**COM 259 – Strategic Sport Communication**

# **Instructor – Tom Lamonica**

# **Instructional Associate – Sa’Mone Winters**

**Class Meetings: Tuesdays, 5 p.m. to 7:50 p.m.**

**In-Person: Fell 123**

**Zoom: # 915 4263 9806 (Jan. 30, Feb. 6 & Feb. 13)**

**& #933 6270 3182 (March 19)**

**Instructor: Thomas A. Lamonica**, Instructional Assistant Professor/Director of Field Experiences

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Office hours: *Jan. 25-Feb. 18 & March 18-22* appointments via Zoom

*Otherwise:* 2-4 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays and by appointment in Fell 456

**Instructional Associate: Sa’Mone Winters,** junior journalism major [scwint2@ilstu.edu](mailto:bavaba1@ilstu.edu)

***Critical Notes***

1. *This is a “synchronous” course. You are responsible for attending every class in-person or via Zoom. Class periods will NOT be recorded for later post.*
2. *Please review the Sport COM Schedule, which is a companion to this document, for a fuller picture of the course plan, including all requirements and deadlines.*
3. *All assigned written work is to be presented in the appropriate Canvas file before 5 p.m. on the due date. Late work may not be accepted or may be subject to substantial points reduction at the discretion of the instructor.*
4. *Prepare and read … the reading assignments are neither long nor complex. You may be assigned to read about a topic without a specific reading. Make sure you have video access for participating in Zoom classes.*
5. *Ask for help … this class is somewhat unique, both by subject-matter and by requirements/assignments. The instructor WANTS to work with each of you one-on-one.*

**Course Description: “Issues Oriented, Professionally Focused”**

Whether it supports the earning power of professional sports or the identity enhancement of college athletics, strategic communication is central to the success of the $60 billion sports industry. Through classroom activities, individually-produced projects, on-site experiences and connections to current sports communication industry leaders, students will learn to be sports communicators by studying its history, strategy, tactics and value.

Key elements of the class

***Issues Oriented:*** The biggest challenge to sports industry leaders today is dealing with issues, so this class will invest time on investigating, discussing and offering resolutions to recent, current and persistent sports issues.

***Professionally Focused:*** The best way to understand the current sports business is to hear from industry leaders, so we will hear from more than a dozen current professionals representing journalism and sports organizations. Also, professionalism will be stressed from student preparation and participation to the grading of assignments. A “casual” attitude toward the proposed learning methods of this class by students will result in a change in format emphasizing readings, lectures and exams.

**Course Objectives**

* Through a better understanding of diversity, equity, inclusion, gender, strategies, revenues and leadership, help students to understand how small details drive the big picture of 21st Century sports.
* By creating opportunities for students to research, write, discuss and present about current issues and topics in sports, develop skills that prepare students to be better communicators, advisors and journalists.
* With the wisdom and insight of alumni and other current professionals in front-facing positions, learn about the challenges and opportunities in sports beyond playing, coaching and watching.
* By studying and analyzing the history and foundation of the Fan Experience, be able to contribute to building the element that drives, or limits, growth in sports: those who watch them.
* Through individualized assistance and mentoring, advance students in the process of building careers in sports.

**Texts:**

**Strategic Sport Communication, Third Edition (2021)** [Paul M. Pedersen](https://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Paul+M.+Pedersen%22), [Pamela C. Laucella](https://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Pamela+C.+Laucella%22), [Edward (Ted) M. Kian](https://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Edward+(Ted)+M.+Kian%22), [Andrea N. Geurin](https://www.google.com/search?tbo=p&tbm=bks&q=inauthor:%22Andrea+N.+Geurin%22)

Human Kinetics

Read All About It Essays as Assigned (access on Canvas “Resources” site in COM 259)

Other reading assignments as Assigned

**Class Meetings For Calendar**

Jan. 16, 23 Fell 123 in-person

Jan. 30, Feb. 6, Feb. 13 Zoom 915 4263 9806

Feb. 20 to March 12 Fell 123 in-person

March 19 Zoom 933 6270 3182

March 26 to April 30 Fell 123 in-person

**Assignments**

* **Required Assignments for ALL!**

***Important note:*** *Regardless of point value, the instructor reserves the right to reduce a student’s grade by one letter (A, B, C, D, F) for each day a required assignment is not completed on time, unless prior arrangements for a substitute assignment are made at least one week before the assignment deadline.*

* + **Book Report**

*PURPOSE: To help students learn the value of being a well-read professional who understands the history, evolution and culture of sports and is capable of in-depth study and analysis.*

* + - Proposal 20 points … select a sports-centered book to read and review, submitting a proposal for approval by the instructor in advance (if you struggle with this, the instructor can provide options). The proposal must contain pertinent information, including title, author, synopsis, reviewer interest and justification of the choice. PURPOSE: To help students personally select a book to help them better understand the business and culture of sports.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSAL: **5 p.m., Jan. 30** in appropriate Canvas folder

* + - Final Book Report 80 points … review and respond to general book content, focusing on three chapters which had a profound impact on perception of a sports themes, concepts or ideas.

