PUR 3463 Sports Communication

Spring 25

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida

Instructor: Eric Esterline
Classroom: Online

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Office Hours: Tuesdays (11a-noon), Wednesdays (11a-noon)
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Course Site: https://ufl.instructure.com
Course Text: -*Sport Public Relations*. G. Clayton Stoldt, Stephen W. Dittmore, Mike Ross and Scott E. Branvold. Human Kinetics, 3rd edition
-*Media Relations in Sport*. Brad Schultz, Phillip H. Caskey and Craig Esherick. FiT Publishing, 5th edition
Textbooks are **RECOMMENDED**, **NOT REQUIRED**
Additional Readings will be posted and available online.

Overview 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:
- understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the US
- demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- think critically, creatively and independently;
- conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness;
- apply basic numerical and statistical concepts;
- apply current tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work, and to understand the digital world.

Office Hours

Office Hours are scheduled upon an e-mail request, conducted online, and/or recorded for access by all (unless a private or in-person meeting is requested).

Course Communication

Your instructor or TA will reply to e-mail as soon as possible but the maximum is 48 hours not including weekends or holidays.

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 you 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	● Welcome, Introductions, Textbook, Syllabus, Canvas, ETC.
MODULE 1 INTRO TO SPORTS COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA RELATIONS	● Intro to Sports Communication and Relations
MODULE 2 INTRODUCING SPORT PUBLIC RELATIONS WITH STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT	● Introducing Sport Public Relations Lecture and Activity
MODULE 3	● 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	● 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	● 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	● CoSIDA, Essential Skills ● Responsibilities of SID, Pros and Cons ● Creating Promotional Guides
MODULE 7 MIDTERM EXAM	● MID-TERM EXAM
MODULE 8 EVENT MANAGEMENT AND MANAGING THE SPORT ORGANIZATION-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP	● 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 ● Identifying influential media, serving media at events, developing media policy and maximizing media exposure
MODULE 9 PUBLICITY CAMPAIGNS	● Early Stage of Campaign Development ● Continuing the Campaign and Ethical Considerations
MODULE 10 CRISIS MANAGEMENT	● 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	● 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	● Global Mega Events, Expanded Coverage, National Sports Orgs ● Law and Media Relations
MODULE 13 FINAL PRESENTATIONS	● Presentations
MODULE 14	● ***FINAL EXAM***

Policies

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 #.

Online Privacy Policy

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Academic Integrity

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 Honor Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. For more information visit the Honor Code web page at http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/ or contact Student Judicial Affairs, P202 **Peabody Hall, 392-1261.**

Current PR Department AI Approach

1. Ultimately, you are here to learn how to be a communications professional, which means you need to learn the basics of writing and creative thinking and be able to execute those skills on your own.
2. AI can be useful to help and refine, but ultimately the work needs to be your own.
   a. If AI wrote your assignment, that is not your own work
   b. It's best as a brainstorming tool
3. You need to be transparent when AI is used.
   a. Each assignment will state if AI use is allowed or not, and if allowed how documentation needs to take place
4. When you use AI, use it creatively.
   a. Be thoughtful with your prompts
   b. Use multiple prompts
5. FACT CHECK
   a. Do not trust anything that is created without checking anything it produces

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

In this class I want you to produce all your own work without generative AI's assistance. It is important for me to be able to ascertain what you know and can produce unaided on your own. The use of generative AI for your assignments in this class is 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 and if evidence is found that your work is AI-generated I will submit your assignment as violating the honor code.

Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this process as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations
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/.

Course Grading

Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points as articulated in the link that follows. https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx

U Matter, We Care

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

*NOTE: Topic schedule subject to change based on guest availability and other factors. There will be no change in project due date or the midterm examination.