



# RTV 4959C: SPORTS CAPSTONE

**SPRING 2025**

**Professor Ryan Hunt**

T | Period 6-8 (12:50 PM – 3:50 PM) | 3324 Weimer Hall

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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This sports capstone course is designed to get you ready for employment in your desired field within the sports industry. Usually taken in the last year of study, this course requires each student to prepare a final project and a comprehensive portfolio to assist in a job search. Students who complete this course will demonstrate progress in their written, oral and communication skills, and they will be prepared to perform well in entry-level sports media and/or communication positions.

## **COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

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

- Understand the current issues affecting the sports industry and how they relate to careers
- Learn, develop and practice the most marketable skills required in a job search
- Improve their résumé, personal brand and any supplementary materials
- Produce a portfolio to showcase examples of student's best work to professional audiences
- Implement the skills and knowledge they have obtained to produce a final capstone project

## 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.

<b>Evaluation Components</b>	<b>Points Per Component</b>	<b>% of Total Grade</b>
<b>Sports Industry Events Discussions (14)</b>	10 pts each = 140 pts	9.3%
<b>Your Sports Job Search Assignments (7)</b>	15 pts each = 105 pts	7%
<b>Résumé Development Project (4)</b> Current Résumé = 25 pts    Cover Letter = 50 pts Tailored Résumé = 25 pts    Final Résumé = 100 pts	200 pts	13.3%
<b>Personal Branding Assignments (4)</b>	25 pts each = 100 pts	6.7%
<b>Social Media Branding</b>	50 pts	3.3%
<b>Networking Connection Assignment</b>	50 pts	3.3%
<b>Mock 1-on-1 Job Interview</b> Pre-Interview Questionnaire = 25 pts 1-on-1 interview with Professor Hunt = 100 pts	125 pts	8.3%
<b>Electronic Portfolio Project (3 parts)</b> Portfolio Check 1 = 25 pts    Portfolio Check 2 = 25 pts Final Portfolio = 100 pts	150 pts	10%
<b>Capstone Project (6 parts)</b> Pitch = 25 pts                      Pre-task = 25 pts Sources/First Steps= 50 pts      Draft 1 = 50 pts Presentation: 50 points              Final = 100 pts	300 pts	20%
<b>Attendance and Class Participation (14)</b>	20 pts each = 280 pts	18.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,500 pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

## GRADING

You will be graded on a 1,500-point scale. Grades can be rounded up to the nearest percentage point at the professor's discretion.

A: 94-100% (1,402-1,500 total points)	C+: 77-79.9% (1,155-1,199)
A-: 90-93.4% (1,350-1,401)	C: 73-76.9% (1,095-1,154)
B+: 87-89.9% (1,305-1,349)	C-: 70-72.9% (1,050-1,094)
B: 83-86.9% (1,245-1,304)	D: 60-69.9% (900 -1,049)
B-: 80-82.9% (1,200-1,244)	E: 59.9% and below (Under 899)

## **READING MATERIALS**

There is no textbook for this course. Readings and resources will be posted online, including:

- *How to Prepare for Your Sports Job Search*, Brian. Clapp. eBook. [Download link available in Canvas.](#)

## **ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS**

*Specific assignment dates and deadlines to be featured in Canvas.*

### **— *SPORTS INDUSTRY CURRENT EVENTS DISCUSSIONS* (140 total points)**

Each week of the semester, we will hold discussions surrounding various topics in the sports industry, sports careers, or our guest speakers. These weekly discussions are worth 10 points each.

### **— *YOUR SPORTS JOB SEARCH ASSIGNMENTS* (105 points)**

You will read specific chapters from the provided PDF *How to Prepare for Your Sports Job Search* and respond to different prompts related to the chapter. These assignments will help you develop a plan of action searching for your job so that you will be more successful in finding a job that fits your needs and skills. There will be seven assignments worth 15 points each.

### **— *PROFESSIONAL BRANDING* (100 points)**

Knowing your personal brand can not only help you market yourself to future employers, it can help you find organizations that are a good fit. It is important to be able to articulate your personal brand before you begin your job search. There will be four assignments worth 25 points each.