DEADLINE FOR REPORT: **5 p.m., Feb. 27** in appropriate Canvas folder

* + **Informational Interview**

*PURPOSE: To enhance interviewing skills while obtaining a better understanding the life of a sports professional.*

* + - Interview Proposal … 20 points … Contact a sports professional (excludes classroom guests, college or high school student-athletes) and schedule an an in-person recorded interview provide all of the following elements, with the first seven listed and the response to the last two questions double-spaced in paragraph form. Have your interview scheduled not later than March 8.
      * LIST: Your name, name of informational interviewee, occupation, company name, address, phone number, time-date-place of your scheduled interview.
      * PARAGRAPHS: Your connection/how you found your interview subject. Why you are interested in interviewing this professional.
      * SCRIPT: Provide 15 interview questions you would like to ask (please note that personal questions, discussions about compensation or employment contracts are inappropriate).
      * PREPARE FOR: Your interviewee to ask you questions about your experience, education and interests.

PROPOSAL DEADLINE: **5 p.m., Jan. 30**, in appropriate Canvas folder

* + - Interview Report … 80 points …
      * RECORD: Request permission from interview subject to record your interview on a device of your choosing.
      * CONDUCT: Conduct your interview **via zoom**, dress appropriately, have your list of questions, and arrive early. Remember to allow your interview subject to ask questions of you.
      * TRANSCRIBE & ANALYZE:
        + Transcribe the questions and answers of at least five questions you believe are most critical.
        + Write a brief analysis of each of your transcribed Q&As explaining what you learned.
      * THANK YOU: Thank your subject appropriately within three days; include a copy of that message in your report.

REPORT DEADLINE: **5 p.m., March 19** in appropriate Canvas folder

* + **Game Broadcast Review** … 200 points …
    - ALERT: Full instructions in Canvas Assignment Attachment; Excel Template in Canvas Assignment Attachment

*PURPOSE: Identifying and understanding what goes into a basketball game broadcast beyond just the description, presentation and analysis of game action.*

* + *IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS:* 
    - *Carefully review the instructions, examples and definitions.*
    - *Watch a college basketball game on TV, taking note of all elements of the broadcast not part of game action.*
    - *Create a timeline of the broadcast in an Excel document*
    - *Summarize sponsors and content elements in lists*
    - *Analyze the broadcast as detailed in the assignment sheet in a written report*

DEADLINE FOR REPORT: **5 p.m., March 5** for BOTH the Report and Excel Document in appropriate Canvas folder

* + **Career Plan Meeting with Instructor** … 50 points

*PURPOSE: To assist students with career advancement, including discussion of career goals, potential internships, resume evaluation and portfolio discussion.*

* + - Make a one-on-one appointment with the instructor via email/Outlook (10 points)
    - Have your resume and portfolio, as well as your questions about the process, and your career interests, prepared for the meeting. (40 points)

DEADLINE FOR SETTING APPOINTMENTS: **5 p.m., Feb. 20.**

DEADLINE FOR MEETING COMPLETION: **5 p.m. March 19.**

* + **At Issue Assignment …** 70 points total … Researching and presenting about a current sports issue that means something to you for the purpose of making a 3-5 minute presentation to the class

*PURPOSE: To help future professionals learn to understand, research, advance and improve issues facing sports, and the people who work in the profession.*

* + - At Issue Proposal … 10 points … Select a topic, problem or situation broadly impacting sports and at least two of its publics. Your topic must be approved by the instructor to move forward.
      * Identify and define the issue.
      * Explain why you chose this issue and why it would appeal to class members.
      * *If you have a presentation preference among April 16, April 23 and April 30, please express it in your proposal. You will be considered for your preference, but it is not guaranteed.*
      * Describe at least two publics the issue directly impacts (these can change after your research)

DEADLINE: Not later than **5 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 27** in appropriate Canvas folder. Your submission will receive a response within five days, and, if your proposal is not accepted, you will have five days to resubmit from the date of the instructor’s response.

