Syllabus for
Business of Sport Communication
JMC 3540:0001 ● SPST 3181:0001

“The business of this
Country is business.”
-Calvin Coolidge
30th US President

“Never
mistake
activity for
achievement.”
-John Wooden
Hall of Fame
Basketball Coach

Fall Semester 2020
12:30 – 1:45 pm Tuesday and Thursday
Van Allen Hall Room 350

Charles Munro, Instructor
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E-mail: charles-munro@uiowa.edu

Office: E328 AJB
Office hours this semester are arranged by appointment only

- WELCOME! -
As an industry “sports” is more than just content that fills pages, screens, blogs, and posts on social media. The consumer – the fan – rules! To attract and keep fans sport businesses create and package spectacles through sophisticated processes that court sponsors, cater to certain target audiences, and compete for market share. Commerically-driven companies, some of them powerful billion-dollar businesses, play a key role in shaping sports’ cultural meanings. Divorced from business considerations like marketing, branding, and public relations, sport would look very, very different. This course approaches the study of contemporary sports communication through the reference points of product, negotiation, content, distribution, marketing, branding to the ultimate consumption by fans.
WHAT THIS COURSE *IS*
WHAT THIS COURSE IS *NOT*

These students **should** take this course:

Both he and she aspire to work in some way related either to covering events for media, promoting a team, or playing any role in a sports organization. Experience has shown me that students who have the best understanding of how sports businesses operate and – most important – know how effectively they communicate the *consumer value* of their products and services are the students most likely to succeed as sports professionals.

These students **should not** take this course:

This is not a sporting skills course. You will not be covering fields of play. You will not be asked to analyze individual games, bouts or matches. Instead, you will be studying the big picture – the relationship between business practices, messaging and the success (or failure) of sports products and organizations. Topics *not* covered include recreational (non-competitive) sports, health, or fitness. Other courses offer excellent opportunities to study those topics. Not this one.
READINGS AND RESOURCES


Periodicals and journals (recommended)

LibGuide. The main library has tailored a special site for this course. These and other publications are available through the UI library at this link: https://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/jmc3540. Check it out!

TILE Classroom. This class is designed for the TILE classroom; it is not lecture based. TILE is an acronym for “Transform, Interact, Learn and Engage” [http://tile.uiowa.edu]. The classrooms are designed with seating in small clusters (that I refer to as “circles”), which promote the concept of student collaboration to discover and discuss course learnings. This emphasizes critical thinking, collective discussion and debate. Additionally, classroom technology promotes sharing visual presentations with the larger class. Since the objective of the classroom architecture has been designed to challenge students to cover course material organically - both through individual and group participation – the course plan (at the end of this syllabus) will likely change as the semester progresses.

Note university rules require that because of Covid-19 only the number of students who can maintain a six-foot separation from each other are allowed in a classroom. That means that this class will have to have students alternate between classroom and online attendance. Also all classes after Thanksgiving break must be offered online. We will establish how this will work on the first day of class. This is not ideal. I appreciate everyone’s patience as we work through this. I intend for this to be a full, rich, and fun class experience for us all.
WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

In baseball as in business there are three types of people: those who make it happen, those who watch it happen, and those who wondered what happened.

- Tommy Lasorda

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication is committed to your academic and professional success. In line with this commitment we have identified learning outcomes that every major should obtain by the time they earn an SJMC degree. We regularly assess the curriculum to determine whether students are achieving these outcomes. You can find more information about these learning outcomes here.

This course is designed to reinforce your understanding of media history in the context of industries and identify transformations in audiences, engagement, and business practice over time. Parts of the course are also designed to help you

- grasp the significance of advances in mass communication technology for cultural production in domestic and global media markets;
- trace the production of cultural meanings across historical periods as well as connections between business models and news/sports consumption.

This course also contributes to these learning outcomes by helping you achieve proficiency in understanding of writing and storytelling by demonstrating your ability to:

- gather factual story elements, and to evaluate and express them in logical, narrative forms for multiple media,
- access and analyze data, report facts accurately, research and edit information responsibly and in a manner commensurate with professional standards,
- apply above concepts in a manner that is sensitive to audiences across all media.

