(This syllabus is a work in progress, subject to change depending on our progress and unanticipated events in and out of class. We will discuss any revisions in class. However, I communicate frequently by email between classes. I expect you will be checking your email daily).

Sport Media and Communication  
TSTD 6267

Professor: Mark Hyman

Room: Duques 652 (until October 22), Duques 255 (Beginning October 29)

Class Meetings – Thursday, 7:10 p.m. – 9:40 p.m. (Beginning October 29, 4:30 to 7:10)

Office: Funger Hall, 301

Office Hours: By appointment.

Web: Markhyman.com

Email: mhyman@gwu.edu

Required text

- Routledge Handbook of Sport and New Media, Edited by Andrew C. Billings and Marie Hardin (2014)
• Sports Business Journal (Subscription minimum of 16 weeks)

Order here:

SBJcollege.com/subscribe

Course objectives

By the end of the semester, students will:

• Gain a conceptual, strategic and technical understanding of sports public relations.
• Learn how to approach core PR assignments including press releases and press conferences.
• Learn about Social Media and its applications in college, professional and Olympic sports
• Develop a Social Media plan for a college athletics team
• Learn crisis management strategies and be able to apply them to events.
• Develop writing skills that are important to success in sport communications.

Teaching philosophy

As in most GW classes, you are expected to maintain regular attendance and stay current with readings in the main text and supplementary materials as assigned. The reading load is substantial. In addition, I believe in an informal environment that encourages student participation. I expect that students will come to class fully prepared and ready to participate in the discussion that day. Your success in this class depends in part on your willingness to become an active participant, both in class and as a partner in team projects.
Instructional methods

Approaches in this course will be varied. A class period might include a lecture and class discussion regarding key points in the readings. A student might lead a discussion of a case study. We might also hear from a guest speaker who visits to speak on about a topic related our readings and class discussions. Finally, we will use Blackboard to share ideas and further our discussion.

Guest speakers/other

During the semester, the class will hear from guest lecturers. As of this writing, scheduled speakers include: Rebecca Roberts, Program Coordinator, Smithsonian Associates; Matt Taylor, Director of Football Communications, Miami Dolphins; Nicole Early, GW Assistant Athletic Director/Marketing and Tickets; Elana Meyers, Winter Olympic Silver Medalist and GW alumnus; Corinne Calabro, social media manager, USA Volleyball; Jared Alexander, adjunct professor, GW Department of Computer Science and Peter Land, Partner, Finsbury Global.

Follow on Twitter
Robert @smithsonian
Taylor @ArchTaylor
Early @nmearly
Calabro @usavolleyball and @CorinneCalabro
Myers @eamslider24
Land @Finsburyglobal
Alexander @JaredAlexander
Prof Hyman @gwportsprof

When tweeting about our class, please include @gwtourism

Class policies

There are few rules but the ones here MUST be observed.

Students may use tablets/notebooks for note-taking and for other class-related assignments. Do not check email, tweet, Web surf or spend time in other ways unrelated to the class.

Turn off all cell and smart phones before class — “off” rather than mute or vibrate. If a
personal or family emergency makes phone use necessary, please let me know before class.

Deadlines are important in this class, as they will be in your professional life after graduate school. Be aware of them and observe them. Assume that work turned in late will receive no credit.

You are responsible for all that is covered in class, whether or not you are present. If you miss class, have a plan for getting notes.

Students may bring to food to class. Those who do are expected to dispose of their trash and to be considerate of others.

________________________________________________________________________

Class attendance

Our time together is extremely short – just thirteen class sessions - so attendance is important. Plan to be present each Thursday for the entire class period. A reduction in points for class participation will be taken for repeated absences.

I monitor attendance. At the start of each class, I circulate an attendance sheet.

If you expect to miss a class, let me know as soon as possible.

Quizzes and exams must be taken on the dates and times designated. Makeups only will be given when students give prior notice AND I have approved.

________________________________________________________________________

Class announcements/cancellations

Please check Blackboard and your student email accounts at least every other day. I’ll share information about guests and assignments throughout the semester. If class is cancelled for bad weather or another reason, I also will use these two methods to notify students.

________________________________________________________________________

Academic Integrity


Please review the University's policy on academic integrity, located at [www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html). All graded work must be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity. Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. Common examples of academically dishonest behavior include: Cheating; Fabrication; Plagiarism; Falsification and forgery of University academic documents; Facilitating academic dishonesty.

More on plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. Know what it means and be clear that you are not practicing it. College students should have a clear understanding of what is their original work and what is not. Fully credit all references in your work. When in doubt, attribute all information that comes from books, newspapers, magazines, websites, television programs and other sources.

If you are feeling overwhelmed or are confronted with a personal crisis, speak with the professor. Trying to explain plagiarism or other dishonest behavior that violates the university ethics standards will be far less persuasive once an assignment has been submitted.

Students with disabilities

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Disability Support Services Office at 202.994.8250, Suite 242 Marvin Center, [http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss](http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss), to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations.
### Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent / Point Value</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Press Release (Intro)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Press Release (Selig)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Selig Event Memo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>SBJ Front Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>GW Basketball Game Night Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Judgment Call</td>
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<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>Ora Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Final Consulting Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>150</td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Class Participation</td>
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<td>1,000</td>
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</table>

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### Assignment Specifications

**Press Release (Intro)**

This is an in-class assignment. Students will be given a set of facts and will then draft a professional press release. The best papers will use the writing techniques described in our readings and discussed in class. (25 points)
Press Release (Selig)

Students will interview a guest speaker in class about the Bud Selig event. Then, using the techniques and approaches we have discussed, draft a press release. (50 points)

Selig Event Memo

We will discuss in class. (50 points)

SBJ Front Page

Choose an article that isn’t on the front page (or lead Web page) of SBJ — but should be. Select another that is displayed on an “inside” page but in your judgment deserves greater prominence. Consider the timeliness and newsworthiness of each article. Explain the importance of each article and to whom among SBJ’s readership the article is most relevant. Analyze why SBJ editors might have made the decisions as they did.

