COMM- 4390_002   SPECIAL TOPICS:   SPORTS WRITING    Fall, 2016
(R. Aipperspach)

OCNR 243
Thursday 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Instructor: Ruth Aipperspach
Ruth.aipperspach@tamucc.edu
361-825-2586
Bay Hall, office 222-B

Hours:

Tuesday:  12.00 noon to 1:00 p.m., 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday:  3:00 p.m.- 4:30 p.m.
Thursday:  12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m.
           3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION   This course is designed to teach students the elements of sports
writing and reporting to include covering issues, interviewing, writing coverage of sporting
events, summaries, interpreting stats and photography coverage of sports. The types of
assignments will include sports profiles and features, review of sports talk shows, sports results,
and an extra credit assignment of play-by-play for game coverage.  Campus related sports
assignments will be eligible for publication in the campus newspaper and its accompanying
website.

Textbook:

COURSE MATERIALS
Writing paper
1 folder with pockets & name on the front cover
flashdrive

GOALS:  To introduce the student to television and radio (audio) and print/internet writing and
learn the techniques used to select and write copy in appropriate format for television, radio and
understand print and internet styles of sports reporting.  Reporting of sports stats and summaries
will be an integral part of the course.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:  By the end of semester, students will:
1. Recognize the basic elements that make up a broadcast, print, and internet sports story and
   select what are the integral parts of the sporting event to be reported.
2. Recognize and interpret media ethics, libel/slander issues affecting sports assignments:
ATTENDANCE This course is an intensive writing course with participation both in class and outside the classroom. Absences for medical, work-related (i.e. attending seminars, workshops, etc.) with documentation will be excused; otherwise three or more absences (including tardiness and leaving class early) will incur a three point deduction off the final grade.

CLASSROOM METHODS AND POLICIES: Classroom discussion, writing assignments, discussion on sports, analyses of various sports events, Oral Reports, an interview and one play-by-play written assignment.
1. All assignments are due at the beginning of class (due dates are on the Syllabus)
2. Do not email copy to the Instructor
3. Late assignments will not be graded
4. Students will sign up for various assignments so you will have adequate time to complete them.
5. There will be no schedule changes during the week leading up to Thanksgiving and the week after Thanksgiving. These are official class days. All deadlines will be adhered to
6. If a student misses an exam, please notify the Instructor within 24 hours. No exams will be given in advance of the date as shown on the Syllabus.

NOTE:
1. Please turn off all cellphones, and other electronic devices and put them in your bag. That means no texting, making or answering calls in the classroom. Students will be free from distractions to focus on the subject matter.
2. Anyone using a laptop or tablet must sit near the front to avoid distractions. Laptops and tablets are for reading the textbook online, and/or taking lecture notes, only, so please inform the Instructor
3. Do not bring food or drink into the computer Lab
4. Refrain from using e-cigarettes and other tobacco products during class time.
5. Preferred Method of scholarly citations where appropriate will be MLA style.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY/PLAGIARISM University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work). In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in any act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a zero.
CLASSROOM/PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class, or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in Article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

ACADEMIC ADVISING The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

Disabilities Accommodations: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

DROPPING A CLASS: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. (………………) is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Statement of Academic Continuity:
In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

GRADED APPEALS: Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, (http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html) For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

This Syllabus describes the day to day class schedule. If any changes are made due to illness, inclement weather, or other reasons, etc., the Instructor has the right to make alterations and those changes will be announced in class.

FYI: All students are encouraged to sign up for an Islander email account. Islander email is critical for university communication in any weather related situations, or other emergencies. Students may contact the Instructor by phone, Islander email, or visit in my office in Bay Hall 222-B.

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Week  1
Aug 25  Introduction to course (ch. 1)
Compare sports summaries and discussion on writing summaries
Interpret and learn how to read current stats

Week  2
Sept  1  Leads (ch. 2) Football guidelines p.140
Go through radio-audio formats, TV formats, print and online
Discuss clichés (see textbook)
Instructor to give assignment: for next class

Week  3
Sept.  8 90-second audiotaped report on football observations
Interviewing (ch.3) and guidelines for writing sports story
Writing assignment TBA - video format
Assign students to watch an Islander volleyball game and bring details to next Class.

Week  4
Sept. 15 Sports and storytelling (ch.5, p.42)
Write sports story in class on volleyball game
(print - newspaper 300 - 400 words with headline)

Week  5
Sept. 22 Soccer guidelines
Tennis (see textbook p. 275 for guidelines)
Write 2 min. sports report in audio/radio format.

Week  6
Sept. 29 Lacrosse discussion (textbook, p. ??)
Assignment for next week:
Listen for at least 30 min. to a radio broadcast of any sport (Basketball, baseball, Football, etc.)
Bring details of a game you listened to on radio to write a 2 -3 min. summary (note the ambience, play-by-play Announcers & comments, how much information and description they give, etc.) for next week
Week 7
Oct 6  **Mid Term Exam**  4-6 min. Oral Report over Sports Journal entries

Week 8
Oct 13  Analyze stats
       Photojournalism: everyone bring one sports action photo from newspaper, sports
       magazine, or internet for review
       Discuss Features (ch. 5)
       **Assign: FEATURE writing:**
       writing guidelines on either a coach, or a player from Instructor List.
       This will be a 2 column article, to include photo space 800-1000 words for
       A Magazine article.
       **Due:** Week 10 at the beginning of class.

