New Course Request

1. School/Division: School of Journalism
2. Academic Subject Code: Jour
3. Course Number: J546 (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)
4. Instructor: Timothy A. Franklin
5. Course Title: Sports Journalism Research: Money and Collegiate Sports
   Recommended Abbreviation (Optional):
   (Limited to 32 Characters including spaces)
6. First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year): Spring 2011
7. Credit Hours: Fixed at 3 or Variable from ________ to ________
8. Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes ☑ No
9. Is variable title approval being requested? Yes ☐ No ☑
10. Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication:
    Collegiate sports are a multi-billion dollar business. But does the public really know where the money comes from and where it goes? Which sports make money, and which ones don't? Which university athletic programs are profitable? What is the financial gap between large schools and mid-majors? What is the gap between men's and women's sports? This course will explore precise answers to those and other questions in an ambitious, deadline-oriented research project in which we will partner with USA Today.
11. Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at 3 or Variable from ________ to ________
12. Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ________ or Variable from 3 to 6
13. Estimated enrollment: 18 of which 100 percent are expected to be graduate students.
14. Frequency of scheduling: Weekly
15. Justification for new course:
Learning how to obtain and research vital public information is critical for journalists and academics.
16. Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? Yes ☑ No ☐
17. Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other materials.
18. If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap is necessary, desirable, or unimportant.
19. A copy of every new course proposal must be submitted to departments, schools, or divisions in which there may be overlap of the new course with existing courses or areas of strong concern, with instructions that they send comments directly to the originating Curriculum Committee. Please append a list of departments, schools, or divisions thus consulted.

Submitted by:

Department Chairman/Division Director

[Signature]

Date

Dean

[Signature]

Date

Chancellor/Vice-President

[Signature]

Date

University Enrollment Services

[Signature]

Date

After School/Division approval, forward the last copy (without attachments) to University Enrollment Services for initial processing, and the remaining four copies and attachments to the Campus Chancellor or Vice-President.
Course Description: Collegiate sports are a multi-billion dollar business. But does the public really know where the money comes from and where it goes? Which sports make money, and which ones don’t? Which university athletic programs are profitable, and which ones aren’t? How many university athletic programs are subsidized by general funds? Are funds originally earmarked for academics propping up sports programs? What is the gap between large schools from the six major power conferences, and so-called “mid-major schools?” What is the revenue and funding gap between men’s and women’s sports?

This course is all about learning the reporting techniques necessary to conduct effective research, and then distilling, evaluating, analyzing and interpreting information to provide an accurate public service to readers. The topic is sports, but these reporting, research and advanced analytical skills are necessary for any journalist aspiring to excellence. For the entirety of the course next semester, the IU National Sports Journalism Center will embark on an ambitious and deadline-oriented research project that examines the revenues, expenses, profits and losses of NCAA Division 1 athletic programs. We will partner with USA Today, the nation’s largest general interest newspaper. In addition to the instructor, two USA Today senior editors will help work with the students inside and outside the classroom. It is expected that the students’ research will be published in USA Today near the end of the semester. This is the second research partnership between the IU sports center and USA Today (the first was a successful examination of basketball coaches' compensation, published on April 2, 2010), and it’s part of an anticipated long-term partnership between the center and the McLean, Va.-based news organization. In future semesters, this
course may well include different research projects with other professional partners.

Students will get an invaluable, real world experience in public service journalism, and will work collaboratively with classmates and professional editors. Students will learn the critical practice of acquiring public information through freedom of information laws. Then, they will construct and populate an intricate database that can be used by reporters, researchers, academics and public officials for years to come. This will require students to evaluate raw financial data and perform high-level statistical analysis in interpreting it. Then, they will learn how to translate those analytical conclusions into a readable, comprehensive story for a general audience. At its core, this course will require students to learn and use critical, advanced, analytical skills to interpret complex and voluminous data and synthesize it to identify important trends and issues.

This course presents a unique opportunity to participate in a deadline-driven reporting project while partnering with a professional news organization. Therefore, this class is designed for serious journalism students who place a premium on thorough reporting, research, analysis, meticulous attention to detail and accuracy.

**Course Objectives:**

- Appraise the history and applicability of state freedom of information laws, and how they can be used to acquire public, taxpayer-supported information.
- Review and analyze the differences between public records' laws in various states, and how they can be applied to researching information.
- Interpret the contrast in financial reporting requirements for public and private institutions, and how those differences can be bridged in analyzing sport spending.
- Identify sources at sport organizations who can help obtain public information in a timely and accurate way.
- Evaluate and use databases and computer-assisted reporting.
• Evaluate and synthesize research data to identify important trends.
• Develop reporting and writing techniques necessary to translate that research data into smart, accurate, contextual and readable stories for the general public.
• Manage, organize, outline and report an in-depth, complex, long-range story.
• Evaluate sport finances, both currently and historically.
• Develop an understanding of the revenue streams and expenses by sport at major organizations, so that students can evaluate and identify important trends and anomalies.