Specific learning outcomes for this course include students being able to:

- Describe the concepts that drive the competitive marketplace in which sports-related businesses operate and apply them to real-world business case studies.
- Identify challenges that have affected management decision making in the past and demonstrate how new crises will future and offer creative solutions.
- Recognize what a brand is and demonstrate the value it brings to sports fans in the worldwide entertainment marketplace.
- Apply the concept of value and diagram the ways it is measured as it flows through all parts of the sports business process from organizational goals to consumer acceptance.
- Demonstrate the various ways a business can use research - both scientific and otherwise - as a tool to develop a fan base.
- Critically appraise the success (or failure) of sports organizations through measures common to the entertainment market sector that include as reference points product, negotiation, content, distribution, marketing and consumption.
HOW YOU WILL EARN YOUR GRADE

Four sure-fire keys to success in this course:
1. Show up
2. Listen up
3. Speak up
4. Submit graded work on time

Your final course grade will be determined by how well you perform in the categories listed below. They offer a variety of ways to display your mastery of course material and ways to creatively apply course concepts. Grading is by points - some assigned and some by percentage - with 100 points possible in each. Note weightings that determine final grades. I post points in the Canvas grade book as quickly as I can and am available *at any time* to discuss your progress.

1. **ATTENDANCE (15%).** Each class session is a unique learning opportunity the experience of which cannot be made up. Sessions are designed to provide valuable time for individual and group discussion, the value of which is lost if you are absent or if you arrive late. Make sure you sign the attendance roster for each class.

   *Attendance policy:*
   There is no such thing as an “excused” or “unexcused” absence. You earn one percentage point for each class you attend. You earn a “0” percentage for each class you miss.

   You will earn partial points (0.80) for any of the following reasons:
   - *You are ill* (or have COVID symptoms) and you notify me as soon as you can that you will not be attending a class. (I may request a written verification.)
   - *You have a family emergency.*
   - *You must be at a UI-sanctioned event* and you notify me of dates in advance.
   - *You have a religious obligation.*

   Notify your teammates; review material covered in class that you miss for any reason!

   [See also “Accommodations for Disabilities” below.]
2. **ENGAGEMENT (15%).** You will be expected to engage in class sessions by 1) finding, posting and replying to news stories related to course content, and 2) solving sports business challenges during class.

   **Discussion Posts/Replies.** Search sports news, trade or business sites for immediately-occurring happenings that you believe are relevant to course content and of interest to the whole class. Post them on “Weekly Hot Happenings” each week. In addition to you will need to reply to classmates’ posts. Posts and replies from fully engaged students are thoughtful not perfunctory and refer directly to course topics. Opinions and perspectives are encouraged. Posts that fall short of these standards are subject to deletion. Fully engaged students will submit one post plus reply per week for a total of **30 weekly posts/replies** be semester’s end.

3. **PARTICIPATION (30%).** You will be working on Circle work: circle challenges, circle presentation, circle project.

   **Circle challenges.** Occasional circle challenges in class often offer opportunities for bonus points. You will work with members of your circle for confronting a sports business situation presented in class and, after a designated period, offering a solution. Points are awarded in class based upon the quality of the circle’s solution.

   **Circle Presentation.** You will work with two-three teammates to research an industry issue and present a 10-minute summary in class for discussion and critique. You will be graded collectively on a 100-point scale for your contribution.

   **Circle Project.** You will work with your circle on a topic that impacts a sports business and its products (radio, TV, online content) paying special attention communication practices and how they reflect the goals of organization. You will pitch researched recommendations for a strategic plan for their future. You will be graded collectively as a circle on a 100-point scale for your contribution.

4. **TRACKING TESTS (10%)**

   Weekly trackers are short tests designed to 1) ensure that you are tracking with course content to that point; and, 2) to give you an indication of how well you are understanding and are applying learning concepts. Your point score will be equivalent to the percentage of correct responses over all test questions. There is no final exam.

5. **CASE STUDY REPORT (20%)**

   You will research, analyze, and report on a sports organization’s success or failure as a business and include your conclusion about its competitive outlook for the future.

   **Peer Review.** You will first submit a draft of your report to classmates for peer review against an established rubric, then given a change to revise it before final submission. (10% of case study grade)
After revision you will submit an 1800-word written report. You will then get an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback to the peers who reviewed your draft.

6. **FINAL ESSAY (10%).**

At the end of the course you will submit a response to several essay-style questions in which you will articulate responses to the course learning outcomes. [See page 4.] The emphasis will be on how well you can demonstrate mastery of concepts underlying the outcomes.

**Standards for earning your grade:**
Tests and attendance scores are percentages. I will post grading standards for how to earn points for circle presentations. Application of these standards in grading must necessarily include a degree of subjectivity. *If you have questions about any of the grading standards or concerns about my application of them, please contact me to discuss.*

**Final grade calculation:**

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**Collaboration and group projects**
Throughout the term you will be working on assignments that require collaboration with classmates. Collaborating is common in today’s professional workplaces. Thus, you should make a concerted effort to work flexibly with your classmates by adapting to the varying skills and styles they bring to group assignments.

