School/Division: Journalism
Course Number: 345 (must be cleared with University Enrollment Services)
Course Title: Sports Writing
Recommended Abbreviation (Optional)

First time this course is to be offered (Semester/Year): Fall 2009
Credit Hours: Fixed at ___3___ or Variable from ______ to ______
Is this course to be graded S-F (only)? Yes [ ] No [x]
Is variable title approval being requested? Yes [ ] No [x]

Course description (not to exceed 50 words) for Bulletin publication:
This class offers overview from its origins to its current status in the twenty-first century. The course will enable students to learn fundamentals of the sports writing process from information gathering and interviewing to writing and editing copy. Students will gain skills necessary for working in today’s sports departments and newsrooms.

Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ___3___ or Variable from ______ to ______
Non-Lecture Contact Hours: Fixed at ___0___ or Variable from ______ to ______
Estimated enrollment: ___15___ of which ___0___ percent are expected to be graduate students.
Frequency of scheduling: Fall/Spring [ ] Will this course be required for majors? Yes [ ]
Justification for new course: Part of new proposed sports journalism curriculum
Are the necessary reading materials currently available in the appropriate library? Yes

Please append a complete outline of the proposed course, and indicate instructor (if known), textbooks, and other materials.

If this course overlaps with existing courses, please explain with which courses it overlaps and whether this overlap is necessary, desirable, or unimportant.

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: [Signature]
Date: [Signature]

Approved by:
Date: 2-25-09

Dean

Dean of Graduate School (when required)
Date: [Signature]

Chancellor/Vice-President
Date: [Signature]

University Enrollment Services

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.
J-360, "Sports Writing"

Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 3:00 – 4:15 PM

Prerequisite: J-201

Room: IT 254B

The Professor: Pamela C. Laucella, PhD
IU School of Journalism
Room 561
Office Phone: 317.278.5334
Email: plaucell@indiana.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 1:00 – 3:00
Thursday, 2:00 – 3:00
And by appointment or email
This class will offer an overview of sports writing from its origins to its current status in the twenty-first century. The course will enable students to learn fundamentals of the sports writing process from information gathering and interviewing to writing and editing copy. Students will gain skills necessary for working in today’s sport departments and will also learn how to critically analyze others’ articles. This class is about writing well and grammar counts! You must convey your story clearly, accurately, and creatively.

Objectives:

- To help students get hands-on experience in sports writing
- To help students become better writers and reporters
- To help students understand the process of writing game stories, magazine features, and opinion columns
- To help students critically analyze stories from working writers and from their colleagues

Textbooks:

In addition to the text below, you will be expected to read the *Indianapolis Star* on a regular basis as well as *Sports Illustrated, ESPN The Magazine*, espn.com, cnnsi.com, and other sport print and online publications/sites. If you want to work in sport, you need to keep abreast of current events and trends. You will be quizzed on current events, AP guidelines, reading from class, or other materials provided in class.


Recommended Resources:


**Course Requirements:**
Because this is a writing-intensive course, there will be no examinations. You are responsible for becoming well versed in sports knowledge and you must demonstrate writing proficiency. EVERY PIECE OF WRITING must be accompanied by definitive research on the subject matter. You’ll be asked to write regularly during class and for homework assignments. You’ll cover IUPUI athletics as well as area high schools, IU, or pro sports. You will be asked to schedule interviews outside of class. Access is important, so please don’t wait until the last minute to set up interviews.

There will be a field-trip to tour an area sports facility, which will substitute for one class period. There will be several guest speakers incorporated into the semester and I will give you a heads-up as soon as I confirm dates.

**Class Rules:**
Typedwritten work must be in proper AP format and style. The *Associated Press Stylebook* is your playbook. You will have access to the online version, which has all current revisions. It is located at [www.apstylebook.com](http://www.apstylebook.com). Since J-201 is a prerequisite for this course, you must know AP guidelines to pass the course. Correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, usage, etc. are required for all assignments. Grades on articles will be determined by a combination of content, style, creativity and cleanliness.

Please meet all deadlines since they are important for class discussion as well as for maintaining a job in sport. For this reason, no late stories will be accepted except for an illness requiring treatment or a significant personal circumstance. If neither of these is the cause, you will receive a grade of zero for that portion of your grade.

The reporting of an illness or personal circumstance must occur no later than 5 p.m. on the day the story is due. Of course, if the matter is of a serious nature and contacting me is impossible, the deadline for notification will be waived. I’m understanding, but expect you to be pro-active, responsible and accountable. I will collect assignments at the beginning of the class period on the due date. If you’re going to miss class, make sure you email the article or place it in my mailbox on the fifth floor BEFORE class.