Course Content and Format: This course will consist of a single, comprehensive in-depth research project that will attempt to show in a micro and macro way the revenues, expenses, profits and losses of Division 1 collegiate athletic programs. Students will be assigned groups of universities, and they will be responsible for acquiring the annual financial reports those schools submitted to the NCAA. They then will analyze, synthesize and interpret that information to develop in-depth stories stemming from the data.


Other reading material:
• Related newspaper, magazine and web stories.
• Previous database research projects.
1. **Methods of Evaluating Student Performance:** Course grade will be based on students meeting deadlines in acquiring financial data from their assigned universities, their accuracy in importing the information into the group database and their final story on the project’s findings.

2. Specific course requirements: There are four evaluated elements to this course.

   A. Meeting deadlines in submitting freedom of information requests to schools, and success in acquiring data on time.
   B. Accurately analyzing research data.
   C. Quality and depth of end-of-semester story detailing the findings of the project. Stories must be 3,000 words.
   D. Attendance and participation in class is critical because this is a collaborative project, in which there will be a premium on working with fellow students, the instructor and the organization.
   E. Grade distribution: Meeting deadlines for submission of information requests, 15%; Success in acquiring data from assigned universities, 20%; Accurately recording the research information into group database, 30%, Final story on project findings, 35%.

**GRADE SCALE (in percent of total possible score)**

- 93-100 A
- 90-92 A-
- 87-89 B+
- 83-86 B
- 80-82 B-
- 77-79 C+
- 73-76 C
- 70-72 C-
- 67-69 D+
- 63-66 D
- 60-62 D-
- 59 and below F

**ATTENDANCE**

You are expected to attend all classes. If you miss one, discuss the circumstances with the instructor in advance. This allows you to work out how you will meet class objectives for that week without your
presence in class. As a matter of firm policy, unexcused late work will not be accepted. If you will be absent from any class where work is due, you MUST contact me IN ADVANCE. We start class ON TIME. Since late arrivals disrupt class, do not be late.

**SCHOOL WRITING STATEMENT**

Writing performance and language usage proficiency are essential to the satisfactory completion of journalism courses. Moreover, writing and speaking skills are essential to the successful practice of being a media practitioner. Therefore, I will monitor writing performance and language usage and you will be graded on your writing, including spelling, punctuation and sentence structure.

**SCHOOL POLICY ON DIVERSITY**

The School of Journalism is committed to creating an awareness of diversity issues as they relate to society, to the workplace and to the classroom.

**DISABLED STUDENT POLICIES**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of disability, or if you have any emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please discuss with me ASAP.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

It is expected that all students will adhere to University standards of honesty. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Nor will cheating of any kind. All appropriate text citations must be appropriately annotated and properly credited with in-text citations, footnotes/endnotes and bibliographic references. Discovery of any instances of academic dishonesty will be immediate grounds for failure in the class.

**COMMUNICATION AND E-MAIL**
I will use Onecourse CL extensively, including the Gradebook so you can track your success. I will post assignments and supporting documents on Onecourse for your use, in addition to any additional reading assignment I may make outside of the assigned textbook. In addition, all e-mail communication will be by standard IU e-mail addresses. If you do not use yours, either start, or set up your address to automatically forward to the address you normally use.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**
(TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE, AS WE ADAPT TO PROJECT NEEDS)

Week One: Introduction to course and objectives, and explanation of class research project. Divvying up university assignments.

Week Two: A primer on the finances of college athletics, and how to obtain annual budget reports universities submit to the NCAA. We will be joined by USA Today editors, and review other similar database reporting projects.

Week Three: How to file a Freedom of Information request, and whom to file it with. Readings from: [http://www.nfoic.org/sample-foia-letters#foireq](http://www.nfoic.org/sample-foia-letters#foireq) and [http://www.splc.org/foiletter.asp](http://www.splc.org/foiletter.asp)

Week Three: Students must have identified the contacts at their assigned universities and entered them into class spreadsheet. We will review those contacts, and discuss any lingering issues.

Week Four: Official FOI requests must be written and turned in, and will be reviewed in class.

Week Five: Final FOI requests must be shipped by this date at the latest. Students will update class spreadsheet with the status of the FOI requests. We will discuss how to follow up, and when to follow up with sources.

Week Seven: A detailed look at how to set up and use databases for in-depth reporting projects, and how they can improve storytelling. A review of other database reporting projects.

Week Eight: A senior NCAA official meets with the class to explain and review the annual financial reports filed by universities. How do you interpret them, how do you find the relevant data?

Week Nine: An in-depth examination of the trends and issues in the finances of collegiate athletes.

Week Ten: Spring break.

Week Eleven: Begin sorting and importing the financial information into the database. Fact check those inputs with the class. Joined again by USA Today editors. Submit database to USA Today during this week.

Week Twelve: Ideation session on possible story angles on research data that we’ve obtained. Writing the compelling enterprise story. Text, pages 89-108. Other readings provided.

Week Thirteen: A review of the storytelling from other database reporting projects. How did reporters use the data to frame stories? What angles did they pursue?

Week Fourteen: The craft of developing stories from databases. Guest speaker: Robert Blau, managing editor for projects, Bloomberg News in Washington. Blau has editing Pulitzer Prize-winning projects and been a Pulitzer judge.


Week Sixteen: Final stories due. NO LATE STORIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.