



SYLLABUS: COMM 3414 (27499)

Sports Media Relations

Autumn 2025

T/R 9:35 – 10:55 a.m. ET

*Class will be referred to as the “3414 AM group”
(given our group’s class time starts and ends in the
a.m.)*

Class Location: Journalism Building 342 [in person unless
otherwise listed]

Instructor

Instructor: Professor Timothy Miller, MBA, APR

Email: miller.8354@osu.edu

Office Hours:

Virtual

Tuesday/Thursday: 12:45 p.m. – 2:05 p.m. ET (Virtual timeslot
booking page available on course’s Carmen page)

Additional windows by appointment: virtually (email to
set-up)

Course Overview – COMM 3414: Sports Media Relations

This course introduces students to the dynamic world of sports media relations, with a focus on strategic communication, ethical practice, and career readiness. Through a flipped classroom model and hands-on learning, students will explore how sports information professionals shape narratives, support media coverage, and build relationships across collegiate and professional athletics.

COMM 3414 is not a traditional journalism or broadcasting course. Instead, it centers on the role of the Sports Information Director (SID)—the behind-the-scenes professional who ensures athletes, coaches, and organizations are represented with clarity, professionalism, and purpose. Students will learn how to write press releases, game notes, and executive bios, and how to support media professionals with usable, timely, and accurate information.

The course emphasizes strategic thinking through the RPIE framework (Research, Planning, Implementation, Evaluation), supported by the Public Relations Society of America. Students will learn to go beyond tactics and understand the “why” behind media relations decisions. They’ll also reflect on their own career goals using the *What Color Is Your Parachute?* workbook, connecting personal strengths and values to real-world roles in sports communication.

Throughout the semester, students will complete three major projects and a series of scaffolded mini assignments that simulate real SID tasks. These projects are designed to be portfolio-ready and help students articulate their strategic clarity, writing skills, and professional growth.

What Makes This Course Unique

- Real-world assignments modeled after actual SID responsibilities
- Scaffolded learning that builds toward portfolio-ready projects
- Integration of personal reflection and career exploration
- Opportunities to engage with campus professionals and media environments
- Clear guidance on ethical and strategic use of AI tools

Student Voice Invitation

Your perspective matters here. Whether you’re a sports fanatic, a curious communicator, or still exploring your path, this course is designed to help you find clarity, confidence, and community.

Major Topics and Skill Development

Students will explore:

- **Foundations of Sports Media Relations:** Understanding the SID's role, ethical principles, and the structure of media departments across sport levels.
- **Professional Writing for Media:** Creating bullet- and paragraph-style game notes, AP Style recaps, press releases, and executive bios.
- **Strategic Messaging and Planning:** Using frameworks like PESO, Valid Metrics, and Kick Butt Index to design and evaluate media strategies.
- **Stakeholder Communication:** Adapting tone and content for athletes, coaches, journalists, fans, and donors.
- **Crisis Communication:** Drafting holding statements and managing media response plans during high-pressure scenarios.
- **Career Exploration and Reflection:** Connecting course work to personal growth through reflective journaling, career services engagement, and goal setting.

Catalog course description

This hands-on, active-learning course will teach the theory and practice of sports media relations, developing strategic communication skills including writing, social media and multimedia, which will prepare students for sports media careers at the collegiate or professional sports levels.

Course Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)

Learning Goal 1

Students will understand the foundational role of sports media relations in collegiate and professional athletics, including the responsibilities of media professionals and the ethical standards that guide their work.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Describe the core responsibilities of sports information professionals in collegiate and professional settings.
- Explain key ethical principles that guide media relations practices in sports organizations.
- Compare and contrast the structure and function of media relations departments across different levels of sport (e.g., NCAA vs. professional leagues).

Learning Goal 2

Students will apply professional writing and communication strategies to create media materials that reflect industry standards and effectively serve sports audiences.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Write bullet-style game notes that highlight key storylines, player statistics, and team trends in a format suitable for media use.
- Compose paragraph-style game notes that provide narrative context and preview upcoming matchups.
- Write an AP Style game recap that summarizes key events and outcomes for media distribution.
- Draft a press release that adheres to sports media conventions, including headline writing, quotes, and organizational messaging.

- Construct a professional executive biography suitable for media guides and organizational websites.
- Revise and edit written content based on instructor and peer feedback to improve clarity, accuracy, and alignment with sports information standards.

Learning Goal 3

Students will exhibit confidence in managing real-world media relations scenarios through simulated press events, crisis response exercises, and decision-making under pressure.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Observe and participate in a simulated press conference, serving in either a spokesperson or media role, and reflect on the communication strategies used.
- Draft a holding statement and outline a media response plan in response to a mock crisis scenario.
- Reflect on performance in simulated media interactions and identify strategies for improvement.

Learning Goal 4

Students will demonstrate an understanding of stakeholder relationships through collaborative exercises and communication scenarios that emphasize fairness, professionalism, and respect for diverse perspectives.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Collaborate with peers from diverse backgrounds on group media relations projects, demonstrating effective communication and shared responsibility.
- Adapt messaging and tone in communication exercises to reflect the needs and perspectives of different stakeholders (e.g., athletes, coaches, journalists).

- Reflect on how personal background, communication style, and individual strengths (e.g., through tools like What Color Is Your Parachute?) influence professional interactions in sports media settings.

Learning Goal 5

Students will develop strategic communication plans tailored to sports media contexts, incorporating audience analysis, message design, delivery methods, and media sentiment evaluation.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Design a basic media relations plan for a hypothetical sports team, event, or issue.
- Identify key audiences and craft tailored messages that align with organizational goals and stakeholder needs.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of different communication channels (e.g., press releases, social media, interviews) in reaching target audiences.
- Develop a sentiment index to classify earned media content as positive, neutral, or negative, and analyze media coverage using this framework.

Learning Goal 6

Students will cultivate habits of reflective and self-directed learning through media analysis, feedback integration, and the development of personal growth goals in the sports communication field.

Expected Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Maintain a reflective journal throughout the semester to track learning progress, challenges, and evolving career interests.
- Set and revise personal learning goals related to sports communication, using feedback from peers and instructors.
- Evaluate their growth as communicators by comparing early and final course work, identifying specific areas of improvement and future development.