**— *PROJECTS*** - This course includes six different projects, all designed to help you better prepare for your post-graduate job search. All projects will be expected to be of high-quality work. On days projects are due, students will present a report on their work in class and receive feedback from the instructor and classmates. Projects will be posted on the course website.

- **Capstone Project** (300 points) - This assignment allows you to produce a new project according to your major option and interests. Eligibility: (1) You may not complete a project in a genre unless you have completed specific coursework for that genre. (2) It needs to be a new project. Your capstone cannot be a rehash of a previous project, whether produced for class or not. Your pitch must be approved prior to starting your project. The final project is worth 100 points, plus a presentation of your project topic worth 50 points. The other 150 points are distributed throughout the semester for checkpoints during the composition of the project.

- **Résumé Development Project** (200 points) - The purpose of the resume assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to take an inventory of your skills and experiences as you begin to think about your professional career. Your resume should be 1-2 pages, for the purpose of submitting to potential employers. Must be designed to the specifics of the assignment. This assignment includes your current résumé (25 points), a more tailored resume focused on one specific job (25 points), a cover letter (50 points) and your final ready-to-use résumé (100 points).

- **Mock 1-on-1 Job Interview** (125 points) - Before you land any job, you almost certainly will have a job interview (or multiple) to determine your fit for the role (professionally and organizationally). In this assignment, you will have a 1-on-1 mock interview with Professor Hunt that will last 15-20 minutes. As a reminder, I hired dozens of people – from interns to entry-level staffers to senior management – at *Sports Illustrated*. There are keys to excelling in any job interview. This assignment will help you prepare for what the process is like. Before the interview, students must complete one pre-interview questionnaire (worth 25 points).

- **Social Media Branding** (50 points) - Always be aware that professional contacts might search for you online. Plus, one thing hiring managers will do when scouting job candidates is peruse your social media accounts. Are you happy with what they will discover? While there are many places to interact and promote yourself online, the primary websites that stand out as essential venues for personal branding are LinkedIn, Facebook, and X/Twitter (and don't overlook Instagram). Do you have a LinkedIn page? Does it accurately represent the work you've done to date? Are your other social media accounts a good representation of the professional you're aspiring to be?

- **Networking Assignment** (50 points) – Your goal is to start to build your network of meaningful connections. Make friends before you need them. As part of this assignment, you will reach out to at least two professionals – either ones we feature in this class or one in your selected field – to schedule a conversation and build a relationship. You will need to submit a PDF of your emails or messages with the professional.

- **Portfolio Site Project** (150 points) - Each student will accumulate items for their portfolio. This portfolio should help prepare you for the opportunities and responsibilities of a college graduate. It will be graded on its quality and completeness, meaning that it should provide excellent artifacts of student learning, as well as a sufficient quantity of such works. Your portfolio must include your capstone project and all “portfolio-required” assignments. The portfolio is designed to house your work done in various classes and/or experiences and must be available online.

### ***ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION*** (280 POINTS)

We only meet once a week. Attendance in the class is required, and your active participation will ensure you get the most out of this class. Unexcused absences will result in deductions from the attendance and participation score for each missed class **(20 points per class)**.

Excused absences include approved UF attendance exceptions. In all instances of extended excused absences, the instructor and student will work out a plan for completing missed assignments. In case of illness, the instructor should be notified in advance and a physician's note may be required. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with [UF policies found here](#).

Students are expected to participate in all class discussions. Please turn off cell phones prior to class. You are also expected to arrive on time for each class.

## **COURSE GUESTS**

The class will also include guest speakers designed to showcase various elements of the sports media industry who can help shed light into their own personal stories, histories, career paths and job searches. In the interest of honest and frank discussions, the comments of guest speakers are strictly off-the-record, unless otherwise noted. This means that they may not be published in any format, either in a print publication or on a web site, personal blog or social media. However, certain class discussions may be based off what you learned from the weekly conversations.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

There may be select opportunities to earn extra credit during the semester. Details to come in specific classes. Class attendance is required to participate in that extra-credit assignment.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

This is a workshop-style class in which we will all contribute ideas and critiques of others' work and ideas. Please use professional courtesy. Turn cell phones off. No texting (or checking your phone) in class. If you need to use your phone, please leave the room to do so. Bring laptops to class.