* + - At Issue Presentation (3-5 minutes in class via Zoom) ... 40 points …
      * Identify and define the issue
      * Present its developmental or evolutionary history
      * Focusing on at least two publics, explain why it needs to change
      * Present how you would recommend the change be done
      * Describe the benefits, and challenges, to having this issue change
      * Be prepared for up to 5 minutes of questions and discussion

DEADLINE: 10 class members will present **April 16**; 10 will present **April 23**; 10 will present **April 30** in assigned schedule released by instructor after proposals are received

* + - At Issue: Colleague Support ... 20 points …
      * Start to finish, attend and participate in class for the two sessions in which you do not present.
      * Students supportive of their colleagues’ presentations will receive additional points for asking questions or making a point to advance the discussion at teaching staff discretion.

DEADLINES: **April 16, 23, 30** (two dates you don’t present)

* **Extra Credit Options**
  + **Student Information** … 10 points maximum EXTRA CREDIT …

*PURPOSE: To get to know students and their expectations for the class*

* + Complete the form emailed to you before classes began.

DEADLINE: **5 p.m. Jan. 16.**

* + **Participation** … 0-5 points per class period EXTRA CREDIT …

*PURPOSE: To promote collaboration and interaction in the classroom—32 minds learn more from each other than one.*

* + - The first time in each class a student participates in discussion or asks a pertinent question, that student receives 3 points. Subsequent times are unscored.
    - If, and when, a student is required to summarize for a group or represent a group after a group study experience, that student receives up to 5 points for that class at teaching staff discretion

***NOTE: Students will not qualify for participation extra credit points unless they attend that class, start to finish. For remote classes, Zoom video is required to receive participation extra credit.***

* **Choice Assignments … One Story From Each Color Group Required**

*PURPOSE: Three choice assignments to help students improve journalistic feature and news writing skills while understanding how professionals work.*

* + *IMPORTANT REQUIREMENTS:* 
    - *Guest Speaker features:* 
      * *one from Sheridan, Hancock or Bohnert—yellow group*
      * *one from Beggs, Hammes or Sports Ops Group—blue group*
      * *one from Zoom Speaker B, Bedella or White—red group*
  + **Guest Speaker Features** … 3 required (9 options, 3 groups) … 100 points each … 300 points total …
    - Written with AP journalistic style, stories about class guests including a news or feature lead, critical facts, accurate quotes and transition for a coherent news story of at least 500 words. Have at least two direct quotes from the speaker.
* *Yellow Group (choose one) Sheridan (Feb. 6), Hancock (Feb. 13), Bohnert (Feb. 20)*
* *Blue Group (choose one) Beggs (Feb. 27), White (March 5), Sports Ops (March 19)*
* *Red Group (choose one) Zoom Speaker B (March 26), Bedella (April 2), White (April 9)*
* DEADLINES: **5 p.m. for all**—SUBMIT AS WORD DOCUMENT in appropriate Canvas folder

**Groups**

The instructor will assign students to random groups for the purpose of class discussion, but the groups should feel free to interact in support of each other beyond the classroom, much as professional colleagues might.

**Teaching Philosophy**

Beyond family and faith, the long-term success of my students matters more to me than anything else. I care much more that you have a chance to be successful professionally five years from now, than I do about how much you know today—even though those two things relate. My job is to inspire and motivate you to become a valued professional. Since I spent more than 30 years as a sport public relations professional, I value a professional approach. I believe young people don’t become professionals when they get paid, or when they graduate—they become professionals when they live, work, think and act like professionals. I promote a hands-on, learn-by-doing, learn-by-reading, learn-by-collaborating process. Especially in “sports class,” you can ask me anything and I will respond.

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| **Grade** | **Percentage** | **Points** |
| A | 90 - 100 | 720+ |
| B | 80 – 89 | 640-719 |
| C | 70 – 79 | 560-639 |
| D | 60 – 69 | 480-559 |
| F | 0 – 59 | 0-479 |

**Grading Scale**

See the assignment schedule for the values of each assignment. Besides the required assignments (which must be completed, or the grade will be reduced), the options in yellow, blue and red print are “choice” assignments. There are eight possible assignments among the “choices,”—six speakers and two panels. Students must complete stories for two speakers (including one of the first three) and one panel. The final grade is based on this scale:

**Course Policies**

**ATTENDANCE**

We don’t grade for attendance—just participation—but the critical learning in this class takes place during the class. (See “Attendance” in Assignment section under “Extra Credit”). As professionals, we should show the courtesy of notifying the instructor in advance with a legitimate reason for being absent (i.e., religious holidays, family emergencies, university sanctioned events, illness, etc.) and sufficient documentation is provided if requested. I will email any student who misses two consecutive classes. If you do not respond to that email, you will be considered “unexcused.”

**ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES & PROFESSIONALISM**

All assignments must be completed and submitted before 5 p.m. on the designated date due. If you are unprepared to turn in an assignment on the assigned day you will receive a zero unless an alternate due date has been previously approved with specific documentation in the event of extreme circumstances. **Unless otherwise stated, all assignments are due at 5 p.m. Tuesdays, in the appropriate Canvas folder.** If you ask me for an extension after the fact, it will not be granted. I understand that students may view this policy as harsh, but please look at this policy from a professional standpoint. When you are in your career and your supervisor sets a deadline for a task to be completed, there too will be no wiggle room for deadlines. By adhering to this policy now, you are only setting yourself up for success in the future.

Best practices:

* + Start all assignments before you sleep on the day you receive them. Even if it’s just reading the directions and opening a file.
  + Remember, it takes about the same amount of time to do an assignment a week before the deadline as it does the night before the deadline … the difference is, the first way has less stress and more opportunity for review and revision.
  + When you finish, ask a student colleague to proofread and edit your work.
  + Regarding deadlines, if you act professionally NOW, professional life will be easier and more successful later. In other words, the habits you develop in college are the ones you take to the “real world.” And habits are easier to continue than to change.

**CHEATING/PLAGIARISM**

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, consistent with the academic integrity policy as outlined in the Code of Student Conduct. All work is to be appropriately cited when it is borrowed, directly or indirectly, from another source. Unauthorized and unacknowledged collaboration on or presentation of someone else’s work warrants plagiarism.

Students found to inadvertently commit acts of dishonesty will receive appropriate penalties specific to the assignment in question. Students found to commit intentional acts of dishonestly will receive a failing grade in the course and will be referred for appropriate disciplinary action through the Office of Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. All work submitted in this course must be your own original work.

**EMAIL POLICY**

All students must use their ilstu.edu email accounts to send and receive email for this course. E-mail is the easiest way to get in touch with the instructor. While a quick response is likely, please keep in mind that the instructor is not always on email, and therefore will get back to you within 24 hours on weekdays and 48 hours on weekends.

**WRITING AND FORMAT OF ASSIGNMENTS**

All work must be typed and double-spaced unless otherwise noted. Essays and papers should have one inch margins and body copy should use a standard 12-point font (Times New Roman, Calibri, or Ariel). Please proofread your work carefully for spelling or grammatical errors. You will lose points for grammatical or spelling errors.

**GRADE DISCUSSIONS**

Instead of discussing your grade (“what do I have to do to get a B?), I would prefer to discuss the process and outcomes of your work and what you can do to perform better in the future. However, I am willing to discuss students’ grades on particular assignments on an individual basis PROVIDING the student has completed a thorough review of the instructor’s comments made on the assignment. This allows you to understand why the grade was earned based on the criteria for that particular assignment. Keep in mind that grade discussions should NOT take place before, after, or during class for confidentiality reasons.

**ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY BEREAVEMENT POLICY**

In the event that a student experiences a death of an immediate family member or relative as defined below, the student will be excused from class for funeral leave, subsequent bereavement, and/or travel considerations.  The student will provide appropriate documentation and arrange to complete missed classroom work as soon as possible according to the process outlined below.

Upon notification of the absence and proper documentation, each faculty member shall excuse the student from class according to this policy and provide an opportunity to complete missed exams, quizzes, and other required work.  Ultimately, the student is responsible for all material covered in class and must work with each individual professor as soon as they return to complete any required work. Details can be found at the following website: <http://policy.illinoisstate.edu/students/2-1-27.shtml>.

**MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

Life at college can get complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors, who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at Counseling.IllinoisState.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

**PARTICIPATION**

Because this is a skills-based, professional development course, participation is essential. Participation is a function of attendance, demonstration of having read the material, asking questions that extend the thinking of the class and instructor, contributing *relevant* examples and demonstrating respect for the contributions of your peers. I will not lecture over the materials read; but rather, synthesize the material into discussions and activities, of which students will play a large role.

**PROFESSIONALISM**

Should you need to miss a class or an appointment, I expect the same courtesy and sense of responsibility you would extend to your employer. This means prior notice and proper documentation. Professionalism includes respecting others’ opinions, not interrupting in class, being respectful to those who are speaking and working together in the spirit of cooperation. ***As professional communicators do, we require that you keep your video on during Zoom classes, unless you have made prior arrangements with the instructor to have it off. It is your responsibility to access technology to meet this requirement.***

**SPECIAL NEEDS**

Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability and/or medical/mental health condition should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services located at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at StudentAccess.IllinoisState.edu.