Course materials

Required books:

Available in the bookstore

Stoldt, G. C., Dittmore, S. W., Ross, M., & Bravold, S. E. (2020). *Sport Public relations*. Human Kinetics Publishers. ISBN: 9781492589389.

^ Rental options also available via Vital Source

Bolles, R. N., & Brooks, K., EdD. (2021). *What color is your parachute? Job-Hunter's Workbook, sixth edition: A Companion to the World's Most Popular and Bestselling Career Handbook*. Ten Speed Press. ISBN: 9781984858269.

BUYER'S NOTE: there is a longer version of this book. It sometimes comes in blue. The condensed version, in ORANGE is the one you want because it says 'workbook' in it.

^ Available for purchase in the bookstore and Amazon

Pedersen, P.M. (Ed.). (2013). *Routledge Handbook of Sport Communication* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/10.4324/9780203123485>

^ Online at no cost to students available through OSU Libraries at link below:

<https://www-taylorfrancis-com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/books/edit/10.4324/9780203123485/routledge-handbook-sport-communication-paul-pedersen>

Recommended book:

Available in the bookstore

Press, A. (2022). *Associated Press Stylebook 2022-2024 And briefing on media law*. New York, N.Y.: BASIC Books. ISBN: 9781541601659.

Teaching Philosophy

My background and experience have provided me with meaningful opportunities to guide students through the evolving world of sports media relations. This course is designed to help you build both strategic clarity and professional confidence—whether you’re pursuing a career in sports communication or simply exploring how your strengths and interests align with the field.

COMM 3414 follows an inverted learning model, meaning you’ll engage with readings, video clips, and pre-recorded lectures before our first class meeting each week. This structure allows us to use in-person time for active learning—through writing workshops, simulations, peer collaboration, and scaffolded assignments that mirror real-world SID tasks.

Rather than lecture at you when we are in-person, I aim to build the structure of learning with you. You’ll come to class having laid the foundation through your pre-class work, and together we’ll reinforce, challenge, and expand that foundation through discussion and application. This model helps us identify and address gaps in understanding while building a shared learning environment that’s inclusive, engaging, and career-relevant.

The workload is consistent with a three-credit course: for every hour in class, expect about three hours of work outside of class. That outside work is not busywork—it’s preparation that allows us to make the most of our time together. When you come prepared, we can dive deeper, connect ideas, and practice the skills that matter most in sports media relations.

Some class sessions will include personal reflections from my own experience in the field, while others will feature guest speakers who bring valuable real-world insights. Every semester, I’m able to look to meet the needs of that section’s collective and will always look to adapt each class dynamically based on your input, ensuring that our time together is responsive and relevant.

I want you to feel comfortable asking questions, sharing ideas, and learning from your peers.

As Ted Lasso would say, “Be curious, not judgmental.” You’ll develop your own style and approach over time, and I believe that learning from others (even if you choose a different path) is part of becoming a thoughtful, strategic communicator.

Sports media relations is a rewarding profession where no two days are the same. I’m excited to help you explore it, challenge yourself, and grow in ways that matter to your future.

Course Expectations

COMM 3414 is a three-credit elective course with high professional and academic standards. Your success depends on consistent engagement, preparation and collaboration.

Here's what you can expect—and what's expected of you:

- **Attend all scheduled class periods.** Classes are held in person unless noted in the weekly Carmen module. Do not schedule work or other commitments during class time.
- **Complete all assigned readings and pre-class work before each session.** This ensures you're ready to apply concepts during our limited in-person time. Quizzes are due by the start of class and are not collaborative. Your lowest two quiz scores are automatically dropped, but there are no makeup quizzes.
- **Bring a computer to every class.** You'll need access to online materials, potential discussion boards, and group resources during class sessions.
- **Be active in Carmen.** Check the course site multiple times per week for updates, materials, and announcements. Weekly modules include readings, assignments, and reminders for quizzes and project deadlines.
- **Ensure reliable access to Wi-Fi and online tools.** You're responsible for accessing course materials and submitting work on time. If you encounter technical issues, reach out before the due date. Visit CarmenCanvas Resource Center for help.
- **Engage fully in your group project.** A significant portion of your grade comes from collaborative work. Stay connected with your team and contribute equitably to campaign development.

Course technology

For help with your password, university e-mail, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the OSU IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at <https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours>, and support for urgent issues is available 24x7.

Carmen:

- Carmen, Ohio State's Learning Management System, will be used to host materials and activities throughout this course. To access Carmen, visit [Carmen.osu.edu](https://carmen.osu.edu). Log in to Carmen using your name.# and password. If you have not setup a name.# and password, visit my.osu.edu.
- Help guides on the use of Carmen can be found at <https://resourcecenter.odee.osu.edu/carmen>
- This course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.
 - [Carmen accessibility](#)

Zoom and Teams:

- The webinar tool Zoom will host any potential virtual class dates, with a link available for the specific date on Carmen.
- Teams will be used to host online office hours by appointment.
- Help guides on the use of Zoom can be found at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697-Getting-Started>

Baseline technical skills necessary for courses

Basic computer and web-browsing skills
Navigating Carmen

Necessary equipment

Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection.

Necessary software

OSU students have access to Microsoft Office products free of charge. To install, please visit https://osuitsm.service-now.com/selfservice/kb_view.do?sysparm_article=kb04733

Word processor with the ability to save files under .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf. Most popular word processing software programs including Microsoft Word and Mac Pages have these abilities.

Computer: Friend or Foe?

This course, like communications as a whole, relies heavily on access to computers, specific software, and the Internet. At some point during the semester you will likely have a problem with technology. Your laptop will crash; your iPad battery will die; a recording you make will disappear; you will accidentally delete a file; the wireless will go down at a crucial time.

These, however, are inevitabilities of life, not emergencies. Technology problems are not excuses for unfinished or late work. Bad things may happen, but you can protect yourself by doing the following:

- Plan ahead: A deadline is the last minute to turn in material. You can start--and finish--early, particularly if challenging resources are required, or you know it will be time consuming to finish this project.
- Save work early and often: Think how much work you do in 10 minutes. An option to give yourself extra peace of mind: set-up or enable auto save.
- Make regular backups of files in a different location: Between Box, Google Drive, Dropbox and iCloud, you have ample places to store and back up your materials. Use them.
- Deadlines, you will find, are a critical component of success in the sports communications industry. Issues uploading to Carmen at the deadline are not accepted accommodations for late work. Please factor in that at times, an upload may stall or need to be re-submitted based on what the system tells you. Successful deadline meeting requires you to factor those types of variable obstacles in timeline so please plan accordingly. Self troubleshooting, connecting with campus IT and then reaching out well in advance of the deadline regarding a tech issue that appears insurmountable on day of deadline is a much stronger approach than missing a deadline and then reaching out to share your issue.
- Make regular backups of files in a different location: Between Box, Google Drive, Dropbox and iCloud, you have ample places to store and back up your materials. Use them.

