**COM 49505:  Sports Communication**

**MWF 11:30-12:20**

**BRNG 1232**

**Spring 2022**

Josh Boyd, Professor, Associate Head, and Director of Undergraduate Studies

Brian Lamb School of Communication

[boyd@purdue.edu](file:///%5C%5C%5C%5Citifs05.itap.purdue.edu%5C%5Ccla_homedirs%5C%5C1366%5C%5Cboyd%5C%5CMy%20Documents%5C%5CCOM%20495%5C%5CUrlBlockedError.aspx%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)                              Cell phone:  given in class

Office hours: T 9-10, F 9-11, and by appointment Office: BRNG 2274E, 494.3333

I want you to learn from and enjoy this course, and I certainly don’t want you to suffer confusion.  If you have questions about the course or about specific assignments, you are welcome to email me any time or to call or text me on my cell phone any time before 11 p.m. If you email me before 5 p.m., I’ll make every effort to reply to you that same day. During my office hours, you can come by in person or reach me on my office phone. When texting, please begin your text with, “This is (your name) from 495.”

*Course overview*

Sports are an important part of culture. Events like the Super Bowl, Winter Olympic Games, and Indiana’s own Indianapolis 500 are reminders of how communication and sport are intertwined in our personal identities. Of course, COVID-19 has affected sports communication as it has affected almost every aspect of American life in the past two years. The Kentucky Derby took place in September instead of May. Professional baseball, basketball, and hockey seasons all overlapped. And for the first time since World War II, the quadrennial Summer Olympics didn’t happen on schedule! The continuing debates over attendance and athlete health at sporting events mean that COVID-influenced sports communication isn’t going away any time soon. These corona-unique challenges to sports communication will get a lot of our attention this semester, along with more conventional sports communication topics such as crisis communication, recruiting, branding, amateur/professional tensions, labor/management struggles, fan identity, and naming.  This class will study the construction of meaning through sport as well as some of the many professions related to sports communication.

This class will help you learn to **think critically about** sports communication, but it will also help you learn to **do** sports communication.  Through the use of sports books and movies, guest speakers (mostly via Zoom), and case studies, you will learn not only about sports communication as a field of study and a profession, but you will learn to be more thoughtful consumers of sports communication in its various forms.

*Course objectives:  At the end of the course, you will be able to…*

1. Describe multiple ways that sports communication constructs and maintains culture.
2. Explain changes in sports communication related to race and gender.
3. Guide 20 minutes of discussion on a sports communication topic.
4. List five key events in the last 100 years of sports communication.
5. List and analyze issues related to naming in sports.
6. Create a basic sports crisis communication plan.
7. Review and critique a book about sports communication.
8. Frame labor-management sports communication issues from both perspectives.

*Textbook*

There is no required textbook for this class. There are, however, several readings that are listed on the syllabus and available electronically on the Brightspace course website. So the content for this class consists of (a) class lectures and videos, (b) class activities, and (c) readings available online. *In order to keep up with the class and be able to succeed on the assignments and quizzes, you’ll need to keep up with the lectures, activities, and readings.*

*Attendance*

In order to adapt to the potential disruptions this semester will face, all assignments can be turned in online. Due dates are strictly enforced; assignments *cannot be made up or turned in late UNLESS you are on a university-sponsored event, doing mandatory military service, or suffering the loss of someone close to you.* In these cases, you will either receive an automatic extension to the next class session, or (if the assignment is something that cannot be reproduced, such as a response to a guest or a pop quiz) your grade on the preceding assignment will count twice. On the larger assignments, you may turn them in early with no penalty or late with one letter grade reduction for each day late. There is some measure of grace; though there are 150 points in the daily assignment part of the grade calculation, there will be at least 170 points possible on daily assignments, and you keep whatever points you earn (even if your number of points is greater than 150).

If you miss class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments *from another student*. If you are quarantined or isolated due to COVID, you can email me on the day of your absence for a Boilercast of the missed class.

If an emergency prevents you from being in class, let me know as soon as you can. It is much easier to work out arrangements *before* an absence than *after.* ***And if COVID or anything else causes you to miss more than 1 week of assignments, talk to me so we can work out an arrangement.***

*Grading wait time*

I make every effort to grade work that you turn in within one week of the due date. Sometimes, I’ll even grade it immediately after you turn it in on Brightspace! Please note that this doesn’t mean you can resubmit a revised version if you have the good fortune to have your paper graded early. Once you submit it to Brightspace, it is the finished product that I’m going to grade. If you have questions or want me to look at something BEFORE you turn it in, please communicate via email.