## **DEADLINES AND DEDUCTIONS**

Journalism is a deadline business. They're called deadlines for a reason. Failure to meet assignment deadlines will result in up to a 10% deduction in the first 24-hour period it's late. Late assignments beyond 24 hours may not be accepted, and could be graded as a zero, unless an emergency can be documented. If an illness or a personal emergency prevents you from completing an assignment on time, written documentation will be required ASAP.

Fact errors will result in a minimum of 10% deduction, depending on the scope of the errors and the assignment.

## **A NOTE ABOUT AI**

Does AI belong in journalism? In this class, it does not. You are here to learn, improve and get more reps, so my No. 1 expectation for you is to simply do your own work. Don't take the easy way out. The only AI welcomed here is Allen Iverson.

In the real world, you would be fired (or be forced to resign) if you turned in a piece of work to your editors with your name on it that was written or had significant elements generated by AI. Major companies have been embarrassed by using AI and passing it off as human work. And jobs have been eliminated across the industry.

In this class, I will randomly pick certain stories over the course of the semester and run them through multiple AI checkers. If assignments are flagged as generated by AI by each detector (over a percentage determined by your instructor), the assignment will not be accepted. You may receive a 0 for assignment plus a half-letter grade deduction from your final grade.

Using AI is akin to plagiarism. And that is one of the biggest sins in journalism. Do your own work.

If you have any degree of uncertainty, please ask.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/HONOR CODE**

Plagiarism is one of the biggest sins in journalism. Do your own work.

Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Violation of the honor code includes plagiarizing material from other sources, using artificial intelligence (such as ChatGPT, see note above), fabricating material or using any work done by another person for a class assignment. Even copying photos from the internet could lead to a copyright claim in the real world. See the Department of Journalism website, as well as UF guidelines (including the [UF Student Honor Code](#)), for specific outline of violations.

Any violations of this code will be reported to the Dean of Students. Failure to comply with this commitment will result in disciplinary action compliant with the UF Student Honor Code Procedures.

## **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

## **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 this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are [available to students here](#).

### **CLASSROOM NEEDS**

Students requesting special classroom needs must first register with the Dean of Students Office, which will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide the documentation to the instructor.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the [Disability Resource Center](#) (352-392-8565) 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 EVALUTIONS**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on a minimum of 10 criteria. These evaluations [are conducted online here](#). Evaluations are typically open during the last three weeks of the semester, but announcements will be made giving specific times when they are open. Summary results of these evaluations are available to students at the evaluations website URL above.

### **COURSE GRADING**

Students will be graded in accordance with UF policies for assigning grade points [as articulated at this website](#).

### **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](mailto: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.

### **THE INSTRUCTOR**

Ryan Hunt is a Sports Lecturer at the University of Florida. A 1997 graduate of UF's College of Journalism and Communications, Ryan spent 25 years at *Sports Illustrated*, including the last four as

its co-Editor-in-Chief. Ryan managed SI's editorial staff, leading a team of experienced reporters and editors and overseeing the digital strategy – from daily content planning to major event coverage to franchise development.

At SI, Ryan started as an entry-level Associate Producer in Atlanta before climbing the ranks – Homepage Editor, News Director, Associate Managing Editor to Executive Editor – to become one of only 11 people to hold the top editorial title at the brand. Hunt won a Sports Emmy in 2017 for Outstanding Digital Innovation for his involvement on the SI/Life VR 'Capturing Everest' project, the first ever bottom-to-top climb of Mount Everest captured in virtual reality.

He grew up in the Tampa-St. Petersburg area and was the sports editor of the *The Independent Florida Alligator* during his time at UF. Nearly 30 years ago, I was in the same position as you are today.