

JOURNALISM 476.1
Professor John Sweeney
Carroll Hall 235
jsweeney@email.unc.edu
Fall, 2019

ETHICAL ISSUES IN SPORTS COMMUNICATION

This course is designed to examine the ethical dilemmas facing the sports field at a time of extraordinary popularity. Some issues are covered daily in the press while others may seem completely obscure. In all cases, the goal is to understand, debate and then attempt to develop appropriate procedures to deal with the most controversial subjects in sport.

The class will analyze and discuss the ethical controversies involved with everything from the modern Olympics to college athletics. Among the subjects to be discussed: regulating drugs, the role of journalism, the status of women and the protection of the environment. To give students an exercise of applied sports communication, we will be involved in an assignment that includes both professional strategic communication and a larger social issue. It will involve Gulfstream Park, one of the top thoroughbred racing parks in the nation.

The course will examine the dilemmas facing sports through the eyes of very different people. An ethical scandal to one person is often a trivial debate to another. Our goal is not to present simplistic solutions or political ideology about ethics but to see how controversial dilemmas play out in the larger culture of a sport or society at a given moment.

-2-

Readings for the Course

Students will be expected to read and discuss five books during the term. The books are available at Student Stores.

The System By Jeff Benedict and Armen Keteyian
The Glory and Scandal of Big-Time College Football

The Junction Boys By Jim Dent
How ten days in hell with Bear Bryant forged a championship team.

The Concussion Crisis by Carroll and Rosner
Anatomy of a silent epidemic.

Into Thin Air by Jon Krakauer
A Personal Account of the Mt. Everest Disaster

MEJO 476 Workbook

Evaluation for the Course

Your grade will result from the following evaluations:

New Media Challenge	12.5%
The September Test	25%
Gulfstream Park Portfolio	25%
Research & Report	12.5%
Take-Home and Final Exam	25%

Office Hours

I will be glad to see students outside the classroom. Please feel free to see me during office hours on Tuesday and Thursday from 11:00—12:00. I am also available to see students at mutually convenient times by appointment.

AEJMC STANDARDS

- Principles of Freedom of Expression
- History and Role of Media in Society
- Diverse Society and Audiences
- Global Cultural Perspectives
- Ethical Principles for Communication
- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Research Methods and Analysis
- Accuracy, Fairness and Clarity
- Data, Numbers and Statistics
- Evolving Communication Technology
- Academically Informed Communication Practices

Schedule of Events

August 20	The tension lines of the Olympics
August 22	The tension lines of Youth Sports
August 27	The college athlete and <u>The System</u>
August 29	The college coach and <u>The System</u>
September 3	<u>The Junction Boys</u>
September 5	The tension lines of Journalism
September 10	The New Media Challenge
September 12	<u>The Concussion Crisis</u>
September 17	The tension lines of Sports Tourism
September 19	<u>Into Thin Air</u>
September 24	Test
September 26	Documentary

-4-

October 1	Gulfstream Brief
October 3	Gulfstream#2
October 10	Gulfstream #3
October 15	Gulfstream #4
October 8	Gulfstream#5
October 17	Fall break
October 22	Gulfstream #6
October 24	Gulfstream #7
October 29	Gulfstream #8
October 31	Gulfstream #9
November 5	Gulfstream #10
November 7	Gulfstream #11
November 12	Gulfstream Park Presentation
November 14	The tension lines of gambling/ Portfolio Work
November 19	Research & Report
November 21	Thanksgiving
November 26	Tension Lines of celebrity/R&R
November 28	Research & Report Presentation
December 3	Current Issues and conclusions

Final Exam, Tuesday, December 10 8:00—11:00

(Exam will include a take-home and in-class portions of the final. Details will be provided during the term.)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Honor Code:

I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system ([http://www.wfu.edu/honor](#)). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. Using a set-up sound bite is a violation of the honor code. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean C. A. Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Seeking Help:

If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

Diversity:

The University's policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination is outlined in the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Bulletin [http://www.wfu.edu/undergraduatebulletin](#). UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Special Accommodations:

If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Department of Disability Services website at [http://www.wfu.edu/disabilityservices](#)

ACCREDITATION:

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: [http://www.wfu.edu/sjmc/assessment](#)

No single course could possibly give you all of these values and competencies; but collectively, our classes are designed to build your abilities in each of these areas. In this class, we will address a number of the values and competencies, with special emphasis on the last six bullet dots under "Professional values and competencies" in the link above.