Additionally, some of your work will be peer reviewed. That means that a portion of your course grade will reflect the collective performance of your group. If for any reason you believe a member or members your is substantially inhibiting your ability to submit high quality work and/or make deadlines, please alert me so we can consider alternative arrangements.
COMMUNICATING

Let’s talk!

You should feel free to communicate with me outside of class about course content, procedures, standards, or to discuss matters of personal concern.

- Remain after class session. I will not leave the classroom until I have addressed all student issues.
- Drop in during office hours (appointment only Fall 2020) or, if that’s not convenient, let’s find a time that is.
- Email me.
- Notify me when you are available to use the chat feature on ICON.
- Text or call at my direct number listed on the first page of this syllabus. Please do not leave voicemail messages at the university phone extension listed for me.

If you feel I have not resolved your complaint or concern, you should then feel free to contact Dr. David Ryfe, Director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, in person at E305 AJB by arranging an appointment with SJMC Administrator, Rebecca Kick, at 319 335-3390.

Planning your time:
University policy sets a weekly standard of two hours outside of class work for every course hour. That means you should expect up to 6 hours per week working on reading or on course projects. When working with classmates in a team, you must coordinate your availability with your teammates.
COLLEGE RULES AND POLICIES

The following are important rules and policies that apply to all of us who teach, learn, and administer in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. They also describe your rights to accommodation and complaint procedure beyond that contained JUST above.

Class Behavioral Expectations
Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life. This includes the policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the Steps Forward for Fall 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, all students are required to wear a face covering when in a UI building, including a classroom. In addition, the density of seats in classrooms has been reduced. In some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more of distance while in other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face covering and maintaining as much distance as possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through the failure to comply with the reasonable directive of an instructor or the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student immediately leave the space for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Student Accountability for the possibility of additional follow-up. Students who need a temporary alternative learning arrangement related to COVID-19 expectations should contact Student Disability Services arrangements/; +1 319 335-1462) (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/fall-2020/covid-19-temporary-learning-arrangements/).

Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing
Some of the sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such recordings/streaming will only be available to students registered for this class. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit, written consent of the faculty member. Further, students may not share these sessions with those not in the class or upload them to any other online environment. Doing so would be a breach of the Code of Student Conduct, and, in some cases, a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

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 based on 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/.
**Staying current with social media:**
The School of Journalism and Mass Communication maintains social media sites for you to stay up to date on the latest events, scholarships and internships.

They are:

- Instagram: @uiowa_sjmc
- Facebook: @UISJMC
- Twitter: @uiowa_sjmc
- LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/school/19128785](http://www.linkedin.com/school/19128785)
- You Tube: [www.youtube.com/user/UISJMC](http://www.youtube.com/user/UISJMC)
- Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/ui_journalism_masscomm](http://www.flickr.com/photos/ui_journalism_masscomm)
**COURSE MAP**

**First, an important note about how the approach to learning...**

This class is designed for the TILE classroom; it is not lecture based. TILE is an acronym for “Transform, Interact, Learn and Engage” [http://tile.uiowa.edu]. The classrooms are designed with seating in small clusters (that I refer to as “circles”), which promote the concept of student collaboration to discover and discuss course learnings. This emphasizes critical thinking, collective discussion and debate. Additionally, classroom technology promotes sharing visual presentations with the larger class. This approach applies both to classroom and online sessions.

This course map is designed to cover course material organically both through individual and group participation. That means the order of some course topics will likely change as the semester progresses. Check “Announcements” daily, which is where I post changes. You are responsible for announced changes in topics, dates or assignments posted on our ICON site.

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<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>HELPFUL NOTES</th>
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</table>
| 1  | Tue 8/25 | Welcome and overview  
• Requirements and classroom protocols  

Sports market sector overview  
• Business structure and terms  

Expectations

[You will need to post/reply each week for the remainder of the semester.]

The flow: sports business schematic  
• Understanding terms (market sector, marketplace, organization, content, product, distribution, marketing audiences, consumer value, measures.)

Divide into “Circles”  | Review “Four Sure-Fire Keys to Success in this Course”  

Read “Format and Guidelines for Hot Happenings Posts.”  

Find and post a weekly “Hot Happening.” Use sources on LibGuide.  