*Plagiarism and academic dishonesty*

For information on Purdue’s policy on plagiarism and academic dishonesty, please see <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/index.html>

By being in this class, you are affirming your commitment to Purdue’s honor pledge:

“As a Boilermaker pursuing academic excellence, I pledge to be honest and true in all that I do. Accountable together—we are Purdue.”

You are responsible for knowing the university policy on what constitutes academic dishonesty.  Here is the short version:  **ALWAYS** give credit—I will assume that everything you turn in (unless otherwise noted) is your own personal work, not borrowed work or group-created work.

**If you turn in something without giving credit to others whose ideas or words you used (intentionally or unintentionally), you will definitely receive a 0 for the assignment**; additional consequences can include failure of the course and even expulsion from the university.

If you collaborate with someone else on an assignment and turn in substantially similar work, you are both guilty of academic dishonesty—even if only your reference pages are identical.

If you turn in work that uses someone else's exact words with no quotation marks around them, you are guilty of plagiarism.

If you use historical information from a website but don’t cite it in your paper and in your reference list, you have violated standards of academic integrity.

If you use citations in the reference list but not in the paper, you have violated Purdue’s academic integrity policy.

If you cite something in a paper without a corresponding reference in the reference list, you have violated Purdue’s academic integrity policy.

If you turn in something written by someone else, expect to fail the course and be reported to the Dean of Students.  Do your own work.  Give credit where credit is due.

*Other Necessary Information*

Quite a bit of syllabus information is generally true across the university, and that information is available on Brightspace.

*Grading*

An A in this course recognizes superior work, work that exceeds the basic requirements.  Work that meets the basic requirements of an assignment earns a C.  Do not assume that turning in acceptable work is the same thing as turning in A work. That said, final grades in this class are typically a lot higher than they are in COM 204, which some of you have probably taken with me.

*Assignments: more detailed instructions and rubrics will be provided on Brightspace.*

*Lower stakes*

\*Small writing assignments will allow you to engage with sports communication subjects and, in some cases, demonstrate some creative thinking (10-20 points each).  Total value: 150 points.

\*There are several online quizzes and paragraph reflections on the readings that will reward you for being prepared for class. These aren’t worth many points apiece (usually 5), but they do add up. And doing the readings BEFORE class will help you get a lot more out of class discussion. The online quizzes can be taken up to 3 times—you keep the score of your highest attempt. Due dates will be assigned throughout the semester. Total value: 50 points.

*Higher stakes*

\*The final exam will evaluate understanding of concepts and self-reflection rather than memorization of facts—it will be open note and online (100 points). There is no midterm.

\*Presentation on sports communication aspects of a nonfiction sports book (see attached list of possible titles) (50 points)

 --book must be from the attached list OR approved by me

 --book must be **nonfiction** and **sports-related**

 --in-class presentations will begin in February

 --presentations must be 5-8 minutes, with the following structure:

 \*summary of the book

 \*major sports communication aspects of the book

 \*most interesting idea from the book

 \*recommendation: should other people read this book? Why or why not?

\*Labor/management exercise (50 points): as Major League Baseball is currently in a lockout,

we will simulate labor/management negotiations between MLB and the MLB Players Association. Each of you will be either in a players’ union group or an ownership group. This exercise will prompt you to gain an understanding of the process of collective bargaining within a sports context. Again, you will make an opening statement and then answer questions from your counterparts. *You must be present, physically or virtually, to earn points on this assignment.*

\*Sports crisis exercise (50 points): in small groups, you will prepare crisis plans for a sports

organization of your choice. Then in class, I will present you with crisis descriptions for which you will have to (a) prepare and deliver a response and (b) take questions—some of them may be hostile—while being as transparent as possible but still protecting your organization. *You must be present, physically or virtually, to earn points on this assignment.*

\*Guide 20 minutes of class about a specific topic in sports communication (50 points)

 --your guidance must include one reading and examples other than the originally assigned

material

 --visual aids are required

 --you might choose to include a short engagement activity (up to 10 minutes of your 20)

*Scheduling*

The two group activities already have their dates set, but you will be able to choose your dates for class discussion and your book presentation. Once you have chosen a date, however, you must either present on that date OR find someone to trade with you. In other words, once you have committed to a date, you are responsible to make sure that someone uses that date.

