

MCOM 2315.001
SPORTS COMMUNICATION
Fall 2020

Instructor: Dr. Terry L. Britt
Class Schedule: MWF 12:20-1:15 p.m.
Room: CAS 257
Office hours: Tu 12:30-2:30 p.m., W 11 a.m.-noon, and by appointment
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SPECIAL NOTE: This syllabus has been constructed on the premise that we will be able to complete the course as scheduled in a hybrid format with face-to-face class sessions on Mondays and Wednesdays, and online (via Zoom) class sessions on Fridays. The syllabus and all assignment requirements within it are subject to change, particularly if public health conditions necessitate converting the course to online-only at some point during the semester.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION:

- A. An exploration into the theory and practice of communication across specialized contexts sports professionals face and the development of journalistic and strategic communication skills needed to succeed in them, including areas such as the press conference, sports feature content, and sports reporting.

II. Student Learning Objectives

- A. Students will be able to:

Competency: Public Speaking

1. Display and master invention, disposition, style, and delivery skills in the presentation of informative, persuasive, and invitational messages to effectively impact a given audience. (Program Learning Objective – Public Speaking)
 - a) To analyze and practice communication that creates or results from complex social organizations.
 - b) To understand, analyze and practice informative and ethical written and oral communication in forms and styles appropriate for various situations, purposes and audiences.
 - c) To identify, understand and practice various professional communication roles in sports.

Competency: Analysis and Systemic Inquiry

- 2. Access and analyze appropriate scholarly sources necessary to understand and analyze communication-based research questions and problems.
 - a) To identify, access, and comprehend appropriate scholarly sources necessary to answer communication-based research questions, problems, or issues.
 - b) To utilize appropriate scholarly sources in group discussion and analysis of topics particular to the social and cultural dimensions of sport, its participants, and its organizations.

Competency: Mediated Presentation

- 3. Gather and effectively communicate information to targeted audiences in a variety of mediated formats.
 - a) Demonstrate skills essential to media professionals and the development of content for dissemination to identifiable audiences.
 - b) Produce content appropriate to specific media channels, including print or digital news, audio-based media, and public relations.

III. Course Evaluation

Topic analysis short papers (3)	15%			
Sports event game story	20%			
Audio Podcast Feature	20%			
Press Conference (including advance and wrap-up)	20%			
Final Exam	25%			
TOTAL	100%			
A = 90-100%	B = 80-89%	C=70-79%	D=60-69%	F=0-59%

IV. Required Texts

A. Required:

- 1. Billings, A.C., Butterworth, M.L. & Turman, P.D. (2017). *Communication and Sport, Surveying the Field, 3rd Ed.*

V. ASSIGNMENTS

- A. (15%) Topic Analysis Short Papers (3): Approximately once per month, you will produce a topic analysis paper (4-5 pgs., double-spaced) on a topic of your choosing from among those we have discussed in class. Personal experiences of sport-related topics are welcome within the paper, but please provide an analysis of the experience that clearly ties to issues and concepts we have discussed. I strongly encourage you to draw upon published works with proper citation (APA style

preferred), not just our course textbook but other relevant texts. Papers will be evaluated based on content, grammar, and structure.

- B. (20%) Sports event game story (various due dates): Due to the postponement of fall sports at UT Tyler because of the COVID-19 pandemic, I will locate video archives of sports event, which you will use to produce a game story in a style you would see on a digital or print news product (we will discuss elements of sports reporting in class). Alternatively, you may, with prior approval from me, cover a live high school or other college sports contest (you will need to contact in advance the proper administrator for a press pass into the event, and please observe all safety precautions in place). In either case, you will notify me upon the completion of the event (or your viewing of an archived event), from which time you will have 24 hours to produce and submit a 500-750 game story. Work will be evaluated based on quality of content, story structure, and proper grammar and punctuation.
- C. (20%) Audio podcast feature interview (Due Oct. 2): This interview-based assignment will have you focus on a current UT Tyler student-athlete of your choice. You will produce of 3-5-minute audio spotlight which will be graded on knowledge of the subject, narrative building with identification of your athlete's main theme and supporting details, expression and organization of ideas. You will also be assessed on strong storytelling content, your delivery and elements of the production of the audio.
- D. (20%) Press conference (Due dates TBA): In all likelihood, this assignment will involve a mock press conference I will set up with a UT Tyler athlete on a specific class meeting date. The assignment consists of three parts: First, a short advance press release announcing the press conference and providing relevant background information, plus a set of five (5) well-developed questions you would like to ask at the press conference; second, activity and participation in the press conference itself; and, third, a follow-up press release (250-300 words) highlighting the content from the press conference.
- E. (25%) Final exam (Due Dec. 9, 2:30 p.m.): The final exam will be administered through Canvas and cover materials discussed in class, readings from throughout the semester, and terms and concepts from your media production assignments. You may take the final exam between 8 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 8, and 12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9. You will have a two-hour time limit for the exam, making the latest possible submission time to be 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 9.