Grading

Assignment or category	Points	Percentage
Group Project Deliverable 1 (Major Project #1)	37	9.3%
Group Project Deliverable 2 (Major Project #3)	63	15.8%
Group Project Presentation 1 (Major Project #1)	13	3.3%
Group Project Presentation 2 (Major Project #3)	37	9.3%
Individual Quizzes (12 total @10 pts each, two lowest scores dropped)	100	25.0%
Individual Project (Major Project & 2)	75	18.8%
Mini Assignments [Some Group, Some Individual] (15 @ 5 pts each)	75	18.8%
Total	400	100.0%

See course schedule for tentative due dates and Carmen for updated/final deadlines

These points tallied together will give you your final grade of the following

COURSE GRADING SCALE:

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

I am not able to negotiate grades, either during or after the semester. If you have a specific question on a particular scoring item and would like to learn more about the scoring during the semester (but prior to finals), please set-up a virtual office hours appointment and send me an email in advance specifically noting which items you'd like to have a dialogue about. Conversing via a brief virtual office hours (either through the booking link during standard office hours or a time that mutually works for us) allows me to come prepared into the discussion (thanks to your email) as well as quickly providing context and/or resolution to your inquiries. I will not be able to accommodate these requests immediately before/after class or simply via email. In return, I promise to be expeditious in setting up some time and being mindful of the value of your time and question(s).

If you believe a scoring error has been made on my manual uploading in Carmen on assignments (i.e. I marked you incomplete when it was complete or I put a 1 instead of a 10), please simply reach out via email so I can look into and no office hour session would be necessary for that.

Assignment submissions

All assignments are due at the date and time listed on the syllabus. In journalism, stories that miss the deadline often do not make it to publication, and yours will not be graded (i.e. you will receive a zero for that graded item). Assignments will be submitted to Canvas and grades will be provided there.

*If you are absent a day an assignment is discussed or assigned, it is your responsibility to get details from me or a classmate. **I do not accept late work.** If you will be absent the day an assignment is discussed or due, contact me in advance for details and/or to coordinate your submission. Under no circumstances are assignments accepted via email unless explicitly stated otherwise. Be sure to check the required format of submissions via Carmen – there are specific points occasionally allocated to submitting the required format; this replicates a real-world situation. If a client wants or requires a PDF and you send a word document, more work has been created and attention to detail is paramount in this profession.*

Make sure you leave yourself ample time for submissions via Carmen (i.e. I recommend not logging on five minutes before the deadline). Be sure to check your uploads and confirm via Carmen that the submission went through. Issues with uploads at the deadline are not an acceptable excuse, unfortunately. You will need to plan accordingly. Reaching out after a deadline with a lack of submission in the real world is unlikely to garner ample sympathy and I replicate that atmosphere of accountability in this course while still trying to be understanding in extreme circumstances. Advance communication in life – and this course – is paramount.

Assignment guide

Class Participation and Professionalism

Think of this class as a professional experience. Your presence, preparation, and collaboration directly impact your success—and your team's.

Professionalism means:

- Attending all scheduled class sessions or contacting your professor **before class** if you must miss.
- Arriving on time, staying for the full session, and contributing constructively to group work.
- Dressing in a way that reflects respect for guest speakers, and each other.
- Communicating clearly and respectfully with your team and instructor.
- Bringing a computer to every class to access materials, collaborate, and complete in-class assignments.

Some days will include coaching, others will feature guest speakers. Your engagement matters. If you're present but didn't complete the pre-class work, just let me know—I respect honesty and won't call you out. Otherwise, I'll assume you're ready to participate and may ask for your input during discussion or group work.

Quizzes

COMM 3414 uses quizzes in place of traditional exams to reinforce strategic thinking and real-world application of course concepts. There are **12 quizzes**, each worth **10 points**. Your **two lowest scores will be automatically dropped**, making quizzes worth **100 points total** out of 400 for the course.

Quizzes are designed to align with the flipped classroom model. You'll engage with readings and pre-recorded lectures before class, apply concepts through in-class activities, and then take the quiz after you've had time to reflect and practice. Each quiz will remain open for approximately one week after it is released, giving you flexibility to prepare, ask questions, and complete it on your own schedule.

Each quiz includes:

- **Pre-reading notes** and “Be Ready To...” guidance posted on Carmen
- **10 multiple-choice questions** that go beyond simple memorization
- **15-minute time limit**
- **Closed book, closed notes** format (no other browser windows or tabs allowed)

What to Expect from Quiz Questions

Quiz questions are designed to reflect the kinds of decisions and thought processes expected of a sports media relations professional. You'll encounter:

- Scenario-based questions **that ask you to apply frameworks like PESO, Valid Metrics, and Kick Butt Index**
- Ethical decision-making prompts **grounded in real-world sports PR dilemmas**
- Strategic writing and editing tasks, **including AP Style conventions and media usability**
- Audience-focused messaging analysis, **requiring you to evaluate tone, clarity, and stakeholder needs**

These questions are not about memorizing definitions, rather they're about demonstrating your ability to think strategically, communicate professionally, and make informed decisions in realistic contexts.

Academic Integrity and Quiz Conduct

Quizzes must be completed independently. Collaboration of any kind is prohibited. Academic integrity is essential in this course and in the profession of sports communication. Just as you would expect honesty and professionalism from others in the field, I expect the same from you.

I reserve the right to administer quizzes using online video proctoring tools. Students must complete quizzes during the scheduled window and do so with integrity. Please review the course's **Academic Integrity** policy for more details.