Make the strongest argument that their positions should be switched. Students will work with a teammate. One team will present its paper each week. (50 points).

Judgment Call

Think through the sort of problem that confronts sports communication professionals each day. Students will receive a short description of a sports organization in crisis. Read the facts carefully. Then, relying on readings, class discussion and other course work propose a plan.

The best papers will show an ability to recognize problems that we have discussed in class and to apply proper strategies. They will also communicate the writer’s ideas clearly and concisely. (100 points)

Social Media Consulting Project

This is a semester-long exploration of social media and its value to sport organizations. Students will act as digital media consultants. They will work with a real clients and propose answers to real problems through research, exploration and analysis.

Students will work in groups. Each group will be assigned a GW Spring intercollegiate sports team. Students will be responsible for developing an original social media plan that is responsive to the unique needs of their client. The plan should be creative, practical, actionable and should address the specific needs of the client.
At the end of the semester, groups will submit written consulting reports to their client-teams. In addition they will present their reports – including recommendations – in class.

Final consulting reports will consist of:

**History/Background:**
Describe client-team’s past experience with SM

**Current Situation:**
How is SM used? What plans (if any) exist for 2015-16

**Current Needs:**
Identify the client’s greatest challenges. Be specific. What are the challenges? What are the perceived obstacles to arriving at solutions?

**Best practices:**
Research and analysis of the most innovative ideas from other programs (in the same sport)

**Team survey:**
Canvass student-athletes on client-team regarding SM, platforms they use, etc.

**Recommendations:**
Propose a SM plan for the client-team.

1. The plan should be limited to four SM platforms
2. The plan should target:
   - Prospective athletes (recruiting)
   - Alumni (fund-raising)
   - Campus (attendance, spirit)

We will discuss in class.

**Final Exam**
The exam will be based on readings and class discussion. (150 points)
Class Participation

Discussion and analysis of issues addressed in lectures, readings and by guest speakers are important components of the course. Plan to come to class with your ideas and be prepared to express them. Note that attendance and participation are not the same.

Here are factors that can increase a participation grade:
- Meaningful contributions to discussion
- Comments that reflect the student’s understanding of assigned readings
- Willingness to contribute to discussion when others aren’t
- Engaging guest speakers
- High frequency of contributions
- Improvement in these areas during the semester

Here are factors that can detract from a participation grade:
- Comments that suggest the student has not done the assigned reading
- Comments that restate what others have said
- Infrequent contributions
- Failure to participate

(200 points)

Final Numerical Grade Calculation (+/-):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>64-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-63</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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GRADING GUIDELINES FOR GWSB

The following are guidelines for grade distributions for GWSB classes.

The suggested ranges are based on feedback from faculty. Each year the Dean’s office will share with Faculty these averages for the entire school as well as by department and program.

The differences in grade guidelines reflect variations in core/non-core classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Classes</th>
<th>Maximum percentage of A and A- combined</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MBAD</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-MBAD</td>
<td>50%</td>
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## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>Course overview, syllabus review, Press Release</td>
<td>“How to Write it,” Electronic Reserves Tab in Blackboard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Press Release -Intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>September 10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bud Selig articles in Blackboard, “Files” tab</td>
<td>Rebecca Roberts, Program Coordinator, Smithsonian Associates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Press Release -Selig</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Instead, we will meet at the Smith Center, Friday, <strong>November 13.</strong></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>September 24</td>
<td>Former Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig at Smithsonian</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We will discuss</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Social Media – College Sports</td>
<td>Sport and New Media, Intro, Ch. 1-2</td>
<td>Nicole Early, GW Assistant Athletic Director/Marketing and Tickets</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>Social Media – Professional Sports</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Matt Taylor, Miami Dolphins, Director of Football Communications</td>
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<td>Group Presentation One</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Speaker/Notes</td>
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<td>October 15</td>
<td>Social Media - Olympics</td>
<td>Sport and New Media, Ch. 12, 14</td>
<td>Corinne Calabro, social media manager, USA Volleyball and Elana Meyers, Winter Olympic Silver Medalist and GW alumnus</td>
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<td>October 22</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<td>October 29</td>
<td>Media Training</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>Group Presentation Two</td>
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<td>November 5</td>
<td>Crisis Management</td>
<td>Sport and New Media, Ch. 16, 17</td>
<td>Peter Land, Partner, Finsbury Global</td>
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<td>November 12</td>
<td>&quot;Wearable&quot; technology in sports</td>
<td>Sport and New Media, Ch. 20. Also see &quot;Files&quot; tab in Blackboard</td>
<td>Jared Alexander, GW Dept. of Computer Science</td>
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<td>November 19</td>
<td>Men and Women- Disparate Media Treatment?</td>
<td>Sport and New Media, Ch. 27, 28</td>
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<td>NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING</td>
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<td>December 3</td>
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<td>Final Reports due, November 29, 5 p.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 10</td>
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<td>Final Project Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 17</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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