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

Sports and Entertainment Blogging / 019:120:002
Summer 2013

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

**Building/time:** A JB W236, 10:30-12:45 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday

**Instructor:** Dave Schwartz
**Office hours:** By appointment each day before class, in AJB E341
**Email address:** david-schwartz@uiowa.edu
**Twitter:** @daveschwartz
**Website:** dave-schwartz.com

**Description of Course**
In 2013, sports are entertainment. The motives of public who consume sports and/or entertainment run parallel: escapism, distraction, appreciation, and identity. This production- and reading-intensive course will explore the successful methods of sports and entertainment blogging – celebrity, movies, TV, music and, of course, sports. Students will learn how celebrity culture and the many tools at their disposal work together to create an escapist experience for online users. We also will discuss the business end of blogging, from financing your site to monetizing it.

**Objectives and Goals of the Course**
By the end of this course you should be able to:
- Understand why blogs fail or succeed
- Predict which blog posts will spread and which will die
- Have an arsenal of tools to launch your own blogs

**Required Texts**
- Spreadable Media, available at University Book Store in Old Capitol Mall

**All remaining texts …**

… On reserve on ICON, or to be assigned by me at a later date.

**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 100 possible points, broken down as follow:

50% Final project (in two parts):
   Part I – Vision and business plan
   Your blog has built an audience—a big, loyal audience with room for even more growth. Two major media companies, Yahoo! and Gannett Company, want in. Before they are willing to invest, they want to see your short- and long-range goals in a 2,000-word document. (More details to follow.)

   Part II – Presentation of vision and business plan
   Gannett has invited you to their HQ to present your plan. This is the last step before it decides whether to bring your site under their umbrella. They have asked for a short presentation, 20 minutes, to discuss your site and what will make it successful. HQ will be our classroom, and your peers will be your audience. (More details to follow.)

15% Interview with a professional role model
   You will conduct a Q&A with a communications professional. This person will either blog full time for a living or produce a blog as part of their job responsibilities. Select someone in a career field that interests you, not someone who is merely accessible and convenient. Expectations for this assignment are sky high, set by previous SJMC students.

15% Blog
   By the third day of class you will have decided on your blog topic for the summer. We will discuss this more the first week of class. Beginning the second week of class, we will devote time each day to blogging. Admittedly, grading for this assignment is subjective. It will take the following factors into account:

   • Creativity
   • Inspiration
   • Voice
   • Timeliness
   • Spreadability
   • Volume

10% Lead 2 discussions (each worth 5%)
   Each of you will lead discussions on two of the readings. What does this mean? It means the day BEFORE you present you send me five discussion questions about your reading, which I’ll share with your classmates. This is to get them thinking ahead of time.

10% Class participation
   Do the readings and voluntarily participate often in discussions. Any questions? Also, turn the ringer off on your phones. A phone that makes noise in class will result in 1 point off of your final total for every person in the classroom who hears it. In other words, if your phone rings and 10 people hear it, that’s 10 points off your final grade out of 100.
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 view all class sessions. If you have a valid reason for missing, notify the instructor by e-mail ahead of time, and provide relevant documentation. Missing sessions greatly reduces your opportunity for scoring an above-average grade in the course.

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 ONE – June 11-13
• Introductions
• Class expectations
• Blogging examples
• Select and present blog topics (Thursday)

READINGS
• For Wednesday, Spreadable Media: “How to read this book” (ix-xv)
• For Thursday, Spreadable Media: “Introduction” (1-46)

WEEK TWO – June 18-20
• Blog
• Truths and misconceptions
• Possession is nine-tenths of the blog

READINGS
• For Tuesday, all the Week 2 links on the ICON site
• For Thursday, Spreadable Media: “Where Web 2.0 Went Wrong” (47-84)

WEEK THREE – June 25-27
• Blog
• “Oh, you want people to read your stuff?”
• Analytics, SEO, and other zzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz

READINGS
• For Tuesday, all the Week 3 links on the ICON site
• For Thursday, Spreadable Media: “Reappraising the Residual” (85-112)
WEEK FOUR – July 2-3
• Blog
• How audiences consume blogs
• Thinking beyond yourself

READINGS
• For Tuesday, Spreadable Media: “The Value of Media Engagement” (113-152)

DUE
• Interview with a professional (hard copy to Dave at the start of Wednesday’s class)

WEEK FIVE – July 9-11
• Blog
• Playing nice with others
• Ethics (yes, ethics)

READINGS
• For Tuesday, all the Week 5 links on the ICON site
• For Thursday, Spreadable Media: “What Constitutes Meaningful Participation” (153-194)

WEEK SIX – July 16-18 (weird week – see below)
There will be NO CLASS on Wednesday or Thursday this week. Tuesday, we will meet from 11:45-12:30 to go over the Spreadable Media chapter and answer any questions you might have.
• Blog

READING
• For Tuesday, Spreadable Media: “Designing for Spreadability” (195-228)

WEEK SEVEN – July 23-25
• Blog
• Prep for final presentations
• Branding yourself and your blog (while asking if there is a difference between the two)

READINGS
• For Tuesday, all the Week 7 links on the ICON site
• For Thursday, Spreadable Media: “Courting Supporters for Independent Media” (229-258)

WEEK EIGHT – July 30-Aug. 1
• Blog
• Presentations each day

READINGS
• For Tuesday, Spreadable Media: “Thinking Transitionally” (259-290)
• For Wednesday, both of the Week 8 links on the ICON site
• For Thursday, Spreadable Media: “Conclusion” (291-305)

***Final project is due Thursday, Aug. 1, in class. Hard copies only.***
About your instructor
Prior to joining the UI in 2007, David Schwartz was a national leader in digital 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 sites 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, a Ph.D. student at the University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication, 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. He currently sits on the board of directors for the Iowa Center for Public Affairs Journalism and is on the advisory committee for the Journalism Education Association’s digital committee.

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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.