Quiz Breakdown and Chapter Alignment

Quiz #	Topic	Primary Text (Stoldt)	Supplemental (Pedersen)	Be Ready To...
1	Roles of SIDs & PESO Model	Ch. 1–2	Ch. 1	Understand SID responsibilities and PESO categories
2	Ethics Scenario Response	Ch. 1–2, 6	Ch. 7, 12	Apply ethical principles to real-world scenarios
3	Stakeholder Messaging	Ch. 10	Ch. 45, 48	Adapt tone and messaging for different audiences
4	Media Resource Navigation	Ch. 6–7	Ch. 12	Evaluate usability of media guides and resources
5	PESO Model in Practice	Ch. 3–5	—	Apply PESO to campaign planning and media mix
6	AP Style & Press Release Writing	Ch. 7	—	Use AP Style and structure press releases effectively
7	Game Notes Structure & Strategy	Ch. 5–6	Ch. 18, 25	Write bullet and paragraph-style game notes

Quiz #	Topic	Primary Text (Stoldt)	Supplemental (Pedersen)	Be Ready To...
8	Executive Bios & Game Recaps	Ch. 5, 7	—	Write professional bios and AP Style recaps
9	Media Pitching Essentials	Ch. 7 + Prowly resource	—	Craft compelling media pitches with strategic clarity
10	Mid-Semester-Ish Review	Cumulative Ch. 1–7	Ch. 1, 7, 12	Review key concepts and terminology
11	Valid Metrics Framework & Kick Butt Index	Ch. 2, 4	Valid Metrics + KBI resources	Evaluate media impact using strategic metrics
12	Final Course Concepts Review	Cumulative Ch. 1–10	All paired chapters	Synthesize course concepts for strategic clarity

Readings

As you saw in “Course Materials,” on top of three required books (one of which is completely at zero cost to students through the OSU Library link), there is one recommended book – the Associated Press Stylebook 2022-2024. It is an excellent resource and will serve you well in this course and over the next several years (a recent edition is on my bookshelf to this day!). We’ll cover material from the book and also encourage you to use it throughout your writing for proper AP Style reference.

There are other reference materials that will be featured in the class, from which we will read select pages/clips from and those sections will be provided/available to you at no charge on our Carmen page.

Class Discussions/Activities/Assignments

Class Discussions, Activities, and Assignments

This course is designed to bridge the gap between academic learning and professional practice in sports media relations. You’ll engage in a mix of in-class and out-of-class assignments that build your skills, deepen your understanding of strategic communication, and prepare you for real-world SID responsibilities.

In-Class Assignments and Activities

COMM 3414 uses a flipped classroom model. You’ll complete readings and watch pre-recorded lectures before class, allowing us to use our time together for active learning. During class, you’ll participate in scaffolded exercises and mini assignments that simulate professional tasks—such as writing game notes, crafting executive bios, and developing media pitches. These activities are designed to reinforce course concepts and prepare you for the major projects.

There are 11 in-class mini assignments, each supported by a TiLT-aligned scaffolding exercise. These assignments are low-stakes but meaningful, and they build toward the major projects. You’ll receive peer and instructor feedback during class, and you’ll be expected to submit your work by the end of the session unless otherwise noted. If you require an accommodation due to illness or another documented issue, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Out-of-Class Assignments

You’ll complete four out-of-class mini assignments known as Parachute Reflections, based on the What Color Is Your Parachute? workbook. These reflections help you explore your strengths, values, ideal work environments, and career goals. Each reflection uses a “Four Windows” model to connect personal insights to course content, career direction, and campus resources. These assignments are essential for developing your professional identity and strategic clarity.

All out-of-class assignments are posted on Carmen and are due by the date listed in the course schedule. Late work will not be accepted unless you’ve arranged an accommodation in advance.

Major Projects

You'll complete three major projects that simulate real-world SID work and are designed to be portfolio-ready:

Major Project 1: OSU Team Media Analysis (Group)

Focuses on strategic message development, media resource evaluation, PESO analysis, and earned media content review. Includes a group presentation.

Major Project 2: SID Essentials (Individual)

Includes writing press releases, game notes, and executive bios. This project showcases your ability to produce professional media materials and is ideal for internship portfolios.

Major Project 3: Strategic Media Plan (Group)

Builds on earlier work to develop a comprehensive media strategy, including stakeholder messaging, media pitching, and evaluation planning. Includes a final group presentation.

Group projects include both written deliverables and presentations. The first presentation is worth 13 points and serves as a developmental benchmark. The second presentation is worth 37 points and reflects your growth in public speaking and strategic clarity. Comprehensive documents and rubrics are available for each major project on Carmen.

Assignment Breakdown

- Ungraded scaffolding/practice exercises in-class
- 15 mini assignments (11 in-class, 4 out-of-class): 5 points each
- Major Project 1: 37 points (PDF) + 13 points (presentation)
- Major Project 2: 75 points (individual PDF)
- Major Project 3: 60 points (PDF) + 37 points (presentation)

All assignments are designed to help you build skills, apply ethical and strategic thinking, and prepare for future roles in sports communication.

Additional information

Extra Credit

Everyone will have the opportunity throughout the semester to attend events or complete additional assignments for extra credit, up to eight total points. Additional details are listed on Carmen on up to four-point possible activities.

Two additional points (thereby reaching a total of 10 extra credit points for the entire semester) are available should the 80 percent of the class complete each of the two milestone surveys. These two surveys include an unofficial midway point professor evaluative check-in assessment (available via Carmen) and then the completion of the university's formal Student Evaluation of Instructor (SEI) at the conclusion of the semester. One point of extra credit is available to the entire class in each of the two surveys should the class reach the participation threshold identified above.

All extra credit will be reported in Carmen. The deadline for completion and reporting to me all of the extra credit is 11:59 p.m. ET on the Thursday before the last week of classes.

Syllabus

This syllabus is an agreement between the instructor and the student. The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus as deemed necessary. By staying enrolled in this class, the student agrees to abide by the policies described herein.

Every effort has been made to create a syllabus that is as comprehensive and accurate as possible, but each class is a living entity and changes may arise. Please know I will notify you by email and in our next class session as soon as any syllabus change may arise.

