

## **Communication 322-02 – Sports Writing**

**Dr. Selene G. Phillips**

Spring 2017 Syllabus

Tues. and Thurs. 9:30 to 10:45 a.m., Strickler Hall 309

Professor: Dr. Selene G. Phillips

Professor office: Strickler Hall 302

Contact: 502-852-2976

selene.phillips@louisville.edu

Professor office hours: Tues./Th. 9:00-9:30 a.m.; 10:45-11:00 a.m.; & Tues. 12:15 to 12:45 p.m.

Communication department: Strickler Hall 310, 502-852-6976

### **Required Textbooks**

*The Associated Press Stylebook and Libel Manual*, (latest edition), The Associated Press  
*Sports Journalism: An Introduction to Reporting and Writing*, Kathryn T. Stofer, James R. Schaffer and Brian A. Rosenthal

### **Course Description**

Students will study and practice writing and reporting techniques for sports events and become familiar with the elements of journalism news and story organization. This course fits the mission of the University of Louisville's Department of Communication by assisting students in developing competencies related to writing and communicating to a specific audience. This course fulfills a writing requirement, WR, for a Bachelor of Science degree in communication, and it serves as a 400-level elective for a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication.

### **Course Goals**

This course will provide students with an opportunity to better understand established elements of sports writing for the media. Students will work on skills needed to prepare sports stories and expand upon and exercise knowledge that may be used in a variety of communication professions. Specific goals are to:

- learn journalistic sports writing skills;
- practice sports news gathering, interviewing, and writing skills;
- exercise good sports news judgment;
- understand sports journalism rights, ethics, and responsibilities; and
- become a critical sports media consumer.

The ultimate goal is to equip students to think critically and to prepare them for a position in communication.

### **Course Policies**

#### **Classroom Conduct**

To facilitate learning, the professor will act as the editor and publisher, and the student is the reporter or news writer. This means that the professor will make all final editing and publishing decisions. This atmosphere will give students working knowledge about how a news room operates. Although this is a writing course, students will also be evaluated on participation in class discussion, which is integral to learning. Being prepared is also critical. Students are expected to read the assigned material *before* class and to participate in discussions. This puts you in the best position to build upon your knowledge, to ask questions, and to participate in class discussion. Unless specified, you are responsible for all material in the texts, including

information not emphasized during class. Quizzes may be given to assess student preparation. Ask questions. Critical thinking and creativity are valued.

Students are expected to maintain collegial behavior during class. Students may disagree with each other or the professor but must demonstrate professional behavior and respect the integrity of fellow classmates and the professor. Professional behavior means not yelling or accusing anyone else of actions. Professional behavior means keeping your appointments with your professor and fellow students for group meetings. If emergencies occur, you need to call others involved and let them know if you will be late or will not be able to make a meeting. Emailing or texting them is not enough if there is less than a 24 hour notice.

Sexual harassment and discrimination is unacceptable and unlawful conduct that will not be tolerated in the educational environment.

We may have guest speakers or participate in activities outside of the regular session. If that conflicts with other obligations, let me know in advance so other arrangements may be made.

Cell phones must be turned off during class. Arrangements may be made for emergencies. If another student or students engage in actions that disturb your ability to learn or to concentrate, please let me know. You may be asked to leave if you text during class.

### **Office Hours**

My office hours will be Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 until 9:30 a.m.; 10:45 - 11:00 a.m.; and Tuesdays from 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. I will be happy to further explain or answer questions about our class, the lecture material, or assignments outside of class. However, if you miss a class, you should refrain from emailing or calling me to ask, "Did I miss anything today?" See below for more on attendance. For complicated questions, especially those involving personal grades, it is best to refrain from such discussions until office hours for privacy.

### **Attendance**

Students need to be on time. Attendance will be taken at the start of class. If you arrive late to class, it is your responsibility to come and see me immediately after class so that I may mark you late, otherwise, you will not receive any credit for being in class. Please do not come to tell me you attended a class a few days or weeks later. I will not remember, and I will not change the recorded attendance.