Week 9
Oct 20  Introduce Basketball guidelines (p. 85, p. 196, 292)
       Writing assignment: TBA – audio format, to be read in class presentation

       **Assignment for next class:** Find details on any Track and Field event from a
       recent NCAA outdoor track and field event from newspaper, magazine or online
       sources.
       **Track and Field (p. 234)**

Week 10
Oct 27  Track and Field (p. 234)
       In-class writing assignment – online with 2 photos 400-500 word summary of
       what happened.
       **Due: at the beginning of class:** Feature magazine assignment

       **For next class:** Find an article on sports ethics (See Ethics in Sports p. 274)
       Instructor has a list of possible topics dealing with ethics in sports.
Week 11  
Nov 3  Ethics in Sports p.274 for class discussion

Introduce writing guidelines and interview procedures for Profile assignment on a player or coach or trainer, or team (650-800 words) to include two quotations from team members, or coaches, or conditioning staff, etc. This will be written in class in Week 12.

Week 12  
Nov. 10  Students write sports Profile - take one sports figure from the list handed out recently and write a 2-3 min. feature in Radio/audio format to include two quotations from the source(s) used.

Week 13  
Nov 17  4-6 min. 2-3person Sportscast for K-BREEZE Sports with Intro and Outro (taped presentation). Turn in sports copy in video format.

Week 14  
Nov 24  ------------------------THANKSGIVING------ no class ------------------

Week 15  
Dec 1  Last class day  
In-class written assignment - TBA

Week 16  
Dec  TBA  FINAL EXAM  7:15 p.m. – 9:45 p.m.
No exams will be given in advance of the Final Exam date as scheduled on the TAMUCC Final Exam Schedule. Please schedule your travel plans including domestic and/or international flights after the examination time. **No exceptions.**

Grading:  
Writing & oral assignments/reports: 50%  
Coverage of major sport assignments 25%  
Mid term & Final Exam 25%

(A = 100-90;  B = 89-90;  C = 79-70;  D = 69-60;  F = don’t ask)
Twitter assignment  @writecomNews

Students will send 6 tweets this semester to fulfill requirements for this course. Each tweet will consist of sports news (i.e. game, player, coach, injury, etc) + source to fit 135-140 spaces. To set up a Twitter account for newcomers:

1. Go to Twitter.com, sign up and then select 10 items from the Twitter list to follow. This is part of the sign up process.

2. In Week 2, send me a tweet with “this is a test” message plus your name.

3. Send two tweets in February, two tweets in March, and two in April for a total of 6 tweets. Each tweet is worth 5 pts for a total of 30 pts for the semester.

@writecomNews

make sure that this twitter address is used only by students in COMM-4390_002 for this assignment in this class. Use Instructor email ruth.aipperspach@tamucc.edu for any questions you may have.
**Comm-4390_002 Sports Writing Grade Sheet** p. 9

**K-Breeze Sports**

**Weekly Written Reports & Oral Reports (50%)**

1. Semester Sports Journal ___/50 (weeks 1-6)
2. Print Newspaper with headline (volleyball) ___30 (300-400 words)
3. Radio/audio format (soccer) ___/20
4. TV format (basketball) ___20
5. Print ___/20
6. Online with headline & 1 photo ___/20
7. Magazine feature on a local sports person ___/50 (800 – 1000 words)
8. Online: Track & Field, 1 photo & caption - ---/30 (NCAA event)
9. Profile 2-3 min -----40 (radio/audio format)
10. Written copy from Sportscast ___/20
11. 6 tweets @ 5 pts each`___/30
12. Oral 90 sec. report on football Observations (audiotaped) _____/20
13. Oral: 2-3 min. (sports report) _____/30
14. Videotaped Sportscast ___/___50

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Grade sheet continued on p.10 ..................
Major Sport assignment: (in pairs) (25%)

Sportswriter:
  a. Double-space 1-2-page written Analysis: and assess how it went and include reference to role of Color Commentator  ____/20
  b. Tweet to Instructor after the game indicating results  ____/5
  c. Hard copy written report within 24-48 hours of the game  ____/20
  d. One photo emailed to Instructor  ____/10

Color Commentator
  a. Submit roster, stats. Chart (hard copy)  ____/25
  b. 1-2 page written summary of your role & how you viewed the game
     Hard copy, double spaced  ____/20
  C 1 Tweet to Instructor  ____/5

Exams (25%)
Mid term Exam /50 & Final Exam /50

EXTRA CREDIT

1
Extra credit of 30 points for ISLAND WAVES Islander sports story factored into student’s grade only if the student completes the assignment. This would have to be within a couple of days of the event to keep the sports story fresh and current (one time grade only). Instructor to proof read and approve before submitting with one photo + caption and credit as to who took the photo. See Instructor for other guidelines; and deadlines
Deadline: Nov. 5, 2016 is the last day to submit any sports copy for the semester editions.

2
Extra Credit for 30-40 min. play by play audio of a sports event and submitted to the Instructor on a flashdrive. (worth up to 50 pts) (See detailed handout for guidelines).
This is over and above the written report required for covering an event.
DUE: on or before December 1, 2016

3. 5 pts extra credit to review each taped presentations (audio or video) and write ½ page critique on your presentation. Check with the Instructor in Bay Hall 222-B. Must be completed within 2 weeks of each taped presentation