# Determination of final grades

Final grades are calculated as follows:

 Homework assignments 150

 Online final exam 100

 Book presentation 50

 Reading quizzes/reflections 50

 Labor/mgmt. exercise 50

 Crisis exercise 50

 Leading discussion 50

TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 500

Grading scale:

448-500: A (no grades of A- will be awarded)

438-447: B+

408-437: B

398-407: B-

388-397: C+

358-387: C

348-357: C-

338-347: D+

308-337: D

298-307: D-

There will be no curve on individual assignments, but there is a possibility (but no guarantee) of a curve on final grades to result in a better grade distribution; I guarantee that at least 10% of the class will earn As. Generally in this class, the percentage is much higher than that.

# Grading standards

Assignments must meet all basic requirements in order to receive a score of C (average).  No matter how creative a paper or presentation is, it will not receive an A (or a B or even a C) if any required element of the assignment is missing.  In other words, a paper has to meet the requirements of a C before it can even be considered for a B or an A.  I will give specific evaluation criteria and requirements for each assignment. Part of being successful in this class (or in life!) is following directions.

*VERY tentative course schedule (subject to change to accommodate guest speakers)*

**Readings should be completed in advance of the scheduled class date; we will discuss the readings on the day they appear on the schedule.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Topic | Readings | Announcements |
| Mon., Jan. 10 | Introduction |   | College Football Playoff National Championship |
| Wed., Jan. 12 | Sports and society  | The Soccer Match | Sign up for book and discussion dates. |
| Fri., Jan. 14 | Community in sport | Forlorn Canadians | DUE: What is a sport?  |
| Mon., Jan. 17 | **MLK DAY—NO CLASS** |  |  |
| Wed., Jan. 19 | Community in sport/sports festivals | Cleveland Browns |   |
| Fri., Jan. 21 | Sports fan culture |  | DUE: Franchise move—new name or not? |
| Mon., Jan. 24 | Sports fan culture | Derby Don’ts (x 2)Heckler  | Bring a ticket stub or email me a photo of you at a sporting event. |
| Wed., Jan. 26 | Sports fan culture | Oh Say Can You See |  |
| Fri., Jan. 28 | Sports and religion | A Tokyo Sequel |  |
| Mon., Jan. 31 | Gender and sports | NCAA’s “March Madness” Brand | **Book presentations begin** |
| Wed., Feb. 2 | Gender and sports | Throw like a girl | DUE: League name |
| Fri., Feb. 4 | Performing identity in sports | Martina Navratilova | Winter Olympics begin |
| Mon., Feb. 7 | Performing identity in sports | Casey Martin | DUE: Acceptable accommodations |
| Wed., Feb. 9 | Politics/nationalism and sports | NASA Astronaut Soccer Ball |  |
| Fri., Feb. 11 | Politics/nationalism and sports | U.S. World Cup bidAdvantage, Women’s Tennis | Super Bowl Sunday: Feb. 13 |
| Mon., Feb. 14 | Olympics discussion |  |  |
| Wed., Feb. 16 | Labor/management relations | Roger GoodellBaseball braces for lockout |  |
| Fri., Feb. 18 | Labor/management relations |  |  |
| Mon., Feb. 21 | Group preparation for labor/management exercise |  |  |
| Wed., Feb. 23 | **Labor/management exercise** |  |  |
| Fri., Feb. 25 | Race and ethnicity in sport  | Baseball’s Dearth |  |
| Mon., Feb. 28 | Race and ethnicity in sport  | North Dakota |  |
| Wed., March 2 | Parent/child interaction in sports | Paradox of Excellence (only pp. 316-324) |  |
| Fri., March 4 | Careers in sports communication   | Game Over (podcasts) |  |
| Mon., March 7 | Player-coach relationships | Coach value in collegeHow Simone BilesRick Pitino’s New Madness |  |
| Wed., March 9 | Player/coach/team communication |  |  |
| Fri., March 11 | TBA (Guest speaker) |  | ***This is the last day to drop a class.*** |
| Mon., March 14  | **SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS** |  |  |
| Wed., March 16 | **SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS** |  | NCAA basketball tournaments begin |
| Fri., March 18 | **SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS** |  |  |
| Mon., March 21 | Sports and mythology: the Perfect Game (VIDEO ONLY) |  |  |
| Wed., March 23?? | Sports and mythology: Classic sports myths, Language and idioms (VIDEO ONLY) | David and GoliathPeyton Has Nothing |  |
| Fri., March 25?? | GUEST SPEAKER ON VIDEO: David Boudia, Olympic Gold Medalist |  | DUE: Sports idiom |
| Mon., March 28 | Mascots and cheerleaders | Just Cheer, BabyBuffalo mascot |  |
| Wed., March 30 | Crisis communication in sports | \*756 |  |
| Fri., April 1 | Crisis communication in sports |  | *Major League Baseball’s season is scheduled to start March 31.* |
| Mon., April 4 | Group preparation time for crisis activity |  |  |
| Wed., April 6 | **Crisis exercise** |  |  |
| Fri., April 8 | Sponsorship, promotion, and athlete branding | Cheering for TeamsTexas FootballIt’s Zombie Bowl Season |  |
| Mon., April 11 | Sponsorship, promotion, and athlete branding | No Olympic Fame | DUE: Crisis reflection |
| Wed., April 13 | Logos, names, apparel, merchandising | *Stud* chapter |  |
| Fri., April 15 | Commodification of sport |  |  |
| Mon., April 18 | Commodification of sport | Corporatas/communitas |  |
| Wed., April 20 | Commodification of sport | No Olympic FameHow Sports Ate Academic Freedom |  |
| Fri., April 22 | Nostalgia: collectibles | A relieverHonest HonusThe player-led venture | Bring a piece of sports memorabilia for show and tell! |
| Mon., April 25 | Nostalgia: the comeback |  |  |
| Wed., April 27 | Communication and sport in the future  |  |  |
| Fri., April 29 | Exam review |  |  |
| Mon., May 2 | **FINAL EXAM WEEK** |  | May 7—Kentucky Derby |

