thinkers, and members of the UI community. It is absolutely imperative that we respect this diversity and foster the texture it brings to our course.

Assignments/Grading *(Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on ICON)*

*Brand History (20%, 200 points)*
Students will compose a history of a sports-related brand that outlines its development, audiences, communication practice, and transformation.

**Brand Development (20%, 200 points)**
Students will develop a sports-related brand and explain the proposed communication practices that will reflect its goals, audiences, and market.

**Industrial Analysis (15%, 150 points)**
Students will offer a history and analysis of a sports program (radio, TV, online) that pays special attention to how the communication practices surrounding it reflect the goals of the media outlet that produces it, its intended audience, and niche within the sports media marketplace.

**Quizzes (20% total: 50 points each)**
The four quizzes will consist of a combination of multiple choice and short answer questions. They will focus primarily on our course readings.

**Program Pitch and Treatment (15%, 150 points)**
In small groups, students will develop a pitch for a sports program (radio, TV, online) that outlines the program, its audience, potential sponsors/advertisers, who might purchase it, how it might be programmed, and how it fits into the sports media marketplace.

**Participation and Professionalism (10%, 100 points)**
I expect frequent and thoughtful participation in this course. This includes listening to others and working in groups as well as contributing during our class-wide discussions. I also expect professionalism. This means coming to class on time, being prepared, and consistently adding value to and enriching our course meetings—not simply showing up to class.

**Grading Scale**

- A (93-100%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-77%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (>60%).

**Grading Expectations for Written Work**
The “A” assignment follows all instructions perfectly and demonstrates a degree of engagement, insight, organization, sophistication, persuasiveness, and originality that exceeds the task’s baseline requirements. It has been carefully revised and edited. Consequently, it is free—or at least very close to free—of any writing errors or typos.

The “B” assignment follows all instructions and is expertly organized, persuasive, and insightful. It has been revised and contains very few writing errors and typos. It, however, does not exceed baseline requirements to the same degree as the “A” paper and may lack the “A” paper’s exceptional originality and sophistication.

The “C” assignment follows instructions, meets the task’s basic expectations, but evidences little engagement with the assignment beyond this point. In other words, it gets the job done. It likely contains some writing errors and typos, though not to an overwhelming or distracting degree.
The “D” assignment does not carefully follow instructions and demonstrates a lack of engagement, creativity, and care evidenced by writing errors, factual errors, poor organization, inconsistencies, etc.

The “F” assignment does not follow instructions and/or is incomplete.

*Interpreting Feedback on Assignments*

My goal in grading is to provide feedback that will help you to improve on subsequent assignments. The comments I provide are designed to help you to move in that direction. If you are having trouble understanding your feedback or are not sure how it might help you to improve please contact me so I can provide further explanation.

*Course Policies and Expectations*

*Office Hours*

My office hours are for you. Please come by whenever and as much as you like with any questions or concerns you have about readings, assignments, the course as a whole, or your academic and professional career. If for some reason you are unable to make it during my office hours, I am happy to set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

*Attendance*

Attendance is required. You have two “free” absences all term regardless of the circumstances. For each absence after two, I subtract 15 points from your final grade. No exceptions.

*Formatting*

I expect all written assignments to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around, stapled (if submitted as a hard copy), and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Be sure to follow all instructions carefully. We will subtract 1/3 of a letter grade for each formatting requirement you do not follow.

*Late Assignments*

Whether or not you are present in class, all assignments must be turned in by the time class begins on the day when they are due. You will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day (including weekends) an assignment is late. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding any circumstances that may affect your ability to complete an assignment by its due date/time.

*Academic Integrity*

All graded work in this course must be your own. Cite all quotations, paraphrases, etc. If you have any questions as to whether or not your work might constitute plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask. Any violation of the University of Iowa Code of Academic Honesty will result in a failing grade for this course and could result in further disciplinary action. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Code of Academic Honesty: [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code)

*Writing Center*

If you are having any difficulties with or would simply like another opinion on your writing we encourage you to make use of the UI Writing Center: [http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/)
## Special Needs

If you have any special needs that might affect your performance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so we can create a plan to accommodate them.

## Course Schedule

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Course Introduction and Introduction to Branding</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 1/20</td>
<td>Introduction, Policies, and Expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 1/22</td>
<td>Reading: <em>Elusive Fan</em>, Chapter 1: The Fan Challenge; Miloch, “Introduction to Branding”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Branding in Sports</th>
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<td>T 1/27</td>
<td>Reading: <em>Elusive Fan</em>, Chapter 3: How Fans Connect</td>
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<td>Th 1/29</td>
<td>Reading: <em>Elusive Fan</em>, Chapter 4: Reinventing the Sports Brand</td>
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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>National Football League</th>
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<td>T 2/3</td>
<td>Reading: Fortunato, “Pete Rozelle: Developing and Communicating the Sports Brand”</td>
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<td>Th 2/5</td>
<td>Reading: Vogan, “Creating and Sustaining America's Game”</td>
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<td>Assignment: Brand History</td>
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<th>Week 4</th>
<th>Nike</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 2/10</td>
<td>Reading: Goldman and Papson, “Suddenly the Swoosh is Everywhere”; Rovell, “How Nike Landed Michael Jordan”; Egan, “Nike's Women Problem”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 2/12</td>
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Week 5  
**The Branded Athlete**

