JMC 3413: Sports Writing
Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 to 10:45 a.m.
University of Iowa School of Journalism and Mass Communication
Fall 2019

Professor Jeff Browne
Office Adler Journalism Building W113
Office Hours Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:45 a.m. to noon, or by appointment
Phone 319-335-3321 (office) 785-760-6635 (cell)
Email jeffrey-browne@uiowa.edu
Twitter @jayschool

Course Description
Sports Writing is a specialty reporting class for undergraduate students aimed at teaching the basics of sports reporting and writing across multiple platforms, covering breaking news, covering a beat and incorporating digital media techniques.

Learning Objectives
- Develop timely and relevant story ideas for a variety of audiences.
- Gather information from a diverse range of sources in an ethical manner.
- Distill that information into accurate, clear and engaging stories.
- Write in a variety of styles, from game stories to features to alternative forms, for a variety of media.
- Use digital media technologies to produce audio, video, photo and graphical stories.
- Incorporate social media to promote your work and to gather information about your beat and about the news media.
- Use data to create a final in-depth story package.
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and communicating about under-covered groups in society.

Resources
You will need to purchase one text:

You will also need to bring with you to class:
- AP Stylebook and Libel Manual, 2016 or newer. This is also available as a Smartphone app for about $30. Bring this to every class. Or memorize it. Your choice.
The Work/Grading

You will be graded in five areas, each of which consists of different assignments. The areas:

1. Six major writing/multimedia assignments.
2. Critiques of sports stories.
3. AP style quizzes
4. Attendance and in-class writing.
5. Extra credit prediction contests.

You may earn up to 1,000 points for the semester, and your final grade will be determined on your percentage of those points earned:

- A (93 to 100 percent); A- (90 to 92); B+ (87 to 89); B (83 to 86); B- (80 to 82); C+ (77 to 79); C (73 to 76); C- (70 to 72); D+ (67 to 69); D (63 to 66); D- (60 to 62); F (0 to 59).

A factual mistake, including the misspelling of a name (of a person or an organization), an incorrect date or location, a math error or any other similar factual error in a story, will result in an automatic F for that assignment. In newsrooms, journalists who make too many mistakes get fired. This classroom policy will prepare you for that brutal world.

Major Assignments (600 points)

This group of assignments will combine your skills as a reporter and writer with what you’ve learned so far about producing multimedia content. Details for each assignment will be discussed in advance of each assignment, but know that live stories (high school and UI) will be due via ICON four hours after the end of the event. Each story will also require several sources, both human and non-human, depending on the story. In other words, do a lot of interviews, and do just as much research. These stories are due in draft form at 9:30 a.m. on the days they are due. After a short peer-editing session, the final versions are due at 10:45 a.m. on that same day.

- #1 — Live high school event coverage, completed before Tuesday, Sept. 10 (50 points). This must be accompanied by another newspaper or internet story from the same event.
- #2 — University of Iowa online preview package (fall varsity sport) by Thursday, Sept. 26 (50 points)
- #3 — Live University of Iowa varsity event with Twitter coverage by Tuesday, Oct. 15 (100 points). This must be accompanied by another newspaper or internet story from the same event.
- #4 — TV Highlights Package (Mid-Season Statistical Analysis of an NFL or College Football Team) by Monday, Oct. 29 (100 points).
- #5 — Personal Memoir by Tuesday, Dec. 3 (100 points).
- #6 — Long-Form Story by Wednesday, Dec. 12 (200 points). We’ll talk.

Critiques of Stories (140 points)

This group of seven assignments will each follow a format that I will provide during the first class period. Each assignment will be worth 20 points, and are due at 9:30 a.m. on the date they’re due.
AP Style Quizzes (60 points)
There will be four take-home AP style quizzes early in the semester. They are worth 15 points each.

Attendance and In-Class Writing (200 points)
Every class period will be worth four points — two points for attendance, two for participation in discussions — for a total of 120 attendance points in the semester. That’s 30 class meetings times four points = 120. There will be four in-class writing prompts that are worth 20 points each = 80.

Extra Credit (up to 150 points)
Every Thursday during the 15-week semester, I’ll post a prediction contest on the course ICON site for Iowa football, NFL football, Major League Baseball, Major League Soccer, Big Ten volleyball, the English Premier League and other sports events. The winner of each week’s contest will earn 10 points extra credit, which would raise your semester grade by one percentage point. Win every week, and you’d raise an 80 percent grade to 95 percent. How about that?

Class and University Policies

Absences and Attendance
Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, unavoidable circumstances, or University authorized activities (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences). Students may use this absence form to aid communication; the instructor will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused (https://clas.uiowa.edu/sites/default/files/ABSENCE%20EXPLANATION%20FORM2019.pdf).

Academic Integrity
All undergraduates enrolled in courses offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College’s Code of Academic Honesty. Misconduct is reported to the College, resulting in suspension or other sanctions, with sanctions communicated with the student through the UI email address (https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

Accommodations for Disabilities
UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

Administrative Home of the Course
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other
colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

**Communication and the Required Use of UI Email**
Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (*Operations Manual, III.15.2*).

**Complaints**
Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. For more information, see https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

**Final Examination Policies**
The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and place of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals. Visit https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

**Nondiscrimination in the Classroom**
UI is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for all people irrespective of their gender, sexual, racial, religious or other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited to optionally share their preferred names and pronouns with their instructors and classmates. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (diversity.uiowa.edu).

**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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.
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