Resources

During the course of this class and throughout your university career, you may find the following helpful:

- **The Writing Center.** This may be the last time in your life that you have easily accessible, free help available for your writing skills—use it. Being a good writer will give you an advantage in every walk of life, and if you are a Communication major, it is expected. Visit <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter> to learn more or to schedule an appointment.
- **Strunk & White's The Elements of Style.** If you are uncertain of what constitutes good writing, this classic book is very straightforward and extremely helpful. The advice and direction offered in this book applies to writing in all fields. Find it at the campus bookstore or at a used bookstore for cheap.
- **AP Style and Communications-Specific Publications**
AP Style Guide Resources - Beyond the AP Style Guide book (available in bookstore), please see below.
 - Online Practice quizzes:
<https://global.oup.com/us/companion.websites/9780199846412/student/apresources/apquiz/>

- Quizlet flash cards:
<https://quizlet.com/2046964/ap-style-quiz-flash-cards/>
- You can look online for others. Be aware, AP makes updates every year, so watch the dates.
- Be sure to review/learn/know the basics - all listed in the AP Style Guide:
 - Dates
 - Numerals
 - Dollars & percents
 - Times
 - Addresses
 - States
 - Titles
 - Names
 - Composition titles
 - Abbreviations

PR/Communications-Specific Publications

- www.ragan.com
- www.prdaily.com
- <http://adage.com>
- www.socialmediaexaminer.com
- <http://mashable.com>
- www.prweek.com/us
- www.prnewsonline.com
- www.odwyerpr.com

Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Only students enrolled in this section are permitted to attend class. Attendance (both physical [in-person or virtual as denoted in syllabus for specific dates] and mental) is key to your success in this class. Your grade is largely contingent on your presence and participation in class. Listen, take notes and ask questions. If you miss class for whatever reason, it is your responsibility to obtain notes from a classmate; the instructor will not provide notes in any circumstance. If you miss class, you will not be able to make up any in-class work or extra credit opportunities.

Attendance

Student participation requirements

We have a lot of material to learn in a short period of time. It is important that you attend all of our class sessions. All of the material is available on Carmen at the beginning of the semester. Readings and videos must be consumed before our live class session so we can work on active learning experiences. Since we meet just twice a week, missing more than two classes in the semester without documentation will result in the final grade being dropped a letter grade.

As previously stated, if you are absent a day an assignment is discussed or assigned, it is your responsibility to get details from me or a classmate. **I do not accept late work.** If you will be absent the day an assignment is discussed or due, contact me in advance for assignment details and turn it in early in class or in my office. Under no circumstances are assignments accepted via email unless explicitly stated otherwise.

It is your responsibility to review attendance tracking within Carmen related to number of dates attended, excused or absent (unexcused).

Since we meet just twice a week, missing more than two classes in the semester without documentation will result in the final grade being dropped a letter grade.

Excused Absences - General Guidelines

NOTE: For any of the scenarios in this section, if you come across a schedule conflict that would see you have to miss class, please reach out to me via email to communicate so we may, as the top part of this section notes, work together.

Students have a responsibility to:

- Attend each and every class meeting scheduled during the normal meeting times, including final exams
- Meet all of the requirements for each course for which they are registered
- Know an instructor's course policy regarding absence and make-up work at the start of the semester.
- Notify faculty/instructor of any preplanned absences within the first week of class or as soon reasonably as possible.
- Make a timely request that an unforeseen absence be excused
- Take reasonable efforts to avoid schedule conflicts
- Work collaboratively and transparently with your course instructor

Faculty have a responsibility to:

- Establish and disseminate a consistent course absence policy that explains expectations and the

process for seeking an excused absence

- Provide a syllabus on the first day of the course that includes information regarding examinations,

scheduled experiential learning activities, or other requirements to the extent possible

- Develop reasonable curriculum adjustments where applicable and track student engagement

- Consider all points of view when exercising judgement in applying course policies in non-standard

situations

- Work collaboratively and transparently with your students

.....

Faculty members may excuse student absences for a variety of circumstances and adjust curriculum requirements as appropriate. Students, faculty, and other instructional staff are expected to work together with respect and integrity to define and enact the appropriate curriculum adjustments.

These reasonable and common situations may include, depending upon the circumstances:

- Illness, physical or mental, or injuries of the student or a student's dependent

Note: See "illness" policies in next section

* Situations covered by Title IX, including medical conditions related to pregnancy

- Participation in intercollegiate athletic events and other university-affiliated academic events as stated in Faculty Rule 3335-9-22 Group Absences.

- Subpoenas

- Jury duty

- Military service

- Bereavement, including related travel

- Religious observances; holidays observed by many members of the university community include, but are not limited to: Rosh Hashanah; Yom Kippur; Sukkot; Passover; Shavuot; 'Id al-Fitr; 'Id al-Adha, and Good Friday

o A calendar of commonly observed religious holidays can be viewed at: https://registrar.osu.edu/participationroster/religious_holidays.pdf Links to an external site.

Note that some of these situations are covered by Federal, State, or other applicable laws. If you have concerns or questions, you may contact the Office of Academic Affairs, Office of Legal Affairs, or Office of Institutional Equity.

If you are to miss an exam date for illness, please see the section specific to that below. If you are to miss an exam date for additional the reasonable and common situations leading to an absence from class that date as outlined above, please reach out: Faculty members may reasonably require documentation to support a request for an excused absence.

Illness Policies

All students, faculty and staff are required to comply with and stay up to date on all university safety and health guidance (<https://safeandhealthy.osu.edu>).

I take attendance each class as part of our regular procedures. As shared earlier, it is your responsibility to review attendance tracking within Carmen related to number of dates attended, excused or absent (unexcused).

Most students should be able to complete a successful semester despite illness-induced absence. If you are too ill to participate in this course due to illness, please contact the instructor as soon as you are able. If you are absent due to illness or scheduled medical appointment, I will give you a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work other than any in-class assignments that are not able to be replicated by an individual student after the fact due to the nature of the assignment. This course offers extra credit to allow students to recoup lost points for situations such as these.

You do not need to provide a physician's document of illness or scheduled medical appointment for a one-off illness/medical absence, but you should advise me via email preferably before class but as soon as you are safely able to do so. This will allow me to properly connect with you on next steps (if any) related to your absence as well as permitting me to update an absence designation in Carmen. If you are expecting to miss multiple classes due to medical appointments and know such in advance, please contact me so we may have dialogue on what you may miss.

If you prefer to not reach out to share you are missing or had to miss a class due to illness or scheduled medical appointment, please simply utilize a flex absence as outlined in the next section.