Check out the brand new periodical **Sportico** as a source of HH posts. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>MODULE ONE:</strong></td>
<td><strong>ECONOMICS AND CHALLENGES OF MANAGING SPORTS BUSINESSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>This module looks at sports organizations from the top and the issues faced by those who run them.</strong></td>
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</table>
| **2** | **Tue 9/1** | **Organizations and ownership**  
• Who runs this place?  
• The athletic director’s role  
• Influence of owners on management  
• The concept of value  
• Sports “products”  
• Technology  
• Colorful characters |  |
|   | **Thu 9/3** | **Challenge: creating and managing people and products**  
• Management challenges  
• Negotiating contracts | **Rights fees:** “If you want to play, you have to pay” |
| **3** | **Mon 9/8** | **Challenge: connecting to fans**  
• The specialness of sports fandom  
• Consumers changing behaviors |  |
|   | **Thu 9/10** | **Key concepts in fan value**  
• The value proposition  
**Management challenges**  
• Integrity of the game  
• Purity  
• Sportsmanship | **Assign Circle (team) Presentations**  
**Read “Team Presentations Guide”** |
| **4** | **Tue 9/15** | **Circle presentations I**  
**Thu 9/17** | **Circle presentations due** |
<p>|   | <strong>Circle presentations II</strong> |  | <strong>Circle presentations due</strong> |</p>
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<th>Week</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Tue 9/22</td>
<td>Circle presentations III</td>
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<td>Thu 9/24</td>
<td>Circle presentations IV</td>
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<td>Circle presentations due</td>
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<tr>
<td>MODULE TWO: IMPACT OF MEDIA ON SPORTS CONTENT AND DISTRIBUTION</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Tue 9/29</td>
<td>Media and sports – Critical Connection</td>
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<td>• Media vs. Sports</td>
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<td>• Attracting Audiences</td>
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<td>• Packaging</td>
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<td>• Rights Fees</td>
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<td>• Narratives</td>
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<td>• Cost of Attendance</td>
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<td>Thu 10/1</td>
<td>Elusive fans</td>
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<td>• Lifestyles</td>
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<td>• The cost of attendance vs. alternatives</td>
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<td>Listen: “Sports stadium shrinkage is a trend”</td>
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<td>Tue 10/6</td>
<td>Circle Challenge: “Building a Dream Team” (work in circles to build a sports organization)</td>
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<td>Thu 10/8</td>
<td>Circle Challenge Presentations</td>
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<td>Circle Challenge deliverable due</td>
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<td>MODULE THREE: ATTRACTING AND BUILDING LOYAL CONSUMERS</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Tue 10/13</td>
<td>Sports marketing and communication strategy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Marketing concepts and buyer behavior (strategic planning, brand communication)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Sales vs. Marketing vs. Promotion</td>
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<td>Thu 10/15</td>
<td>Assign: Case Study</td>
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This module takes a deep dive into the often-strained relationship between sports businesses and fans.

This module is about businesses’ attempts to attract fans to their products.
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Description</th>
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| 9 | Tue 10/20 | **Branding in sports**  
- What is a brand?  
- The battle for fans  
**How the peer review process works**  
- Case study examples |
|   | Thu 10/22 | Research topics  
Discuss Case Study topics |
| 10 | Tue 10/27 | **Brand management**  
Marketing concepts and buyer behavior (strategic planning, brand communication)  
**Circle challenge: branding** |
|   | Thu 10/29 | Case Study topic approved and posted |
| 11 | Tue 11/3 | **Sports marketing campaigns**  
**Research in sports businesses**  
- How and why businesses do and use research  
- Methodologies and outcomes  
- Habits of Fans |
|   | Thu 11/5 | Case Study draft due  
Case Study peer review in class |
| 12 | Tue 11/10 | **Applied marketing and communication strategy**  
**Communication strategies** – working with professional teams |
|   | Thu 11/12 | Final Case Study due  
Back evaluation due |
| 13 | | **Thanksgiving recess**  
All UI courses will be delivered virtually after Thanksgiving recess. Our class will continue to meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays via Zoom. There will be no classroom meetings. |
| 14 | Tue 11/24 | **Future of sports communication:**  
**E-Sports**  
**Circle project workshop** |
|   | Thu 11/26 | Online class only  
Assign Circle Project |
| 15 | Tue 12/1 | **Circle project workshop**  
Online class only |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thu 12/3</th>
<th>Present Circle Project I</th>
<th>Assign final essay</th>
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<tr>
<td>16 Tue 12/8</td>
<td>Present Circle Project II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu 12/10</td>
<td>Present Circle Project III</td>
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