_T 2/17_  
Reading: Mocarski and Billings, “Manufacturing a Messiah: How Nike and LeBron James Co-Constructed the Legend of King James”

_Th 2/19_  
Reading: Walton, “From Rebel with a Cause to Hero with a Swoosh”  
Assignment: Quiz 2

Week 6  
**Sports Brand and Charity**

_T 2/24_  
Reading: Kraft, Lee, and Polite, “Under Armour: Protect This Brand!”; _Elusive Fan_, Chapter 4: Generating Sports Brand Transformation

_Th 2/26_  
Reading: King, “A Dream Cause”

Week 7  
**Reinventing the Sports Brand**

_T 3/3_  
Reading: _Elusive Fan_, Chapter 6: Implementing the Sports Brand Transformation; Drane, “Professional Bowlers Association: Revamped and Ready to Go”  
Screening: _League of Ordinary Gentlemen_

_Th 3/5_  
Assignment: Brand Development

Week 8  
**Branding/Programming in Network Sports Television**

_T 3/10_  

_Th 3/12_  
Reading: Billings and Brown: “Understanding the Biggest Show in Television: What the Olympic Games Communicates to the World”  
Assignment: Quiz 3

Week 9  
**Branding/Programming in Network and Cable Sports Television**

_T 3/24_  
Reading: Johnson, “Monday Night Football: Brand Identity”
Th 3/26
Reading: Miller and Shales, “Blood”

Week 10
Sports TV, Documentary, and the Corporate Brand: ABC/ESPN

T 3/31
Reading: Vogan, “Chronicling Sport, Branding Institutions: The Sports Television Documentary from Broadcast to Cable”

Th 4/2
Reading: Vogan, Institutionalizing Sport History in the Contemporary Sports Television Documentary

Week 11
Sports TV, Documentary, and the Corporate/Public Brand: ESPN/PBS

T 4/7
Reading: PBS Frontline, “Concussion Watch”; Fainaru and Fainaru-Wada, “Inside the Numbers: Counting Concussions in the NFL”
Assignment: Quiz 4

Th 4/9
Reading: AP, “ESPN Drops Out of PBS Project on NFL Head Injuries”; Lipsyte, “Was ESPN Sloppy, Naïve, or Compromised?”; Miller and Belson, “NFL Pressure Said to Lead ESPN to Quit Film Project”;
Screening: League of Denial

Week 12
Workshops

T 4/14
Independent Workshop

Th 4/16
Independent Workshop
Assignment: Program History/Analysis

Week 13
Case Studies: Big Ten Network and SEC Network

T 4/21
Reading: Mandel, The Real Reason the Big Ten Added Maryland and Rutgers”; Dent, “New TV Markets to Test Big Ten”; Leitch, “The Revolution will be Televised”

Th 4/23
Reading: “SEC Network’s Success Launch Raises Disney’s Stock Estimate to $95”; Ourand, “SEC Net Dodging Major Battles on Distribution”; Ourand and Smith, SEC Network’s Cost Will Top that of other College Nets”; Dosh, “SEC Latest to Launch Conference Network”
Assignment: Quiz 5

Week 14  Final Project Workshops

T 4/28    Workshop
Th 4/30   Workshop

Week 15  Final Project Presentations

T 5/5     Presentations
Th 5/7    Presentations

Final Projects Due to ICON Monday, May 11 by 12:00pm

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 CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Electronic Communication: University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences. (Operations Manual, III.15.2. Scroll down to k.11.)

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

Academic Honesty: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the CLAS Code of Academic Honesty. Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies: Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic Handbook.

Understanding Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a
responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather: In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the Public Safety web site.

The Iowa Dozen

The mission of our School is to educate journalism and mass communication professionals, scholars and faculty. Through professional and creative research activities, they enhance a continually growing and evolving understanding of the social and cultural roles, responsibilities, and contexts for communicators in a democratic society, as well as in diverse global contexts.

To accomplish that mission:

We learn to ...

- Write correctly, clearly and well.
- Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
- Edit and evaluate carefully.
- Use media technologies thoughtfully.
- Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value ...

- Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
- A diverse global community.
- Creativity and independence.
- Truth, accuracy and fairness.

We explore ...

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

References for Articles on ICON:


Miller, James Andrew, and Tom Shales, “Blood.” In Those Guys Have All the Fun: Inside the World of ESPN. 2011.