**NOTABLE SPORTS NONFICTION: Please confirm your choice with me so there will be no duplications. You are welcome to choose nonfiction sports books not on this list, but you need to clear them with me first.**

*The Beckham Experiment: How the World’s Most Famous Athlete Tried to Conquer America* (Grant Wahl)

*Beer and Circus* (Murray Sperber)

*The Boys of Summer* (Roger Angell)

*Chasing the Rodeo* (W. K. Stratton)

*A Civil War: Army vs. Navy* (John Feinstein)

*Death in the Afternoon* (Ernest Hemingway)

*Destination Basketball* (Hemminger & Bensch)

*Eight Men Out* (Eliot Asinof)

*Friday Night Lights* (H. G. Bissinger)

*Game of Shadows (*Fainaru-Wada & Williams)

*Imperfect: An Improbable Life* (Jim Abbott)

*The Inner Game of Tennis* (W. Timothy Gallwey)

*Inside Edge* (Christine Brennan)

*Into Thin Air* (Jon Krakauer)

*Juicing the Game* (Howard Bryant)

*Life on the Run* (Bill Bradley)

*Little Girls in Pretty Boxes* (Joan Ryan)

*Moneyball* (Michael Lewis)

*Mint Condition*  (Dave Jamieson)

*The Perfect Mile: Three Athletes, One Goal, and Less than Four Minutes to Achieve It* (Neal Bascomb)

*Quiet Strength* (Tony Dungy)

*Sacred Hoops* (Phil Jackson)

*Seabiscuit* (Laura Hillenbrand)

*A Season on the Brink* (John Feinstein)

*Sowbelly (Monte Burke)*

*Stud* (Kevin Conley)

*The Sweet Science* (A. J. Liebling)

*Take Time for Paradise*  (A. Bartlett Giamatti)

*They Call Me Coach* (John Wooden)

*They Call Me Mister 500* (Andy Granatelli)

*Those Guys Have All the Fun: Inside the World of ESPN* (James Andrew Miller)

*Veeck as in Wreck* (Bill Veeck)

*When Pride Still Mattered* (David Maraniss)

*A Whole New Ballgame* (Sue Macy)

*The Wildest Ride: A History of NASCAR* (Joe Menzer)

*The 34-Ton Bat* (Steve Rushin)