Faculty members may reasonably require documentation to support a request for an excused

Absence related to missing an entire quiz window. However, requiring doctor's notes, police reports in case of injury, and other such documentation in the event of physical/mental illness or injuries can cause an unintended hardship for students who may not, for example, have financial means or the ready ability to obtain such a note. Furthermore, this kind of documentation often contains highly sensitive information that needs to be managed in special ways to protect the privacy of the individual and to maintain compliance with institutional data policies. Students in special situations or those requiring specific, long-term, or other accommodation should seek support from appropriate university offices including but not limited to: Student Advocacy, Student Life Disability Services, the Office of Institutional Equity.

Additional Absences - General Guidelines

Guidance for absences beyond the above scenarios

Flex absences (non-excused absences)

Outside of the examples in the section immediately above, if you must miss an in-person class for another reason, here is my guidance:

In this particular scenario, because we meet two times a week, you would not need to formally document an absence with me for up to two in-class periods (equivalent of one week). You can simply do what you need to do and use the day as a flex absence but you'll still need to review and abide by the bottom section of this page ("Missing a Class"). From a formality perspective, I'll mark it in my log as an absence (unexcused) and, as I shared in the preceding sentence, for this course you would have up to two of those to flex-utilize. Can you provide me a courtesy heads-up? Absolutely, but it is not required and for transparency it would not change how I would code it in the system for the up to one week (here: two classes) of absences.

As a reminder, please work with any outside jobs/internship supervisors to let them know of your class commitments as they should not overlap with our course. If an unavoidable one-off conflict was to arise, please see the above paragraph. Please also make sure you are in regular contact with any class-related groups/partners should you need to miss a class.

Beyond the one week, any scenario in which you potentially anticipate missing more than one week of class - excluding scenarios outlined by the university in the section above ['excused absences'] must be proactively discussed with me in advance. I will take time to review for approval and will do so on a case-by-case basis. In this case, should the situation be approved by me, you would be marked as an excused absence for that date beyond the one-week of previously mentioned 'flex' unexcused absences (in which no documentation needed for that).

As a reminder from the very top section of this note: since we meet just twice a week, missing more than two classes in the semester without documentation will result in the final grade being dropped a letter grade.

MISSING A CLASS? IMPORTANT FOR ALL ABSENCES:

If you are absent a day an assignment is discussed or assigned, it is your responsibility to review our Carmen page for that date. I do not accept late work. If you will be absent the day an assignment is discussed or due, contact me in advance for assignment details and turn it in early in class.

Under no circumstances are assignments accepted via email unless explicitly stated otherwise.

It is your responsibility to review attendance tracking within Carmen related to number of dates attended, excused or absent (unexcused).

QUESTIONS/THOUGHTS/CONCERNS?

Let's talk!

Student Academic Services

Arts and Sciences Advising and Academic Services' website provides support for student academic success. Information on advising issues such as tutoring, transfer credits, academic standing, and contact information for Arts and Sciences advisors can be obtained through this website. The site is: <http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

Student Services

The Student Service Center assists with financial aid matters, tuition and fee payments. Please see their site at: <http://ssc.osu.edu>

Copyright Disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

Please note that all contents are may be subject to copyright protection and belong to the author. Audio/Video recording of lectures and posting or other unauthorized uses of digital and/or print material are prohibited.

Managing Stress

College can be a stressful time, and I am always here to help you—in this class and beyond. If, however, you feel you need more support, I encourage you to reach out to the Student Advocacy Center at 292.1111. They will always work with professors on your behalf.

Safe and Healthy

Keeping students healthy and preventing the spread of illness is important to The Ohio State University— and to me. Students are encouraged to stay home if they are sick and may be asked to leave class if they are coughing/sneezing. Students who are sick and cannot attend class must contact me *BEFORE* class to receive any class materials and turn in assignments via the drop box or e-mail. If you do not notify me, your assignment will not be accepted.

Diversity

The School of Communication at The Ohio State University embraces and maintains an environment that respects diverse traditions, heritages, experiences, and people. Our commitment to diversity moves beyond mere tolerance to recognizing, understanding, and welcoming the contributions of diverse groups and the value group members possess as individuals. In our School, the faculty, students, and staff are dedicated to building a tradition of diversity with principles of equal opportunity, personal respect, and the intellectual interests of those who comprise diverse cultures.

Intellectual Diversity

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

Military-Connected Students

The [Military and Veterans Services](#) (MVS) Office offers a wide range of resources for military-connected students. Whether using educational benefits or not, all military-connected students are encouraged to learn more about how the university supports military-connected students (i.e., information about tutoring, transition services, access to the veteran's lounge, etc.). For service members, should you receive military orders during the semester or know of classes that will be missed due to service commitments, please speak with your instructor as soon as possible on possible accommodations. MVS contact information: milvets@osu.edu; 614-247-VETS; veterans.osu.edu/; 185 Student Academic Services Building, 281 W. Lane Avenue.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu

Academic integrity policy

Policies for this course

Written assignments: Your written assignments, including discussion posts, should be your own original work. In formal assignments, you should follow **AP** style to cite the ideas and words of your research sources. You are encouraged to ask a trusted person to proofread your assignments before you turn them in- but no one else should revise or rewrite your work.

Reusing past work: In general, you are prohibited in university courses from turning in work from a past class to your current class, even if you modify it. If you want to build on past research or revisit a topic you've explored in previous courses, please discuss the situation with me.

Academic Misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term

“academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>

Accessibility accommodations for students with disabilities

Requesting accommodations

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know via email immediately so that we can privately discuss options. You are also welcome to register with Student Life Disability Services to establish reasonable accommodations. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu ; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu ; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you are ill and need to miss class, including if you are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of a viral infection or fever, please let me know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations. You can connect with them at slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; or slds.osu.edu.

Religious accommodations

It is Ohio State’s policy to reasonably accommodate the sincerely held religious beliefs and practices of all students. The policy permits a student to be absent for up to three days each academic semester for reasons of faith or religious or spiritual belief.

Students planning to use religious beliefs or practices accommodations for course requirements must inform the instructor in writing no later than 14 days after the course begins. The instructor is then responsible for scheduling an alternative time and date for the course requirement, which may be before or after the original time and date of the course requirement. These alternative accommodations will remain confidential. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that all course assignments are completed.

