

PUR3463 Sports Communication – Fall 2024

Instructor: Sasha Matar, Adjunct Lecturer

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Office Hours (Virtual only): Wednesday through Friday (flexible for most of the day) by appointment. See <https://calendly.com/sasha-matar> to schedule an appointment.

Course Description and Objectives

PUR 3463 offers instruction, analysis, and training in the principles and practice of public relations in sports organizations. Emphasis is on media relations and skills essential for sports communication professionals, including handling media interactions across platforms, problems, crises, and integration of positive communications strategies with strategic goals of sports organizations.

Course Learning Objectives

After successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- (1) Demonstrate an understanding of the basic skills necessary to effectively carry out day-to-day responsibilities in sports communications and sports information professions
- (2) Demonstrate ability to generate content, including effective writing, from a sports perspective
- (3) Demonstrate ability to effectively integrate communications strategies with a sports organization's goals
- (4) Distinguish between sports communication perspectives and sports journalism
- (5) Distinguish in and among sports communication operations, issues and challenges in professional, intercollegiate and Olympic sports
- (6) Demonstrate understanding and skill strategies in handling negative publicity and communications crises in sports organizations
- (7) Demonstrate skill for assisting athletes, coaches, sports executives and owners to effectively handle media interviews

(8) Demonstrate ability to manage use of social media by the organization, staff members and athletes

(9) Demonstrate understanding of the ethics and values of sports communications

College of Journalism and Communications Objectives

The Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications requires that by graduation all students should be able to:

- apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press, in a global context, and for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located;
- demonstrate an understanding of the multicultural history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate culturally proficient communication that empowers those traditionally disenfranchised in society, especially as grounded in race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and ability, domestically and globally, across communication and media contexts;
- present images and information effectively and creatively, using appropriate tools and technologies;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- apply critical thinking skills in conducting research and evaluating information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- effectively and correctly apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

Course Format

This course is a completely asynchronous class. Each week you will have readings, lectures, discussions, and assignments. All of this comes together in your three exams and the large project due at the end of the semester. You must keep up with the readings to fully understand issues and intelligently complete your assignments and exams. It is in your best interest to fully engage yourself because what you learn will help you make important decisions in the future.

** This syllabus is subject to change as appropriate and necessary. Updates will be posted on Canvas.*

Book – Recommended NOT required

-*Sport Public Relations*. G. Clayton Stoldt, Stephen W. Dittmore, Mike Ross and Scott E. Branvold. Human Kinetics, 3rd edition 2020.

-*Media Relations in Sport*. Brad Schultz, Phillip H. Caskey and Craig Esherick. FiT Publishing, 4th edition 2014.

Additional Readings as Assigned

Additional Readings will be posted and available online

Availability

Please feel free to reach out to me any time during the semester. I'm available by email and will try to get back to you within 24 hours. If you would like to set an appointment, you can see times I have available here: <https://calendly.com/sasha-matar>

Course Grades

The Following table outlines the point-accruing components of the course. The total points earned from each component will be summed and divided by the total points possible in the course.

Evaluation Components	Points Per Component	% of Total Grade
Assignments (12)	15-20 pts each = 200 pts	18.2%
Writing Assignments (5)	50 pts each = 250 pts	22.8%
Online Discussions (10)	25 pts each = 250 pts	22.8%
Midterm (1)	100 pts each = 100 pts	9.1%
Sports Organization Project (1)	150 pts each = 150 pts	13.67%
Final Exam (1)	150 pts each = 150 pts	13.67%
Total	1100 pts	100%

Assignment Descriptions

Team Assignments (12 assignments, 15-20 pts per assignment)– Team assignments will include research topics related to your final project. Each week you will be assigned a specific research task to complete towards building content for your final Sports Organization project and paper.

Writing Assignments (5 writing assignments)– Students will rely upon their research, analytical, writing, interviewing, and multimedia skills to produce press releases for six different sports events. Two of these must be attended live. Students will be graded on

grammatical, form, multimedia, engagement, and story focus elements. Stories will be posted on the course WordPress site.

Online Discussion (11 discussions, drop lowest) - Through our class portal on Canvas we will hold online discussions surrounding various topics in sports communication. You will be required to post your thoughts and respond to classmates as well. There will be a rubric for you to follow to insure you participate properly.

Points	14-15	10-13	5-9	1-4	0
Quality of Post (10 pts)	Appropriate comments: thoughtful, reflective, and respectful of others postings	Appropriate comments and responds respectfully to others postings	Responds with average effort providing obvious information without further analysis	Responds, but with minimum effort. (e.g. "I agree with Bill)	No Posting
Relevance of Post (10 pts)	Post topics related to discussion topic; prompts further discussion of topic	Posts topics that are related to discussion content	Posts topics which do not relate to the discussion content	Makes short or irrelevant remarks	No Posting
Contribution to the Learning Community (5 pts)	Aware of needs of community; attempts to motivate the group discussion; presents creative approaches to topic	Attempts to direct the discussion and to present relevant viewpoints for consideration by group; interacts freely	Makes little effort to participate in learning community as it develops	Does not make effort to participate in learning community as it develops	No feedback provided to fellow student(s)

Midterm (1 test; 100 points) and Final Exam (1 test; 150 points) – Students will be tested on material covered in the course with an assortment of multiple choice, true/false and essay questions.