VI. ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE UPLOADED TO CANVAS.

- A. Your analysis papers and other assignments will be submitted to Canvas. Deadlines are vital elements in every form of sports communication and cannot be missed. A missed deadline will result in a 15% deduction per day.

VII. Policies

- A. **Course Withdrawal:** The last date to withdraw from classes is **November 2, 2020**.

B. Final Examination Due Date: Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 2:30 p.m.

- C. **Electronic Devices:** Turn off all electronic devices including cell phones and MP3 players. Allowing a cell phone or other device to ring during class is rude and disrupts class. No text messaging or checking the time on your cell phone during class. Keep these devices in your backpack during class.
- D. **Use of Computers in Class:** Do not use computers during class for reading/writing e-mail, surfing the Web, playing games, working on assignments for other classes, or writing letters. You may use a laptop computer only for taking class notes. If you use your laptop for any other purpose, I will require you to immediately close the computer.
- E. **Assignment Policy:**
1. Assignments will be given throughout the semester. Students are responsible for all course materials, including, but not limited to, class lectures, handouts, workbook and textbook reading assignments.
 2. Assignments and due dates may be changed at the instructor's discretion with fair notice to students.
 3. Students must complete all assignments in order to pass the course. This does not mean that merely completing all assignments guarantees the student will pass the course.
 4. Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due at the beginning of class.
 5. All papers must be typed or word-processed using the format required for the assignment.
 6. Spelling, grammar, and structure are as important as the content of any written work.
- F. **Late Assignments:** Late assignments are discouraged and will be assessed a penalty prior to evaluation. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the date specified.
- G. **Attendance and Tardiness Policy:** Students are expected to attend class. **If you must miss a class session due to an illness (doctor or health clinic note required), funeral of an immediate family member (copy of obituary or service program required), or university-sponsored activity, please contact me as soon as possible to inform me of your expected absence.**

Five or more absences from class, unless resulting from a prolonged illness that requires the student to remain at home, will result in the deduction of one letter grade from the final course grade. See the current UT Tyler catalog for the university's policy on student responsibility for missed classes and assignments. Be familiar with the university's drop policy. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to religious observance or university-sponsored activities should inform the instructor by the second class meeting. **Students over 15 minutes late**

are considered absent. If a student must be absent the day an exam or assignment deadline is scheduled, he/she must notify the instructor before class time. No make-up tests or assignment deadline extension will be allowed if the instructor is not given a legitimate excuse before the time of the exam or assignment deadline.

H. Class schedule (subject to change)

Aug. 24 – Sports Communication icebreaker activity

Aug. 26 – Key points of course expectations; Overview of audio podcast assignment; begin discussion of Chapter 1 “Introduction to Communication and Sport”

Aug. 28 – (Online) Continue discussion of Ch. 1

Aug. 31 – Sports reporting workshop (Dr. Britt)

Sept. 2 – Sports reporting workshop, Part 2 (Dr. Britt)

Sept. 4 – (Online) Discussion of Chapter 2 “Community in Sport”

Sept. 7 – No class session for Labor Day holiday

Sept. 9 – Discussion of Chapter 3 “Sports Media: Navigating the Landscape”

Sept. 11 – (Online) Continue discussion of Ch. 3

Sept. 14 – Discussion of Chapter 4 “Sport Fan Cultures”

Sept. 16 – In-class activity – Fan identity and origin: Attend class in your favorite sports team shirt, jersey, cap, or jacket and be prepared to share your stories of fandom, what influenced you to become a fan of the team, and best and worst moments as a fan.

Sept. 18 – (Online) – Continue discussion of Ch. 4

Sept. 21 & 23 – Discussion of Chapter 5 “Sport and Mythology”

Sept. 25 – (Online) Overview of press conference assignment; Topic analysis paper due via Canvas by 12:20 p.m. (start of class).

Sept. 28 & 30 – Discussion of Chapter 6 “Gender in Sport”

Oct. 2 – Discussion of Chapter 7 “Race and Ethnicity in Sport”; Audio podcast assignment due by 12:20 p.m. (start of class)

NOTE: Remainder of October schedule subject to change for press conference activities.