Creating an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a community to reflect diversity and to improve opportunities for all. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Office of Institutional Equity:

1. Online reporting form at equity.osu.edu,
2. Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605,
3. Or Email equity@osu.edu

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Office of Institutional Equity to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

Campus Free Speech policy

Ohio State's Shared Values include a commitment to diversity and innovation. Pursuant to these values, the university promotes a culture of welcoming differences, making connections among people and ideas, and encouraging open-minded exploration, risk-taking, and freedom of expression. As a land-grant institution, the university takes seriously its role in promoting and supporting public discourse. To that end, Ohio State is steadfastly committed to protecting the First Amendment right to free speech and academic freedom on its campuses, and to upholding the university's academic motto — "Education for Citizenship." The Campus Free Speech policy adopted in May 2023 supports this commitment.

Grievances and Solving Problems

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

Weather or other short-term closing

Should in-person classes be canceled, I will notify you as to which alternative methods of teaching will be offered to ensure continuity of instruction for this class. Communication will be via email/CarmenCanvas announcement.

OTHER RELATED RESOURCES

Food Security: (<https://www.buckeyefoodalliance.org/>, 614-688-2508) The Ohio State University is committed to ensuring that all students have access to adequate and healthy food. Any undergraduate or graduate student with a BuckID may confidentially use the Buckeye Food Alliance food pantries. No proof of need is required. The pantry is located in Lincoln Tower, Suite 150 (1800 Cannon Dr., Columbus, OH 43210). Check the website or call for current hours.

PLEASE TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF (Mental Health Statement)

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you are or someone you know is suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614--292--5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younklin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766.

If you are thinking of harming yourself or need a safe, non-judgmental place to talk, or if you are worried about someone else and need advice about what to do, 24-hour emergency help is also available through the Suicide Prevention Hotline (Columbus: 614-221-5445)

Who can I talk to? Where can I go for help with emotional distress?	Who can I talk to? Where can I go for help with emotional distress?
Counseling and Consultation Service 614-292-5766 1030 Lincoln Tower, 1800 Cannon Dr. Younkin Success Center, 1640 Neil Ave.	Student Wellness Center 614-292-4527 RPAC, 337 Annie & John Glenn Ave.
“Let’s Talk” Thursday evenings, 6-8 p.m. Multicultural Center, Ohio Union	Sexual Assault Response Network of Central Ohio 614-267-7020
Psychology Services Center 614-292-2345 105 Psychology Building, 185 Neil Ave.	Buckeye Peer Access Line (PAL) 8 P.M. – Midnight (only) 614-514-3333
Stress Trauma & Resilience 614-293-STAR Harding Hospital, 1670 Upham Dr.	Suicide Prevention Lifeline 614-221-5445 or 800-273-8255 Text 4hope to 741741 Or call 911 for immediate assistance

School of Communication Cares

School of Communication Cares

SCHEDULE AND SCHEDULE DISCLAIMER

I reserve the right to alter the scheduled topics as the semester progresses. These changes will be announced via Carmen announcements or email.

Course Map – Overview

Welcome to COMM 3414: Sports Media Relations. This course is designed to be more than an introduction. What you're embarking on is a strategic, hands-on journey through the professional world of sports communication. Whether you're exploring the field for the first time or already envisioning a career in sports PR, this course will help you build the clarity, confidence, and skills needed to succeed.

We begin with foundational principles: the role of Sports Information Directors (SIDs), ethical standards, and the strategic frameworks that guide media relations. From there, we move into applied practice: writing press releases, game notes, and executive bios; analyzing media resources; and crafting stakeholder messaging. You'll learn how to support media professionals, shape narratives, and evaluate communication impact using tools like the PESO model, Valid Metrics Framework, and Kick Butt Index.

Our flipped classroom model means you'll engage with readings and pre-recorded lectures before class, then use in-class time for active learning. You'll complete **15 mini assignments** (11 in-class, 4 out-of-class), each scaffolded to build toward one of three **major projects**. These projects simulate real-world SID tasks and are designed to be portfolio-ready.

You'll also participate in four **Parachute Reflections**, based on the *What Color Is Your Parachute?* workbook. These reflections help you explore your strengths, values, ideal work environments, and career goals. I want you to be able to connect personal insight to professional direction.

Throughout the semester, you'll collaborate with peers, engage in simulations, and receive feedback that helps you refine your strategic thinking. You'll learn how to manage media relationships, respond to crises, and communicate with clarity across diverse audiences. You'll also explore where a career in sports media relations could take you, and how to find a role that fits your strengths and aspirations.

Course Map – Week-by-Week Progression

This high-level overview shows how the course unfolds across the semester:

- **Weeks 1–2**
 - Foundations of sports media relations
 - Roles of SIDs, PESO model, and ethical principles
 - Parachute Reflection #1: Skills & Strengths
- **Weeks 3–5**
 - Strategic messaging and stakeholder communication
 - Media resource analysis and usability
 - Game note formats and executive bios
 - Parachute Reflection #2: Interests & Values
- **Week 6**
 - Major Project 1: OSU Team Media Analysis presentations
- **Weeks 7–9**
 - AP Style recap writing and peer review
 - Finalizing SID Essentials project
 - Parachute Reflection #3: Ideal Work Environment
- **Week 10**
 - Major Project 2: SID Essentials submission (individual)
- **Weeks 11–13**
 - Stakeholder messaging and media pitching
 - Valid Metrics Framework and Kick Butt Index
 - Parachute Reflection #4: Career Goals & Next Steps
- **Weeks 14–15**
 - Final group work and presentations
 - Major Project 3: group presentations
- **Week 16**
 - Final reflections and course wrap-up
 - Showcase of student work and personal growth

Course Map – The Hero's Journey

In COMM 3414, we use also the hero's journey (Joseph Campbell) as a metaphor for your growth, not just as a student, but as a future professional in sports media relations. This framework helps you reflect on your development, challenges and transformation throughout the semester.



Stage 1: Ordinary World

You begin the course with your current understanding of communication, sports, and career possibilities. Some of you may already be curious about sports PR; others may be unsure of where you fit.

Stage 2: Call to Adventure

The course introduces the role of Sports Information Directors (SIDs), the PESO model, and the ethical foundations of media relations. You complete your first Parachute Reflection and begin to see how your strengths and interests might align with the field.

