

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism**

**SPMT 430.001—Sport Communication**  
**Spring 2012**

|                         |   |                       |   |
|-------------------------|---|-----------------------|---|
| <b>DAY/TIME:</b>        | M 4:30 – 7:10 p.m.  | <b>LOCATION:</b>      | Robinson A123   |
| <b>PROFESSOR:</b>       | Kelly Morgan  | <b>EMAIL ADDRESS:</b> | <a href="mailto:kvanders@masonlive.gmu.edu">kvanders@masonlive.gmu.edu</a><br>I will respond to your email within 24 hours – most likely sooner |
| <b>OFFICE LOCATION:</b> | Mason Enterprise Center<br>4031 University Dr., #112<br>Fairfax, VA 22030                               | <b>PHONE NUMBER:</b>  | 703-585-3373, call or text  |
| <b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>    | M 1:00–3:00 p.m.<br>You are welcome any day by appointment! You may also feel free to email or call me. | <b>FAX NUMBER:</b>    | 703-993-2025  |

#### **PREREQUISITES**

60 hours, including SPMT 201, PHED 200, and the General Education communication requirement; or permission of instructor

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides a senior-level exploration of the role of sport communication in contemporary cultures. Readings and discussions will address questions about how communication about/in sports highlights the importance of sports, the cultural identities of those who engage in sport communication, and the pervasiveness of sport communication practices in industry.

Assignments and in-class discussion will focus heavily on the communication aspect (theoretical and practical) of this course and will prepare students for professional life as well as advanced academic studies.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. recognize the connections among sport communication practices and cultures;
2. develop analytical abilities in application of theories and concepts to sport communication practices;
3. watch, analyze, critique, and discuss the media's portrayal of the community of sport;
4. analyze the discourses surrounding sports issues; and
5. gain an awareness of the pervasiveness of sport communication in other venues.

#### **COURSE OVERVIEW: POLICIES**

1. **Participation.** Attendance and punctuality are essential for success in this class. Most of your work is based on information from the lectures and participation in class discussions. Your absences and/or tardiness will affect your general progress and that of your classmates. **Zero**

**to two absences will result in no penalty unless they occur on a day when you are assigned to turn in an assignment.** Students who arrive late or leave early without prior arrangements with me will be counted as absent. Some absences, such as university sports-related, may be excused provided **prior** arrangement is made with me. Other examples of excused absences may be for medical reasons or field trips in other courses and will be allowed only at my discretion. Students who stop coming to class without discussing it with me will receive a failing grade. Should you miss an assignment due to absence, you will be allowed to make it up provided that you have written documentation regarding the nature of the absence. If you miss an oral presentation, it is up to me as to how and/or if you will make up the assignment.

2. **Written Assignments.** Written assignments will be expected to demonstrate college-quality writing. All work prepared outside of class (papers and projects) will be assessed for content AND for presentation. Your assignments must clearly have been planned, researched, and proofread.
3. **Format.** Papers and projects submitted must be typed, and attention should be paid to form (including grammar, punctuation, spelling, and general appearance) as well as to content. Your work should be in APA format, using the 6<sup>th</sup> edition. A helpful online guide can be found at: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
4. **Submission.** Assignments not turned in on the specified day will be given a grade lower than the one deserved. For example, an “A” assignment submitted late will be given a grade of “B.” **No assignment will be accepted later than one week after it is due.** If there is a circumstance where you will be unable to turn an assignment in on time, please contact me ASAP. I will determine whether an alternate submission date is acceptable.
5. **Honor Policy.** George Mason University takes its honor policy quite seriously, and so do I. Papers, projects, and other assignments must be your own work.
6. **Plagiarism.** Plagiarism is representing another’s work as your own or recycling your work and representing earlier work as new work. I will be checking your work for originality. **Remember to use proper source citations in citing the evidence you use in your research.** Failure to do your own work, or not to give credit where necessary, will result in failing the course and a report to the honor committee. If you need assistance with citation rules beyond the APA style guide or with determining if something should be cited, please ask me!
7. **Technology.** I welcome your use of computers or tablets to take notes during the lecture portion of our class (the first part of the evening); however, **I will require that you put your computer/tablet away during our discussions.** Cell phones should be turned off or silenced. I will offer you the same courtesy. Those who choose not to follow this policy will be asked to leave and given a 0 for the evening’s participation.

Upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards:

*SMPRC: NASSM-NASPE Standards*

| Standard | Content  |
|----------|--|
| 7        | Interpersonal communication; small group communication; media and sport; electronic media; e-mail, web sites, graphics, desk-top publishing; print media; public speaking; mass communication and sport; computer application; customer service; team building; meeting management; sport journalism/broadcasting; ratings and shares; organizational communication; writing press releases. |

Further, upon completion of this course, students will meet the following professional accreditation standards:

*National Flashes of Insight Association (NFIA)*

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 8.21 | Understanding of and the ability to analyze thought processes |
| 8.22 | Understanding of procedures and techniques for assessment     |

**NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY**

The class will have lecture, discussion, informal in-class group work, informal presentations, and online project formats. It will require active participation from all students.

**REQUIRED READINGS**

Billings, A. C., Butterworth, M. L., & Turman, P. D. (2011). *Communication and sport: Surveying the field*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Any additional required readings will be available on the class Blackboard.

**EVALUATION**

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 760 possible points.

| Assignment  | Points | Due Date                              |
|---|--------|---------------------------------------|
| 2-4 pg paper on your understanding of Sport Communication | 100    | February 6                            |
| Bloggng project   | 300    | Set up by January 30;<br>Weekly posts |
| Example of sport advertisement and brief presentation     | 30     | April 23                              |
| Term Paper  | 200    | May 14                                |
| Participation   | 130    | Every class                           |

## ASSGNMENTS

More detailed assignment information will be on Blackboard – all assignments will be discussed in class to ensure your understanding of expectations.

### 1. Short paper on your understanding of sport communication

You will write a 2-4 page paper on what sport communication is and how it applies to your interests, **due 2/6/12 in class**. This paper must have:

- Section 1: Describe your understanding of sport communication from the readings
  - At a minimum, you should cite the Pederson et al. article from 1/30/12 and our textbook, Billings, Butterworth, & Turman. You are welcome to cite additional readings.
  - If your information in this section is guided closely by the readings, lecture, and class discussion, you will have no trouble answering this correctly.
- Section 2: Applying sport communication to you
  - This section is all your original thoughts—no need for citations.
- A references page citing all of your references. At a minimum, you will have the textbook and the article. **\*\*This does not count in the 2-4 pages**

You will be graded on your thoughtfulness, your use of the readings, and how well the paper is written. Do your best with APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition style. I will not take off APA points for this paper, but I will mark any errors so you will know what to do for the term paper.

### 2. Blogging project

This is your main project for the semester. It will allow you to take your sport communication knowledge and put it into practice. **You may NOT combine this with an existing blog – it must be a new blog set up specifically for this assignment.** You may choose your blogging platform. I suggest Blogger because it is easy to use, but this is your choice. The blog must be set up and named by **1/30/12**. You will write two posts per week, which should be 200-250 words each. Posts can be about anything sport-related; for example, sports news, a personal story, your commentary on a game. I will check for these weekly. Your posts will be graded based on the thoughtfulness of your work, the ability to relate your post to sport, and for the assigned length (200-250 words).

I will post our class' list of blog links on Blackboard. You will be expected to participate on other students' blogs throughout the semester, posting 1-2 **thoughtful** comments per week.

