

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

SPMT 480: Special Topics in Sport Management
Spring 2011

DAY/TIME:	Online	LOCATION:	Online
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OFFICE LOCATION:	Montclair, NJ	PHONE NUMBER:	917-705-0663
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is an online course. There is no specific time for class each week. You are required to participate in online discussions every week as defined in COURSE OVERVIEW below.

Special Topics in Sports Management for the spring 2011 will focus on Ethics, Public Relations, & Communication in Sports Management. What are their relationships? What are the ethics & public relations concerns in the world of sports management? For this course, you will define your personal ethics; we will look at simple public relations structures, and then use those as guides to discuss public relations questions. We will examine current and recent cases in the worlds of professional and college sports, and when appropriate, we will look to the rest of the entertainment world to compare and contrast with sports. We will examine public relations from a practical point of view. We will discuss the issues and options that face professionals, from athletic directors and coaches to PR directors and agents in their work.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To recognize and present your own ethical and moral foundation and how you communicate those beliefs;
2. To affirm or modify that foundation in the light of the class work and discussions;
3. To recognize and demonstrate the relationship between sports management professionals and the public;
4. And then to be able apply and communicate this personal framework to a series of ethical & public relations decisions made by individuals, leaders, and managers in the sports world.

COURSE OVERVIEW

All students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code. You are expected to actively participate in class discussions as defined below, complete in-class assignments and fulfill all assignments on time as described.

PARTICIPATION AND DISCUSSIONS EXPECTATIONS

Discussion Questions

The Online Discussions are a major part of this course and 50% of your final grade.

Participation Grade

The course is presented in 15 units. In each unit, you have the opportunity to earn up to 30 participation points to a maximum of 450 points total.

The unit-grading matrix used for participation in the discussions is:

Weekly Blackboard Grade Table

0 quality posts	0 points
1 quality post in the discussion	15 points (F)
2 quality posts in the Discussion:	19-21 points (D)
3-4 quality posts in the Discussion:	22-24 points (C)
5-7 quality posts in the Discussion:	25-27 points (B) plus a Sunday reflection
8+ quality posts in the Discussion:	28-30 points (A) plus a Sunday reflection

What Makes a Quality Post?

“A” Participation includes active discussion and regular interaction with the other students and inspires additional thought about the subject being discussed. The participation is well written, and demonstrates insight of the subject area. The discussion clearly shows the student synthesizes the materials and assignments. The student responds to the discussion points, with thoughtful interaction by incorporating the readings.

An “A” post could include:

1. Your response to the question.
2. Something from a reading to emphasize your point.
3. Something from your experience that helps interpret or translate a post into practical use.
4. An extension of the thread with another thought, question or point.

“B” Participation is considered acceptable participation in discussions. It includes active participation in the discussion with thoughtful contributions and integrated analysis of the topics and readings. The student read the assignments and understands the main points. The student participates regularly and interacts with others. The student responds to the discussion points and student-led discussions.

“C to F” Participation is little or no interaction with the discussion, disruptive posts, or posts that are not well thought out. Students who do not respond to all the discussion points each week or who do not interact with the student-led discussions are not performing at a satisfactory level. The student is not keeping up with the discussions and is unprepared for the class.

Remember: it is not just quantity; it is also quality of the posts. If you post 8 times in a conference but actually don't say a whole lot more than “I agree” or “that's a good point” or “thanks for sharing,” you will not earn the full points. These are good for class morale but they don't stand-alone, you must add some substance as well.

If you also do all your posts on the last day or two of the Unit week, it will negatively impact your participation grade because it limits our ability to interact with you.

Missing discussions cannot be "made up." The primary reason is that your colleagues cannot share in your discussion if you don't participate during the week.

Online Learning

Since many of you may not have participated in an online course, I will try to be as thorough as possible.

To maintain solid graduate-level performance, it is recommended that you log in and interact in the units for about an hour per day, 4-5 days per week. (*About the equivalent of travel and attendance for on-campus course*) Be sure to take the time to read all of your classmates' posts so that your responses are interactive and engaging with them.

The threaded discussions are the most important and valuable section of the class. The number of posts can be overwhelming for students who are new to online learning. Plan your time accordingly. Try not to let more than one day go by without checking into the discussions.

As discussed in “Myths about Taking Online Classes” (*listed on the last 2 pages*), the general rule of thumb for a homework-to-credit-hour ratio for both face-to-face (f2f) and online classes is 2-3 hours of reading, writing and participation in the discussions per each hour of class time. Since this is a 3-credit course you should expect to

spend *approximately* 9 hours per week to:

- Complete the reading assignment,
- Research academic responses,
- Formulate your own perspectives,
- And participate in the discussions.

With the online course, you get to choose which 6-9 hours in the week you invest in your course. To handle this workload, you must budget your time. You cannot expect to do well if you drift in occasionally and make a few gratuitous comments or if you log in during the closing minutes of the class each week. Each time that you visit the discussions, be sure to leave an audit trail (*at least one response that documents your presence in the discussion*).

Sunday Reflection- You are also required to post a weekly reflection of your discussion for the week. Has it strengthened your perspective or changed it? Why?