Stage 3: Refusal of the Call

In the first two weeks, you'll be introduced to the foundational concepts of sports media relations—roles of SIDs, strategic frameworks like PESO, and ethical principles. But even at this early stage, hesitation is natural. You might feel unsure about how your strengths fit into the field, or question whether you're ready to think strategically in a professional context. The first Parachute Reflection asks you to look inward, and the initial in-class activities challenge you to engage with unfamiliar terminology, frameworks, and expectations. It's common to feel uncertain as you begin to shift from passive learning to active participation.

Stage 4: Meeting the Mentor

Through instructor guidance, peer collaboration, and guest speakers, you receive tools, feedback, and encouragement. Scaffolding exercises and "Be Ready To..." notes help you prepare for each challenge with clarity.

Stage 5: Crossing the Threshold

By Week 3, you've committed to the journey. You begin applying strategic frameworks, collaborating on group work, and preparing for your first major project. You're no longer just learning—you're doing.

Stage 6: Tests, Allies, and Enemies

You face real-world simulations, peer review, and strategic writing tasks. You build alliances with classmates, learn from guest visitors, and confront internal doubts or external pressures.

Stage 7: Approach to the Inmost Cave

As you prepare your SID Essentials project, you reflect deeply on your professional identity. You begin to see how your voice, values, and skills can shape media narratives.

Stage 8: The Ordeal

You submit your individual project and face the challenge of presenting your work publicly. You must demonstrate clarity, professionalism, and strategic thinking under pressure.

Stage 9: Reward

You gain confidence, clarity, and a growing portfolio of work. You begin to see yourself as a capable communicator—someone who can contribute meaningfully to a sports organization.

Stage 10: The Road Back

You begin your final group project, applying everything you've learned. You refine your stakeholder messaging, pitch media stories, and evaluate communication impact using professional tools.

Stage 11: Resurrection

Your final presentation is a culmination of your journey. You demonstrate mastery of strategic communication, collaboration, and professional readiness. You've grown—and it shows.

Stage 12: Return with the Elixir

You leave the course with a clearer sense of your career direction, a portfolio of real-world work, and the ability to articulate your value to future employers. You return to your academic and professional world transformed, ready to take the next step.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE – UPDATED AUG 21, 2025

Week	Pre-Class Chapter & Video Work	Mini Assignment Due (End of Class)	Quiz Due (Start of Class)	Course Milestones & Notes
Week 1 (Aug 26, 28)	<p>For Tuesday: Review Syllabus and Carmen, including intro to sports PR. Optional: Watch <i>Moneyball</i> via Carmen.</p> <p>For Thursday: Chapter 1: Introducing Sports Public Relations (and watch lecture), Routledge Handbook Ch 1: Communication Theories and Sport Studies</p>	Mini Assignment 1: Intro Reflection	—	—
Week 2 (Sep 2, 4)	<p>Chapter 2: Integrating PR With Strategic Management (and watch lecture)</p> <p>Routledge Handbook Ch 7: Applying PR Theory to increase understanding of Sport Communication and Ch. 12: Sports Reporting & Journalistic Principles</p>	Mini Assignment 2: Parachute Reflection #1	—	—

Week 3 (Sep 9, 11)	Chapter 6: Managing the Sport Organization–Media Relationship (and watch lecture) &	Mini Assignment 3: Media Resource Scavenger Hunt	Quiz 1 Due (Tues) Quiz 2 Due (Thurs)	—
	Chapter 7: Employing News Media Tactics (and watch lecture)	Mini Assignment 4: Key Message Mapping Practice		
Week 4 (Sep 16, 18)	For Tuesday: Chapter 10: Advancing Relationships With External and Internal Publics (and watch lecture)	Mini Assignment 5: Stakeholder Messaging Exercise		
	Routledge Handbook: Chapters 45, 48: Strategic Influence & College Athletics Communications			
	For Thursday: Chapter 3: Engaging Publics Via Social Media, Chapter 4: Engaging Publics Via Other Forms of Digital Media (and watch combined Chs 3-4 lecture)			
Week 5 (Sep 23, 25)	For Tuesday: Chapter 5: Engaging Key Publics via Legacy Media (and watch lecture)	Mini Assignment 6: Parachute Reflection #2	Quiz 3 Due (Tues) Quiz 4 Due (Thurs)	Major Project 1 group work and presentation prep

Week 6 (Sep 30, Oct 2)	Finalize presentation slides and rehearse	—	Quiz 5 Due (Tues)	Major Project 1 (Group) Due Tuesday - Presentations Tues & Thurs
Week 7 (Oct 7, 9)	Routledge Handbook: Ch. 18: The impact of Publicity on Fans' Emotion... and Ch 25 Sport Fandom in digital world	Mini Assignment 7: Game Note Draft (Scaffolded)		
	Mini Lectures: AP Style, Recaps, Voice & Tone	Mini Assignment 8: Executive Bio Draft		
Week 8 (Oct 14, 16)		Mini Assignment 9: AP Style Game Recap	Quiz 6 Due (Tues)	
Week 9 (Oct 21)	In-Class Individual SID Essentials Work Session	Mini Assignment 10: SID Essentials Rough Draft & Peer Review	Quiz 7 Due (Tues) Quiz 8 Due (Thurs)	—
Week 10 (Oct 28, 30)	Chapter 8: Communicating in Times of Crisis (and watch lecture)	Mini Assignment 11: Parachute Reflection #3		Major Project 2: Individual Project – SID Essentials Due
Week 11 (Nov 4, 6)		Mini Assignment 12 Mini Pitch Draft		—

Week 12 (Nov 13)	Chapter 9: Cultivating Positive Relationships in the Community (and watch lecture)	Mini Assignment 13: KBI and Valid Metrics Framework Practice	Quiz 9 Due (Tues) Quiz 10 Due (Thurs)	—
Week 13 (Nov 18, 20)		Mini Assignment 14: Parachute Reflection #4: Career Goals & Next Steps	Quiz 11 Due (Thurs)	—
Week 14 (Nov 25)	Tuesday: Groups meet independently during class period	—	Quiz 12 due (Tues)	No class Thursday (Thanksgiving)
Week 15 (Dec 2, 4)	Finalize presentation slides and rehearse		—	Major Project 3: Group Project – Due Tuesday, Presentations Tues & Thurs
Week 16 (Dec 9)	—	Mini Assignment 15: Career Services Visit and Reflection		Final reflections & course wrap-up
	—			No class Thursday (Last Class Tuesday)