- Posts: 10pts each (20pts per week)
- Comments: 5pts per week

### 3. Example of athlete endorsement advertisement/brief presentation

Select an example of an advertisement that uses sport to sell a product. This may be an athlete endorsement, sport product, or anything else in advertising that uses sport, an athlete, sport imagery, and/or sport mythology. You may use any media – print, online, etc. You will give a brief, informal presentation to the class describing the ad, the message, and the effectiveness. **The ad and presentation are due in class on 4/23/12.**

- Ad: 10pts
- Presentation: 20pts

#### 4. Term Paper

Your final paper will be a scholarly study of a sport communication topic of your choice. Your paper is worth 200 points and should be between 10-12 pages long. You may go longer if you would like to. The paper should be written in a formal tone using APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition style throughout. **This paper is due over email by 12:30pm on 5/14/12.**

Your research paper must include:

- Abstract
- Introduction
- Hypothesis or Research Question
- Literature Review
- Analysis
- Conclusion
- References (Wikipedia is NOT a valid source)

This paper should answer a question that you feel is important to sport communication as a study. Examples of appropriate paper topics include, but are not limited to: an analysis of the portrayal of women in sport communication, a review of the evolution of sport communication, and case studies of positive and negative examples of sport communication. Remember, this is a sport communication paper, so your topic must relate to **communication and how it has been used in sport.**

You must use at least 10 sources as references in your paper. Use *quality* sources, such as textbooks, academic articles, and reputable newspaper articles. If you need help with where to find sources or whether a source is of acceptable quality, do not hesitate to ask me.

#### 5. Participation

A significant portion of our class is discussion. Each class, you will be expected to participate in discussion, showing that you are prepared (have read the material) and engaged. Our class this semester has a wonderful mix of majors, including those in the sport/health and communication fields. You will learn a lot from each other, and I ask that you be generous with sharing your knowledge and experience with the class.

##### Grading Scale (in %)

|             |              |              |             |
|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| A = 94 –100 | B+ = 88 – 89 | C+ = 78 – 79 | D = 60 – 69 |
| A- = 90 –93 | B = 84 – 87  | C = 74 – 77  | F = 0 – 59  |
|             | B- = 80 – 83 | C- = 70 – 73 |             |

## TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings and assignments are due on the date they are listed.

| Date | Topic   | Reading   | Assignment  |
|------|---|---|---|
| 1/23 | Introduction and Welcome  |   |   |
| 1/30 | Defining Sport<br>Communication                                   | - Billings et al., Ch. 1<br>- Pederson et al., <i>The juxtaposition of sport and communication: defining the field of sport communication</i> (on Blackboard under Assignments) | - Blog set up and titled<br>- Email Prof. Morgan blog link  |
| 2/6  | History of Sport<br>Communication                                 |   | - Short paper on understanding of Sport Communication due in class<br>- 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due |
| 2/13 | Community in Sport;<br>Online Community                           | - Billings et al., Ch. 2  | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 2/20 | NO CLASS – Prof. Morgan will be at a conference                   |   | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 2/27 | Sports Fan Cultures; Sports and Mythology                         | - Billings et al., Ch. 3<br>- Billings et al., Ch. 4  | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 3/5  | Gender in Sport   | - Billings et al., Ch. 5  | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 3/12 | Spring Break  |   |   |
| 3/19 | Race and Ethnicity in Sport                                       | - Billings et al., Ch. 6  | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 3/26 | Performing Identity in Sports                                     | - Billings et al., Ch. 8  | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 4/2  | Player-Coach Relationships in Sports                              | - Billings et al., Ch. 10   | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 4/9  | Small Groups/Teams in Sports                                      | - Billings et al., Ch. 11   | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 4/16 | Public Relations and Crisis Communication in Sports Organizations | - Billings et al., Ch. 12   | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |
| 4/23 | Commodification of Sport  | - Billings et al., Ch. 13   | - Example of ad due<br>- Presentation in class<br>- 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due                     |
| 4/30 | Wrap up; Putting Everything Together; Lessons for the Real World  |   | - 2 blog posts due<br>- 1-2 comments on student blogs due   |

|      |                         |  |   |
|------|-------------------------|--|---|
| 5/7  | NO CLASS – Reading Days |  |   |
| 5/14 | NO CLASS                |  | Final Paper due by email <b>(No later than 12:00pm)</b> |

*Note: I reserve the right to alter the schedule as necessary*

### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

### *Campus Resources*

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu>].

**CORE VALUES COMMITMENT:** The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.