Special Situations: As working professionals and adult learners, your time is valuable and sometimes overcome by other events than class. Let me know if you need time or a special situation arises. I am flexible and want you to succeed and will work with you in any situation based on *legitimate* needs.

Late Assignments I expect you to deliver your assignments on time. Assignments are due to be posted or emailed (as indicated in the assignment section) no later than 3:00am EST on the day after they are due. Assignments that are late will have reduction in grade.

Late Penalties:

- 1 -2 days late: 5% point deduction
- 3-7 days late: 10% point deduction
- 8+ days late: 20% point deduction

If you are unable to log-on on a particular day that an assignment is due, you are responsible for turning in that assignment early in order to avoid late penalties. In cases of emergency, please contact me to make arrangements for turning in the assignment—in advance of the due date. *Assignments will not be accepted after the last day of class.*

Timing

Contributions to a discussion thread made after the end date for grading, 11:59 pm of the last day of the Unit (Sunday) as stated in the syllabus, will not be included in consideration of the grade. You must post in the Unit week; otherwise they will not count.

Final Thoughts

Your responses should stimulate the thinking of your classmates. A great deal of what you get out of this class will arise from our discussions. You should consider discussion units not as merely a "mandatory check-in requirement," but as an idea lab where challenges stimulate your thinking.

Listen to your classmates. They are sources of ideas and knowledge. Take pride in your posts, realizing that others will be reading them. Your posts should generate conversations that add value to the learning experience. As you post in the discussions, question if you are adding value.

Through the weekly questions, you get to examine the responses and challenge your own thoughts and beliefs, creating an interesting course. Continually work to make your arguments clear and concise. As you write your posts in this critical thinking environment, please:

- Remember that critical-thinking discussion is civil, well informed, and argues for or against an idea or point, not a person.
- Don't interpret critical questions/comments to mean that your responses are wrong, or that your classmates don't like or don't respect you.

- Don't get distracted by the confrontational connotations of the term "argument." An argument is simply what you construct to support your opinion, your claim. The more controversial the topic, the more learning that can take place.

REQUIRED READINGS

The assigned textbook for this course is:

Favorito, J. (2007) *Sports Publicity: A Practical Approach* Butterworth-Heinemann

EVALUATION

Course Grading Policies

All students are expected to participate fully, and at the highest professional standards. This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 1000 possible points.

Requirements	Points
Exam	
#1 <i>Mid-term Project</i>	150
#2 <i>Final Project</i>	150
<i>Ethical Statement</i>	100
<i>Team Project</i>	150
<i>Participation</i>	<u>450</u>
TOTAL	1000

Grading Scale

[This section MUST be included and reflect the current GMU undergraduate or graduate +/- grading scale]

A = 940 – 1000	B+ = 880 – 899	C+ = 780 – 799	D = 600 – 699
A- = 900 – 939	B = 840 – 879	C = 740 – 779	F = 0 – 599
	B- = 800 – 839	C- = 700 – 739	

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE for SPRING SEMESTER 2011

This is the general layout for the course. Because we are studying the ethics and public relations in sports, we will want the flexibility to adjust the topics as the course progresses, or as current events occur.

Course Week	Unit	Readings & Assignments	Subjects	Unit Discussion
1/24-1/30	1	Research "Ethics"	Define Ethics	Discuss your research
1/31-2/6	2	Research "Public Relations" <i>Ethical Statement Due 2/2</i>	Define Public Relations	Discuss your research
2/7-2/13	3	To be posted in course documents	Cheating	BB Discussion
2/14-2/20	4	To be posted	Creating Heros	BB Discussion
2/21-2/27	5	To be posted	Baseball & Steroids	BB Discussion
2/28-3/6	6	To be posted <i>Midterm Due 3/2</i>	College Athletes & Pay	BB Discussion
3/7-3/13	7			None
3/14-3/20	***	Spring Break	Spring Break	Spring Break
3/21-3/27	8	To be posted		BB Discussion
3/28-4/3	9	To be posted <i>Team Project Due 4/6</i>	Television	BB Discussion
4/4-4/10	10	To be posted	Radio	BB Discussion
4/11-4/17	11	To be posted	American Politics	BB Discussion
4/18-4/24	12	To be posted	Presidential Politics	BB Discussion
4/25-5/1	13	To be posted	Environment	BB Discussion
5/2-5/8	14	<i>Final project Due 5/8</i>	Current Events	
5/9-5/15	15		Current Events	

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.