Oct. 5 & 7 – Discussion of Chapter 8 “Politics and Nationalism in Sport”

Oct. 9 – (Online) Discussion of Chapter 9 “Performing Identity in Sport”

Oct. 12 – Continue discussion of Ch. 9

Oct. 14 & Oct. 16 (Online) – Discussion of Chapter 10 “Communication and Sport in Parent-Child Interactions”

Oct. 19 & 21 – Discussion of Chapter 11 “Player-Coach Relationships in Sport”

Oct. 23 (Online) – Special topic discussion: Coaches and sport participant experiences; Topic analysis paper due by 12:20 p.m. (start of class)

Oct. 26 & 28 – Discussion of Chapter 12 “Small Groups/Teams in Sport”

Oct. 30 (Online) – Special topic discussion: Individual vs. team sports; tentative due date for completion of press conference assignment

Nov. 2 & 4 – Discussion of Chapter 13 “Crisis Communication in Sports Organizations”

Nov. 6 (Online) – Special topic discussion: Reporting when things go wrong

Nov. 9 & 11 – Discussion of Chapter 14 “The Commodification of Sport”

Nov. 13 (Online) – Special topic discussion: Why we need sports souvenirs

Nov. 16 & 18 – Discussion of Chapter 15 “Sports Gaming”

Nov. 20 (Online) – A brief tour through the history of sports video games; Topic analysis paper due by 12:20 p.m. (start of class)

Nov. 23-27: No class meetings – Thanksgiving break.

Nov. 30 – Discussion of Chapter 16 “Communication and Sport in the Future”

Dec. 2 – Final exam review session

Dec. 4 – No class meeting

Dec. 8 – Final exam (via Canvas) opens at 8 a.m.

Dec. 9 – Final exam due by 2:30 p.m.

Additional Syllabus Information

Important Covid-19 Information for Classrooms and Laboratories

Students are required to wear face masks covering their nose and mouth, and follow social distancing guidelines, at all times in public settings (including classrooms and laboratories), as specified by [Procedures for Fall 2020 Return to Normal Operations](#). The UT Tyler community of Patriots views adoption of these practices consistent with its [Honor Code](#) and a sign of good citizenship and respectful care of fellow classmates, faculty, and staff.

Students who are feeling ill or experiencing symptoms such as sneezing, coughing, or a higher than normal temperature will be excused from class and should stay at home and may join the class remotely. Students who have difficulty adhering to the Covid-19 safety policies for health reasons are also encouraged to join the class remotely. Students needing additional accommodations may contact the Office of Student Accessibility and Resources at University Center 3150, or call (903) 566-7079 or email saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Recording of Class Sessions

Class sessions may be recorded by the instructor for use by students enrolled in this course. Recordings that contain personally identifiable information or other information subject to FERPA shall not be shared with individuals not enrolled in this course unless appropriate consent is obtained from all relevant students. Class recordings are reserved only for the use of students enrolled in the course and only for educational purposes. Course recordings should not be shared outside of the course in any form without express permission.

University Policies

A. UT Tyler Honor Code:

1. Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do. Students Rights and Responsibilities To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

B. Campus Carry:

1. We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

C. UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University:

1. All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors. Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products. There are several cessation

programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

D. Academic Honesty Policy: Students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. Anyone caught cheating will earn a “0” for that assignment and will be subject to academic and disciplinary action. Plagiarism (the use of written and oral words or ideas of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker’s or writer’s indebtedness to that person) will not be tolerated. This includes the use of papers or other materials previously submitted to instructors in other classes, as well as video and audio recordings. Students caught plagiarizing will fail this class and be subject to academic and disciplinary action.

E. Student Standards of Academic Conduct

1. Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

a) “Cheating” includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) copying from another student’s test paper;
- (2) using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- (3) failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- (4) possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed “crib notes”. The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- (5) using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- (6) collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- (7) discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- (8) divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;

- (9) substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 - (10) paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - (11) falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - (12) taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - (13) misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- b) "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
 - c) "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
 - d) All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

F. **The U-T Tyler Writing Center** provides professional writing tutoring for all students in all disciplines. If you wish to use the Writing Center, you should plan for a minimum of two hour-long tutorials per assignment: the first to provide an initial consultation and drafting plan, and the second to follow up. Be prepared to take an active role in your learning, as you will be asked to discuss your work during your tutorial. While Writing Center tutors are happy to provide constructive criticism and teach effective writing techniques, under no circumstances will they fix, repair, or operate on your paper. Location: CAS 202. Appointments: 903-565-5995.

G. **Disability/Accessibility Services:**

1. In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application.
2. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant

Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices> , the SAR office located in the University Center, #3150 or call 903.566.7079.

H. **Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies:**

1. Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (STE 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. (For Fall, the **Census Date is September 9, 2019.**) Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.
2. Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.
3. The **Census Date (September 9, 2019)** is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:
 - a) Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
 - b) Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
 - c) Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
 - d) Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
 - e) Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

I. **State-Mandated Course Drop Policy:**

1. Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).
2. Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

J. **Student Absence due to Religious Observance:**

1. Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

B. Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities:

1. If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time, the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

K. Social Security and FERPA Statement:

1. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

L. Emergency Exits and Evacuation:

1. Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

M. UT Tyler Resources for Students:

1. UT Tyler Writing Center (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
2. UT Tyler Tutoring Center (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
3. The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
4. UT Tyler Counseling Center (903.566.7254)