Each set of three unexcused absences results in a lowered grade. Arriving late is rude, disruptive, and disrespectful to the professor and other students. Consider dropping this course if you are unable to be on time. If you missed a class, I will not repeat the lecture for you. You are responsible for obtaining notes and information from a classmate if you miss a class. Please exchange phone numbers with at least two other classmates. There are no make-ups for anything completed during class. **Extra credit is not offered.** This merits repeating. No extra credit is offered for this course. Please do not ask at the end of the semester if you may do something for extra credit. That is unprofessional, unethical, and unfair to your other classmates. I will refer you to the syllabus. If a certain grade level is important to you or there is a grade you are aiming for, come and see me during my office hours so I may help you. Please do not wait until the end of the semester.

## **Communication**

It is your responsibility to obtain a valid ULink account to access Blackboard. Grades appear on Blackboard as soon as the material is graded. Check Blackboard to ensure the proper grade was recorded. Notify me as soon as possible if there are any discrepancies. If there is an error or you are upset about a grade, see me or make an appointment within 48 hours after the material has been returned. This does not mean we have to meet immediately, it just means you need to make an appointment right away. If you wait until the end of the semester, I am unable to assist you in the same manner than if we work on things immediately. For example, if you wait until April to ask me about a graded assignment in January, then I will ask you why you waited so long to clear up the problem.

Grades are confidential. Professors are discouraged from transmitting sensitive information where the identity of the recipient cannot be verified, such as e-mail or telephone. I am happy to provide information during office hours, but please do not ask for graded information via e-mail or telephone.

## **E-mail**

The best way to reach me is e-mail. I will respond as soon as possible, but I do not always look at e-mail on weekends. E-mail correspondence must be written in a professional manner. Students must type "Com 322" in the subject heading of the e-mail message and sign their full name to all correspondence if they want to receive a response. Class e-mails are often sent to students via Blackboard to your University-provided e-mail account.

## **Deadlines**

You are required to turn assignments in on time. Turning a paper in a few minutes late, at the end of class, or later in the day results in deductions. In a newsroom, being late is an expensive error and may cost one his or her job. In the unfortunate case of an emergency, it is the students' responsibility to notify the professor as soon as reasonably possible to make other arrangements.

Papers placed under my door or attached to the door or board outside my door do not count as being turned in and those papers will be ignored. If you do not turn papers in to me or when they are due, you must turn them into someone at the communication department office in Strickler 310. After identifying the day and time you turned the paper in, the individual should place your paper in my mailbox. Take note that that the office is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. I usually return papers immediately after they are graded during the following class. If you missed that class, you must come to see me to retrieve your graded paper. I will not carry the graded papers to future classes. Returned papers should be saved. They contain editing suggestions and are evidence of your work. You will need draft versions of your paper for full credit when you turn in your final version. If you do not pick the paper up, you will be unable to incorporate those requested edits for your next or final version.

## **Assignments**

Assignments must be completed before coming to class and turned in on time. There will be no make-up work for quizzes or in-class assignments. Major assignments are only accepted late with a valid University excuse; however, for each day the paper is late, 10 percent will be deducted from your grade. If a paper is a few minutes late, this is counted as the first late day and will result in a 10 percent deduction.

Assignments must be completed in the requested format. Students must turn in an electronic version to SafeAssign *and* a hard copy to the professor in class. Written work must be submitted in a professional Associated Press format, typed, and double-spaced with 1.5 inch margins using 12 point Times font and black ink. Multiple pages must be stapled together, not folded or paper clipped. Papers must be identified as follows in the upper left hand corner with:

John Smith (Your name)  
COMM 322 (Course title)  
Dr. Phillips (Professor's name)  
Story Proposal (Name of assignment)  
March 2, 2017 (Date assignment is turned in)

This is the only single spaced section. Failure to follow any of these instructions will result in a loss of points. For example, points will be deducted from papers with headings on the right side of the paper instead of the left and headings that are double-spaced instead of single spaced. Also, points will be deducted for papers that are not stapled together. Points will also be deducted if there are extra spaces between your paragraphs.

The student sample papers are provided as an inspiration to assist you. Do not follow their format, as the format and required lengths change from semester to semester. It is not a good idea to use the sample papers as a template. Instead, use them to help you to do your own reporting, writing, and investigation.

Poor writing will hurt your grade. Use the Writing Center at the Ekstrom Library. Assignments require students to act as a reporter and gather facts for a story. Students must tell interviewees that they are student journalists and that these stories may be published. Turning in a previously published story or one that you worked on for another class is unacceptable and considered cheating.