As far as content, your work must be original. You can talk to other colleagues about how to approach stories, but you must write and turn in your OWN work. HAVE FUN! If you commit to improving your writing, you will be pleased with the class and your grade. Improvement is important! I have an open door policy for students. Use it!

**Assignments:**
**Game Coverage:** You will cover two game stories throughout the semester. The first is grouped in the written assignments totaling 45% and the second is the mid-term worth 15%.
Columnist Analysis: Choose a national sports columnist like Rick Reilly, Jay Mariotti, Kevin Blackstone, Sally Jenkins, Michael Wilbon, Steve Rushin, or many others by the end of the second week of class. Keep a running log of the columnist’s work and write a 500-700 word paper on your impressions of the journalist’s coverage, content, strengths, weaknesses, writing style, etc. You must discuss at least five stories. **It is due on April 9.**

Midterm Story: Your midterm will be a game story, which I will discuss fully in class. **It is due on March 12.**

Final Story: I’m giving you the choice to write ANY type of story for your final. Pursue your passion! Whether you choose a game story, feature, or investigative piece, please incorporate everything you have learned throughout the semester. **Your final paper is due in class on May 4th.**

Unless specified, articles should be submitted as printouts, double-spaced with pages stapled together and the following information in the upper left corner of the first page:

**Name**  
J-360  
**Slug (One-word name for assignment, Example: Football)**  
**Exact Word Count**

If assignments are to be sent electronically, they should be submitted as word document attachments with the above information included in the upper left corner of the first page.

Course Evaluations: I’m a student-centered professor and want you to get a lot from class. Please talk to me any time about your concerns. I have high expectations, yet I’m fair and understanding. I will ask you mid-semester for your feedback, but it’s always welcome throughout the semester. Email is the easiest way to reach me, and I’m also available to meet during office hours or another mutually convenient time.

Grading:  
You will be graded on accuracy, spelling, grammar, AP style, structure, conciseness, readability and completeness. Final grades are comprised of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Assignments</th>
<th>45%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm, Due on March 12</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes on Current Events</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columnist Analysis, Due on April 9</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final, Due in Class on May 4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specifics:  
93.5 - 100 A  
89.5 - 93.4 A-  
86.5 - 89.4 B+  
83.5 - 86.4 B
An Important Note:
Factual or spelling errors will result in an automatic deduction of points from the assignment grade, with the amount determined by the severity and frequency of the errors. Deductions will also be made when articles are considerably below or above the assigned story length. Please make sure you proofread and edit your work!

Academic Integrity:
I adhere to the ideals Thomas Jefferson instilled in public institutions devoted to higher learning and educational freedom. Please reference IUPUI's Student Code of Student Conduct for details. You can access it at [http://www.iupui.edu/code/](http://www.iupui.edu/code/). Your acceptance to the university community assumes and requires a commitment to these principles. Academic dishonesty or fraud of any form is unacceptable and undermines our community of scholars. This includes plagiarism, multiple submission, false citations, or false data. I require you to sign an honor pledge on all work and I expect you to understand its value and accept its implications. I take this very seriously and I expect you to do the same.

Your work must be original. You can talk to other colleagues about how to approach stories, but you must write and turn in your OWN work. All of these assignments must be done without any collaboration or help from other sources unless otherwise stated by me. Any unauthorized help or collaboration will be considered a violation of the Code of Conduct and could result in penalties. These actions include, but are not limited to:

- Not citing a source used in a story.
- Using other people's reporting notes. (You may, however, double check the accuracy of your facts and quotes with others who attended the same interview or event.)
- Using content from other people's stories without giving credit or attribution.
- Turning in someone else's story.
- Making up direct or indirect quotes in stories.
- Making up people, events, or facts in a story.
- Making up a story from an event that never happened.
- Making up a story from a past event or interview. You must represent information accurately.
- Making up a story from others' notes or accounts.

Students with Disabilities:
Students with a specific disability (permanent or temporary, physical or learning), who require special accommodation during the semester should make an appointment to meet
with me at the beginning of the semester.

**Attendance and Expected Behavior:**
A free flow of ideas and information will bolster learning and will enable you to communication and learn with peers in a team-oriented environment. I will reward stellar attendance and reserve the right to penalize a student’s grade for excessive absences. You can take two choice absences without any deduction from the semester grade. The third absence will result in the loss of one point (from your final grade). Each subsequent absence will result in the loss of two points. Perfect attendance will be rewarded by an addition of two bonus points.

I also ask that you are respectful to your colleagues and maintain professionalism in the classroom and during out-of-class assignments. Please do not use harsh or profane language inside the classroom and please show consideration towards your colleagues and their opinions. Please turn off cellular phones before entering class and only use computers for in-class writing or discussions. If you’re covering an event outside of class, please remember that the most appropriate dress is business casual.