- ❖ All students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>]
- ❖ University policy states that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the professor
- ❖ Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See www.gmu.edu/student/drc]
- ❖ For additional School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism information, please visit the website at <http://rht.gmu.edu>

Sport and Entertainment - 13096 - SPMT 480 - 001

Registration Dates: Nov 02, 2010 to Feb 08, 2011

Drop without Tuition Penalty Dates: Nov 02, 2010 to Feb 08, 2011

Drop with Tuition Penalty (and final drop deadline) Dates: Feb 09, 2011 to Feb 25, 2011

Attributes: Undergraduate - Upper Division


Instructors: William H. Graham (P)

Internet Campus

Off DElect Asynchronous Instructional Method

3.000 Credits

Scheduled Meeting Times

Type	Time	Days	Where	Date Range	Schedule Type	Instructors
Class	TBA		On-line/Internet NET	Jan 24, 2011 - May 18, 2011	Lecture	William H. Graham (P) 

Myths about Taking Online Classes or Online FAQs by Dr Leslie Dinauer & Dr George Harding

There are more similarities than differences between online and face-to-face (f2f) classes, including the material, assignments, and in a modified form, discussions. Some individuals expect online classes to be easier than f2f classes. In reality, online classes may be more difficult for some students, primarily because it is so easy to 'forget to go to class' (i.e., log on).

One fundamental difference between the two kinds of classes is the discussions. In the f2f class, all student discussions take place in real time (in person), so students do not have the opportunity to think about and research the topic, especially when the topic veers in an unexpected direction; in-class comments are 'top of the head'. In online class discussions, students have an opportunity to think about and research both their own and their classmates' positions, and provide URLs and other citations to support their position. Because of this research capability, online classes can have more rigor/substance than f2f classes.

Here are a series of myths about taking online courses, along with the facts concerning the myths.

Myth 1: *My work schedule is demanding so the online format is great for me. All I need to do is hand in the homework assignments and keep up with the reading (I don't need to waste time in discussions).*

Fact: If you are not an active participant in the weekly online conferences, you will not successfully master the class material and there is a high probability that you will not earn a passing grade. Moreover, classroom participation is a significant part of your final grade. In the past there have been students who fail the class (i.e., receive a "C") because their participation grade has been so low as to pull their overall average below 80%.

Myth 2: *Online format means I have time for more classes, which should be manageable after work.*

Fact: Contrary to myth, online courses can require more diligence and heavier participation than their f2f counterparts. Online course assignments have been designed to require approximately the same amount of time that you would spend if you were in a traditional class (class time plus homework time). The savings are in frictional costs (transportation time to and from class along with all the class time not directly related to learning the topic, breaks, chitchat, etc.). The rule of thumb for homework to class time for both f2f and online classes is 2-3 hours of homework for each hour of class time. In a 3-credit hour course one would expect to spend *at least* 9 hours per week to complete the readings and assignments and "in the classroom" (i.e., logged in to the classroom). Plan to log into the classroom 4-5 times each week to add your comments to the discussion (you cannot expect to do well if you drift in occasionally and make a few gratuitous comments). Each time that you visit the classroom, be sure to leave an audit trail (one or more responses that document your presence in the classroom).

Myth 3: *Since I do not need to participate in every discussion, I can take time off from class.*

Fact: You are responsible for the material covered in every unit, which may deviate from the assigned readings. What you get out of a class is directly proportional to what you put into it. If you do not actively participate in all phases of the classroom, you cheat yourself of the learning experience. Why then would you be willing to accept anything less than full participation with all of its benefits from the classroom?

Myth 4: *After submitting my responses to the conferences, I need not visit the conference again that week.*

Fact: You are expected to join the Discussion 4-5 times a week and contribute/share your thoughts and comments to the ongoing discussions. As you can see from grading information interaction with your classmates is important to your participation grade.

Myth 5: *I am a working adult with a family and other classes to attend. I like the flexibility of the online format. Whether I hand in an assignment on time or not should not affect my grade.*

Fact: Although instructors will generally do everything possible to accommodate their students, as indicated in Myth 4 you are expected to participate in the discussions 4-5 times a week and to turn in work on time. With the

flexibility of an online course, it can be easy to let things slip until the last minute.

Myth 6: *Why think about something that another student has given much thought to? If I copy or paste a few paragraphs here and there from the web, it saves me time and never hurts anyone.*

Fact: Class and GMU policy are that students are expected to advance their opinions in their own words and where others' words or thoughts are used, to give appropriate citation. While the Internet makes it very easy to copy material, sophisticated tools are available that makes it easy to catch plagiarizers. Therefore, students should be diligent about citing sources.

Myth 7: *Discussions are informal exchanges of ideas, so instructors should not expect high quality writing in my responses.*

Fact: Just as athletes put forth their best efforts in practices in order to be fully prepared for official events, the classroom is the place to learn/practice expressing yourself professionally. As such, each effort should be a best effort. Without such practice, you will not be ready/prepared when required to produce quality writing on the job.

Myth 8: *I am busier than everybody else. I can't be expected to contribute as much to the discussions.*

Fact: Enrollment in this class is a professional commitment/business relationship on the part of the student, which needs to be treated very seriously. Life events will intrude, but it's the student's responsibility to make whatever adjustments may be required to fulfill this responsibility.

Myth 9: *I am busier than everybody else in the class and my demanding schedule means I can expect exceptions to any/all of the above.*

Fact: All students are evaluated using the same criteria. Blackboard does an excellent job of compiling statistics on the quantity (character and word counts) for each student. In addition to the Blackboard statistics, I also keep track of the content of your posts as well as the quality of writing in your responses.

The ultimate fact: To get the most from class, participate thoughtfully, professionally, consistently, and often.