Do not think you can catch up at the end of the semester or talk me into allowing you to do an extra work. That is unfair to your classmates. Extra credit is not offered; however, incentive grading is available. That means that there will be over 100 points possible to earn 100 points. So in a way, extra credit is built into the system. Come and talk to me as soon as possible if you feel behind or do not understand something. It never pays to wait until the last minute, just before an exam, or at the end of the semester to meet with me if you are experiencing trouble. By that time, it is too late. If you are concerned about your grade, meet with me immediately.

### **Tests & Quizzes**

Quizzes may be given at the start of class. Those who are absent may not make up the quiz without a valid University excuse. If a student has a legitimate University excuse for missing an exam, a multiple page essay exam *and* a cumulative exam may be given. If a student has a legitimate emergency, you must provide valid documentation *before* you are allowed to make up the exam. If this occurs, you must notify the professor before she returns the exam to the class, or it will be too late. Students must notify the professor of a legitimate emergency as soon as possible.

Making up an exam is allowed under limited circumstances. If a medical emergency occurs, it is the student's responsibility to notify me as soon as possible so arrangements may be made. You must have valid documentation before an extension is considered. A legitimate emergency is the death of an immediate family member or your own personal medical emergency. Valid documentation is required. For example, if you are extremely ill, ask a friend,

relative or care giver to call or e-mail the professor and/or the communication department. It is unacceptable to notify the professor a few days after the emergency.

The following events are not emergencies and are not good excuses to miss class, an assignment, or take an exam late: bad weather, heavy traffic, going on a family vacation or cruise, attending a family reunion or get-together, being on hand for a friend or relative's birth, a doctor or dentist appointment, moving, breaking-up, or hearing bad news. These are all significant events, but decisions to attend them have consequences.

### **Study Expectations**

University guidelines recommend students devote three to four hours per week on a course in addition to every hour spent in class. Since this class meets 2.5 hours per week, the recommended study time outside of class is 7.5 to 10 hours per week. Spending less time on this class decreases the chances of earning a high grade.

### **Accommodations and Special Needs**

Students with special needs or disabilities needing reasonable accommodations to satisfy course criteria must meet with me as soon as possible. Students must supply documentation from the Disability Resource Center or another resource that will assist in planning accommodations. Students may be asked to contact the Disability Resource Center at 852-6938 to determine academic and testing accommodations. Those with personal or family problems are encouraged to seek counseling, at no charge, with the UofL Personal Counseling Center at 852-6585.

### **Title IX/Clery Act Notification**

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain confidential support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111). Disclosure to University faculty or instructors of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer. For more information, see the Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**

Students must turn in their own original assignments and stories. Cheating or plagiarism, the representation of someone else's work as one's own, is justification for failure in the course and a report to the Dean of Students Office according to University regulations. It is unacceptable to submit work to fulfill the requirements of this course if you already submitted it or are planning to submit it to fulfill the requirements of another class. Plagiarism is a serious affront to the educational system and will not be tolerated. Any proven plagiarism or other academic misconduct will result in failure of this course and will be reported to the committee on student discipline for further action, including notice in the permanent record, dismissal or expulsion. I will seek the maximum punishment available according to University regulations. A

letter concerning the plagiarism incident will be placed in the student's file. Two such letters means expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, copying or cutting and/or pasting someone else's work from another source, including the Internet, and claiming it as your own; paraphrasing someone else's work and claiming it as your own or not properly attributing it; collaborating excessively with another person and claiming the work as your own; turning in work that was done for another class; and cheating on tests. Cheating includes making up sources or interviews. For more information on plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, refer to page 38 of the Undergraduate Catalog. It is the students' responsibility to understand these policies and the ramifications of any actions. Students are advised to become familiar with academic dishonesty in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities that can be found at the Campus Life web site. Academic dishonesty is in Section Five.

Attribution, the act of giving proper credit to an author, is extremely important in journalism. Attribution is explained in the text and will be discussed throughout the semester. Understanding attribution is critical, because not adhering to attribution may also result in plagiarism.

SafeAssign will be used for all papers turned in. Students will receive zero credit for papers that are not submitted to SafeAssign on Blackboard.

### **Grading and Measuring Tools for Objectives**

Students will apply what they have learned to their writing assignments and exams. The goal in this class is to reach 100 points. Incentive grading is used, so there will be more points offered than 100, but grading is still based on a 90, 80, 70, 60, 50 scale. Grades are assigned on content, organization, accuracy, and style on the items and scale below.