**A Note about Our Schedule:**
Please view the tentative schedule as a work in progress. The unpredictable nature of media schedules will occur sometimes. The schedule therefore will resemble that of a newsroom – planned with the knowledge that surprises might arise. The project and paper deadlines should remain in place. I will inform you of changes via email through Oncourse or in class. If you miss a class, please be pro-active. Thank you for your patience.

**Tentative Weekly Schedule**
(Any changes will be discussed in class and through Oncourse)

- **January 13:** Introduction to Class
- **January 15:** Foundations of sports writing
  Reinardy & Wanta, Chapters 1 & 2 (pp. 1-9)
- **January 20:** Introductory Paper Due
  Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 3 (pp. 10-30)
- **January 22:** Leads
  Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 4 (pp. 31-43)
- **January 27:** Leads Continued...
  Reinardy & Wanta, Chapters 5, 6 (pp. 44-66)
- **January 29:** Structure & Style
  Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 7 (pp. 67-83)
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 18 (pp. 193-197)
Appendix (pp. 198-212)

February 3: Super Bowl Discussion

February 5: Game Stories, Beat Writing
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 10 (pp. 104-120)

February 10: Interviews & Use of Quotes
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapters 8-9 (pp. 84-103)

February 12: Endings
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapters 11 & 12 (pp. 121-135)

February 17: Features & Profiles
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 16 (pp. 166-175)

February 19: Features & Profiles Continued...

February 24: Sports Columns
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 15 (pp. 157-165)

February 26: Columns Continued....

March 3: Sidebars, Advances and Follows
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapters 13 & 14 (pp. 136-156)

March 5 Sports News & Enterprise Reporting
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 17 (pp. 176-192)

March 10: Writing Workshop

March 12: Midterm Due
Writing Online
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 20 (pp. 230-243)

March 17: Spring Break

March 19: Spring Break

March 24: Field Work

March 26: Writing for Broadcast

March 31: Legal and Ethical Issues
Reinardy & Wanta, Chapter 19 (pp. 213-229)
April 2: Writing for PR
April 7: Covering Race, Gender and Diversity Issues
April 9: Columnist Analysis Due
        In-Class HBO video
April 14: Writing Workshop
April 16: Covering Business and Sport
April 21: In-Class video and writing assignment
April 23: Careers in Sports
April 28: Field Work – Work on Final
April 30: Field Work – Work on Final
May 4: Final Paper Due
        Last day of class

Helpful Links:

Sports Journalism Organizations:

The Association for Women in Sports Media (AWSM):
http://www.awsmonline.org/

Associated Press Sports Editors:
http://apse.dallasnews.com/

Sports Journalism Jobs:
http://www.americanpressinstitute.org/pages/toolbox/journalism_job_links/sports_journalism_jobs/

Poynter Institute:
http://www.poynter.org/

The American Copy Editors Society:
http://www.copydesk.org
Other Helpful Sites:

Quick AP Refresher:
http://www.bu.edu/com/writingprgm/ap_styleguide1.pdf

Newsroom 101:
http://www.newsroom101.com/

Sports Media Guide:
http://www.sportsmediaguide.com

Women’s Sports Foundation (WSF):
http://www.womenssportfoundation.org

NCAA Graduation Rates:
http://www.ncaa.org/grad_rates/

Hoops Avenue: NBA news and gossip from newspapers around the country:
http://www.hoopsavenue.com/

Great Overall Resource:
http://www.sportslinkscentral.com/

Info on Sports Venues:
http://www.sportsvenues.com/

National Alliance for Youth Sports:
http://www.navs.org/

Indy Racing League:
http://www.indycar.com/

Physician and Sports Medicine
http://www.physportsmed.com/

College Hoops:
http://www.collegeinsider.com/

Sports from Female Perspective:
http://www.girlstalksports.com/

Societal Impact of Women and Sport:
http://www.gamefaceonline.org/
Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport:
http://www.bus.ucf.edu/sport/cgi-bin/site/sitew.cgi?page=ides/index.htx

Baseball Stats:
http://baseball1.com/
http://pressbox.mlb.com/pressbox/statistics/index.jsp
http://sports.espn.go.com/mlb/statistics
http://www.baseball-reference.com/

Important Site for Writers on Sports Injuries:
http://www.labtestsonline.org/

Site for Copy Editors:
http://www.theslot.com/

Sports Stats Databases:
http://www.bballsports.com/

Sports Almanac:
http://www.infoplease.com/sports.html

Investigative Sports:
http://www.hbo.com/realsports/index.html
http://sports.espn.go.com/espn.otl/index

Fantasy Football Picks:
http://www.thehuddle.com/

Sports Fan Site:
http://www.sportsfansofamerica.com/

Sports Blogs:
http://www.blogtopsites.com/sports/