

Disclaimer: This is an indicative syllabus only and may be subject to changes. The final and official syllabus will be distributed by the Instructor during the first day of class.

The American University of Rome
Communication and Digital Media Program

Department or degree program mission statement, student learning objectives, as appropriate

Course Title:	Sportswriting
Course Number:	COM 323
Credits & hours:	3 credits
Pre/Co-Requisites:	ENG 202 or permission of the instructor

Course description

This course will examine sportswriting in its various professional forms and will instruct students in approaches to writing about sport for publication. The course develops the skills needed to be a sportswriter: event reporting, feature writing, opinion articles/blogs, interviewing, editing, and researching. Students will visit sporting events and venues in Rome, as well as read and analyze the literature of sportswriting. We examine the changing world of sports journalism, the rise of social media in sport, the issues around fake news, and the ethics of sportswriting.

Required Textbook *(subject to change)*

- Fink, Conrad C. *Sportswriting: The Lively Game*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2001.
ISBN: tba
- Wilstein, Steve. *The Associated Press Sports Writing Handbook*. McGraw-Hill, 2001
ISBN: tba

Recommended Reading *(subject to change)*

- Aamidor, Abraham (ed.), *Real Sports Reporting*. Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Andrews, Phil. *Sports Journalism, a Practical Introduction*. Sage Publications, 2005.

Maramis, David (ed.) & Stout, Glenn (series editor) *The Best American Sportswriting 2007*. Houghton-Mifflin, 2007.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the principles of reporting on live sporting events
2. Analyze interviewing techniques for sports stories
3. Analyze facts and data for sports stories
4. Write sport stories, under the pressure of a deadline, and edit work written by others

Course Learning Activities

- Every writing assignment must be accompanied by research on the subject matter. (LO 1) Students will learn where to research what they need.
- Students will read six profiles and analyze the journalists' approach to gathering information from an interviewee. Students will write one profile of an athlete or a person involved in sports (coaches, managers, etc.) (LO2)
- Students will bring to class every week a sports-related print story of their choice for class discussion of its merits or lack thereof. (LO3)
- Writing assignments: over the course of the semester students will write five sports stories on: soccer, rugby, volleyball, basketball and one more sport of their choice. Three stories must be event coverage, two must be columns. (LO 4)
(The five stories, after critique and correction, will be included in a portfolio with the sports package below and returned to the instructor for final grading.)
- Sports package: students will prepare a season advance package on a team of their choice (LO 5) and will deliver an oral presentation on this package at the end of the semester.
- Students will critique each others work in class to exchange ideas and suggestions for improvement. (LOs 3 and 4)

Assessment tools

Class participation	10%
Profile	15%
Events stories (3, 10% each)	30%
Columns (2, 15% each)	30%
Sports package (including presentation)	15%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Topic
Week 1	Discussion of course content, assignments, review of syllabus
Week 2	In-class writing assignment, not graded, "Why I Want to be a Sports writer" The craft of writing. Fifty top writing tools (class handout.)
Week 3	Collecting the essential facts for a sports story: the rules, statistics, names and interviews Writing game stories: how sports events are covered
Week 4	Writing sports leads Precise language and eliminating cliches
Week 5	Covering Rugby Writing profiles
Week 6	Critique rugby stories Covering Volleyball
	Developing in-depth stories Critique volleyball stories
Week 8	Covering Soccer Writing a sports column.
Week 9	Critique soccer stories. What's a sports package and season advances?
Week 10	Covering Basketball. The Internet and sports: the web as pseudojournalism?
Week 11	Critique basketball stories. Covering the Olympics.
Week 12	Sports and society. Media-ted sports and popular culture, sports as folk religion: idols, hero worship, role models.
Week 13	Sports and race, sports and gender. The ethics of sports journalism.
Week 14	FINAL EXAM - Class presentations of sports packages

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In keeping with AUR's mission to prepare students to live and work across cultures, the University places a high value on classroom experience. As a result attendance is expected in all classes and attendance records are maintained. The University's attendance policy is as follows:

1.0. Minimum Attendance Requirement: Students must attend a minimum of 70% of a course in order to be eligible to be considered for a passing grade.

1.1. Automatically Accepted Absences

Students will not be penalized for one absence from classes meeting once a week;
Students will not be penalized for three absences from classes meeting twice a week;
Students will not be penalized for four absences from classes meeting more than twice a week, as in the case of some intensive courses.

1.2. If further absences are recorded, grade penalties will be applied according to the Instructor's specific attendance policy, as stated in the syllabus, and following the institutional parameters given in the Note* below.

1.2.1. If the Instructor does not specify an attendance policy, there will be no grade penalty other than that attached to the minimum attendance requirement, and any penalized absences recorded above the basic 70% attendance requirement for the course will be invalidated.

1.3. During Summer sessions where courses are taught more intensively over a shorter period the following applies:

- Students will not be penalized for two absences from class.

2.0. Tolerated Absences

Certain categories of absence will not be penalized but they will be counted as an absence (for a 3-credit course meeting twice a week). These absences are:

- The Model United Nations (MUN);
- Permit to Stay,
- SG's "Ambassador Program" (Student Government initiative)
- Religious Holidays

The American University of Rome makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate students who must be absent from classes to observe religious holidays. (Please refer to the Provost's Office list of accepted absences for religious holidays)

Not attending a class due to the observance of a religious holiday will normally not be counted as an absence.

Students who will need to miss class in order to observe religious holidays must notify their Instructors by the end of the Add/Drop period (first week of classes), and must make prior arrangements with their Instructors to make up any work missed.

2.1. The list does NOT include academic field trips because these (including arrangements for travel) must not overlap with other classes.

3.0. Cases of prolonged absences caused by an emergency or a medical condition may require students to withdraw from some or all of their courses. Under such circumstances students should first consult their academic advisors.

*Note: No Instructor may penalize a student more than half a letter grade for each absence beyond the tolerated limit (e.g. from A- to B+).

Grade Point Average

A student's grade point average (GPA) is computed by multiplying the quality points achieved by the number of credits for each course. The result is then divided by the total number of credit hours taken. The Cumulative or Career Total Grade Point Average (CGPA) is the grade point average for all credit hours taken at the University and at approved study abroad programs. The GPA and CGPA are calculated by truncating after the second digit after the decimal point. Transfer credits have no effect on the CGPA at The American University of Rome.

Grades

Grades are posted on a secure area of the University's official website and are mailed to AUR degree students only upon written request. Grades are mailed to the various study abroad programs. Grades computed in the (GPA) reflect the following grade equivalents:

GRADE		GPA	
A	Excellent	4.00	94 – 100 points
A-		3.70	90 – 93.99 pts
B+	Very Good	3.30	87 – 89.99
B	Good	3.00	83 – 86.99
B-		2.70	80 – 82.99
C+		2.30	77 – 79.99
C	Satisfactory	2.00	73 – 76.99
C-	Less than Satisfactory	1.70	70 – 72.99
D	Poor	1.00	60 – 69.99
F	Failing	0.00	59.99 – 0
WU	Unofficial withdrawal counts as an F	0.00	
P	Applicable to development courses	0.00	
<i>Grades not computed into the grade point average are:</i>			
W	Withdrawal		
AUDIT (AU)	Only possible when the student registers for a course at the beginning of the semester as an audit student		
I	Incomplete work must be completed within the ensuing semester. Failure to do so results in automatically converting the I grade to the default grade, which is then computed into the grade point average		
P	Pass grade is applicable to courses as indicated in the catalog.		
WIP	Work in progress		