Sports Organization Project (1 project) – Students will complete a project detailing the communications operations of a professional baseball, basketball, hockey, football, or soccer organization. All organizations must be pre-approved by the instructor. Reports will provide a summary of the staffing of the communications office along with responsibilities, examples of positive and negative publicity handled over the past two years pertaining to the organization, and examples of media coverage of the publicity. Students will be expected to provide an outside analysis of the effectiveness of communications operations with respect to the overall goals of the sports organization, incorporating concepts and principles from course discussions, readings and guest speakers. The project will require students to provide suggestions as to how the organization could have met those goals more effectively.

Course Outline

MODULE WELCOME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome, Introductions, Textbook, Syllabus, Canvas, ETC.
MODULE 1 INTRO TO SPORTS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intro to Sports Communication and Relations
MODULE 2 INTRODUCING SPORT PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introducing Sport Public Relations Lecture and Activity
MODULE 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PR as a management tool, stakeholders and constituents, issues management, organizational reputation
INTEGRATING PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	
MODULE 4 DEVELOPING WRITING AND INTERVIEWING SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Forms of Writing, Types of Releases ● Audience Awareness, Common Errors and Distribution ● Before and After the Interview
MODULE 5 THE PRINT MEDIA, BROADCAST MEDIA, SOCIAL MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Print media history, relating with content providers for athletes ● Relating with content providers for audiences, old and new models of covering a story ● Radio and TV (national, regional and local) ● Social and New Media
MODULE 6 SPORTS INFORMATION SPECIALISTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CoSIDA, Essential Skills ● Responsibilities of SID, Pros and Cons ● Creating Promotional Guides
MODULE 7 MIDTERM EXAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MID-TERM EXAM
MODULE 8 EVENT MANAGEMENT AND MANAGING THE SPORT ORGANIZATION-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lecture-The Basics and Mandatory Content, Production Schedule and Game Day Programs ● Game Management, Game Day Media Ops, Do's and Dont's in Press Box ● Press Conferences ,Media Days and Special Events

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying influential media, serving media at events, developing media policy and maximizing media exposure
MODULE 9 PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Stage of Campaign Development Continuing the Campaign and Ethical Considerations
MODULE 10 CRISIS MANAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of crisis and need to plan, preparing for crisis and managing a crisis, assessing crisis response Creating a Crisis Management Plan
MODULE 11 EXPLORING UNMEDIATED COMMUNICATION TACTICS AND DEMONSTRATING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nature of crisis and need to plan, preparing for crisis and managing a crisis, assessing crisis response
MODULE 12 GLOBAL SPORT MEDIA RELATIONS & LAW AND ETHICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Mega Events, Expanded Coverage, National Sports Orgs Law and Media Relations
MODULE 13 FINAL PRESENTATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations
MODULE 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FINAL EXAM

Late Work

You are responsible for all material covered or assigned. Your grade on late assignments will drop one letter grade for every day they are late. **If a technical problem occurs that prevents timely submission of an assignment, you should first contact your instructor and/or TA and then the UF Help Desk.** Follow up with an email to the instructor that includes an update and Help Desk Ticket #.

Grading

The grading scale for the course is:

A 94.0-100%	C 74.0-76.99%
A- 90.0-93.99%	C- 70.0-73.99%
B+ 87.0-89.99%	D+ 67.0-69.99%
B 84.0-86.99%	D 64.0-66.99%
B- 80.0-83.99%	D- 61.0-63.99%
C+ 77.0-79.99%	E below 61.0%

Follows current UF policies

(<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>). NOTE: To continue taking public relations courses (PUR) you must pass this class with a C or better.

Diversity Statement

Your experience in this class is important to me. I embrace a notion of an intellectual community enriched and enhanced by diversity along a number of dimensions, including race, ethnicity and national origins, gender and gender identity, sexuality, socio-economic class, disability, age, and religion. It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well-served by this course and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for others.

In this course, we will cover subjects that may be sensitive and/or challenging. As in all our courses, we do this not to indoctrinate but to instruct, to prepare you to be the most effective and successful media professional or scholar that you can be. We encourage you to understand all concepts presented in class, but we know that what you personally choose to believe is your business.

Course Professionalism

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times. Carefully consider how you participate and the assignments you submit. You can use humor and demonstrate creativity but think ahead to how it will reflect on you. Use your best professional judgment. Projects should not contain nudity, profanity, illegal activities or situations that would put you or others in danger.

Student Accommodations

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center \(Links to an external site.\)](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Recording of Class

Although the class is already recorded, the same rules as other online/in-person classes still apply. The purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures

without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

AI Submission of Intellectual Property

When submitting materials to AI tools, such as assignment instructions or other content, ensure you have the appropriate permissions for any copyrighted elements. Additionally, avoid sharing any information protected under FERPA, including personal data from educational records (provided via ChatGPT, 2024).

AI Policy for Student Work (AI is allowed/integrated into assignments)

In this course you will be allowed to use generative AI for some assignments. AI is commonly used in the profession, so familiarity with generative AI tools is important. However, do not let your creative thinking and editing skills lapse! When AI is allowed or encouraged in assignments, you will need to document how AI was used. This could include providing your original prompts, showing the editing that you did to the created content, or using appropriate citation of information obtained via generative AI. If you are using AI when not explicitly allowed, that is considered a violation of the honor code as you are presenting content as your own that was not fully created by you. There are various AI detection tools available (built within Canvas and externally such as ZeroGPT), and many AI platforms follow very formulaic response patterns. If I am concerned that your work is not your own, I will try to verify the originality of your work. If unable to do so, I may ask you to resubmit the assignment detailing how you arrived at your submission.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for

credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here](#) to read the Conduct Code. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with me.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

Campus Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: Visit [UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the [Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).