A = Outstanding – 90.0 to 100% or more of the total possible points. Nearly perfect.

B = Superior – 80.0 to 89.9% of the total possible points. Above average or mediocre.

C = Adequate – 70.0 to 79.9% of the total possible points. Average or mediocre.

D = Marginal/minimum – 60.0 to 69.9% of the total possible points. Below expectations.

F = Unacceptable - less than 59.9% of the total possible points. Below minimal expectations.

Extra points will not be "given" or "awarded." For example, if a student earns a score of 89, the earned grade is a B and that score will be assigned. No pluses or minuses are assigned. Students will earn grades based on their performance on the items listed below.

_____ Exam 1 = 20%	Due: Feb. 9, 2017	worth 20 points
_____ Story Proposal = 5%	Due: Mar. 2, 2017	worth 5 points
_____ Interviews & Notes = 5%	Due: Mar. 21, 2017	worth 5 points
_____ Story Draft = 10%	Due: Mar. 28, 2017	worth 10 points
_____ Story Final (2,000 words) = 30%	Due: Apr. 11, 2017	worth 30 points
_____ Exam 2 = 20%	Due: Apr. 18, 2017	worth 20 points
_____ Other = 10%	Due: throughout	worth 10 points

The Other category includes attendance, class participation, and all in-class assignments.

### **Intellectual Property**

Faculty notes and other course material, electronic or otherwise, are intellectual property owned by the instructor. If this material is sold without permission, the student has infringed on the faculty member's property rights.

## Comm. 322: Sports Writing Class Schedule

### Week 1

Tues., Jan. 10, Intro, Syllabus, Plagiarism

Thurs., Jan. 12, Syllabus Questions, Reading: Stofer Appendix B

### Week 2

Tues., Jan. 17, Last day to drop; Syllabus Quiz. Reading: Stofer Ch. 1, AP Stylebook 1 - 21

Thurs., Jan. 19, Reading: Stofer Ch. 2, AP Stylebook 21-42

### Week 3

Tues., Jan. 24, Reading: Stofer Ch. 3, AP Stylebook 42-63

Thurs., Jan. 26, Reading: Stofer Ch. 4, AP Stylebook 63-84

### Week 4

Tues., Jan. 31, Reading due: Stofer Ch. 5, AP Stylebook 84-105

Thurs., Feb. 2, Reading due: Stofer Ch. 6, AP Stylebook 105-126

### Week 5

Tues., Feb. 7, AP Stylebook 126-147

Thurs., Feb. 9, **Exam 1 (20 pts.)** (over Stofer Ch. 1 – 5, AP 1 – 126, and all other material discussed)

### Week 6

Tues., Feb. 14, Reading: Stofer Ch. 7, AP Stylebook 147-168

Thurs., Feb. 16, Reading: Stofer Ch. 8, AP Stylebook 168-189

### Week 7

Tues., Feb. 21, Reading: Stofer Ch. 9, AP Stylebook Appendix A, C, 189-210

Thurs., Feb. 23, Reading: Stofer Ch. 10, AP Stylebook 210-231

### Week 8

Tues., Feb. 28, Reading: Stofer Appendix C,

Thurs., Mar. 2, **Due: Story Proposal (5 pts.)**

### Week 9

Tues., Mar. 7, Reading: AP Stylebook 231-252

Thurs., Mar. 9, Last day to withdraw, Reading: AP Stylebook 252-273

### Week 10

Tues., Mar. 14 & Thurs., Mar. 16, No class, spring break

### Week 11

Tues., Mar. 21, **Due: Interviews and notes (5 pts.)**

Thurs., Mar. 23, Last day to withdraw, Reading: AP Stylebook 273-301

### Week 12

Tues., Mar. 28, **Due: Story Draft (10 pts.)**

Thurs., Mar. 30, SafeAssign & Editing

### Week 13

Tues., Apr. 4, Story Editing

Thurs., Apr. 6, Story Editing

Week 14

Tues., Apr. 11, **Due: Story Final (30 pts.)**

Thurs., Apr. 13, AP Quiz

Week 15

Tues., Apr. 18, **Exam 2 (20 pts.)**

Thurs., Apr. 20, Last Com. 322 class