

## **JOURNALISM 454: SPORTS PUBLIC RELATIONS - SPRING 2008**

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

Class Number:	J454
Units:	2
Meets:	Tuesday, 7:00-9:40 PM
Midterm Exam:	March 4
Final Exam:	May 6
Texts:	No required textbooks
Mandatory Reading:	espn.com; LA Times Sports, ussportspages.com

### **FACULTY**

J.A. Adande  
Erikk Aldridge

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Sports Public Relations 454 is a course designed to provide you with a complete overview of public relations opportunities within the sports industry. The course will take a detailed look at the interaction of newspaper, radio, television, agency, Internet, college, and the team with public relations departments. This course will include limited lecture time, with more time being spent in a participatory group setting. We will ask for total class involvement, with brainstorming and problem-solving situations. Our students will become sports publicists over the course of the semester.

#### Course Objectives

1. Develop a clear understanding of the day-to-day responsibilities of sports public relations professionals.

2. Encourage attention-grabbing writing skills that reflect an understanding of news judgment.
3. Learn how to target key contacts and develop relationships within the field.
4. Become adept at handling negative publicity and crisis situations
5. Gain exposure to professionals in the field.

## **ACADEMIC POLICIES**

### **PLAGIARISM/ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Plagiarism is defined as taking ideas or writings from another and passing them off as one's own; in journalism, this includes appropriating the reporting of another without clear attribution. The following is the Annenberg School of Journalism's policy on academic integrity as published in the university catalogue: "Since its founding, the USC School of Journalism has maintained a commitment to the highest standards of ethical conduct and academic excellence. Any student found guilty of plagiarism, fabrication, cheating on examinations, or purchasing papers or other assignments will receive a failing grade in the course and will be dismissed as a major from the School of Journalism. There are no exceptions to the school's policy."

### **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS**

Any students requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to the professor as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. The office is located in the Student Union room 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.

### **INTERNSHIPS**

The value of professional internships as part of the overall educational experience of our students has long been recognized by the School of Journalism. Accordingly, while internships are not required for successful completion of this course, any student enrolled in this course who undertakes and completes an approved, non-paid internship during this semester shall earn academic extra credit herein of an amount equal to one percent of the total available semester points for this course.

### **CLASS ATTENDANCE**

Students are advised to attend the first class meetings of their journalism classes or the instructors may drop them from their classes. The School of Journalism adheres to the

university policy, which states “an instructor may replace any student who without prior consent does not attend...the first class session of the semester for once-a-week classes. It is then the student’s responsibility to withdraw officially from the course through the Registration Department.”

## **GRADING POLICIES**

### ***Undergraduate degrees:***

The School of Journalism expects its students to maintain at least a 2.7 (B-) grade point average in all journalism classes. Those who fall below this will receive additional counseling from faculty and advisement staff. Students are required to complete each journalism class with at least a grade of C-. Journalism courses with a grade of D+ or below must be repeated.

Please note that the university's cumulative grade point average will include both grades in its calculations and students must maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average to graduate from USC.

### ***Graduate Degrees:***

A minimum grade of C (2.0) is required in a course to receive graduate credit. Work graded C- or below is not acceptable for subject or unit credit toward any master's or doctoral program. A grade point average of at least 3.0 (B) on all units attempted at USC toward a graduate degree is required for graduation. In addition, a grade point average of at least 3.0 on all graduate work attempted at USC, whether or not all such units are applied toward the degree, is required.

## **OFF THE RECORD**

Everything that is discussed in and for this class by the teachers, students, or guest speakers is strictly off the record. Nothing should be discussed outside of class, especially with members of the media (including The Daily Trojan).

## **CAVEAT**

The information, procedures and schedule included in this syllabus are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.

## **ACADEMIC CALENDAR**

Classes Begin	January 14
Spring Recess	March 17-22
Study Days	May 3-6

## **GRADING PROCEDURE**

Bi-Weekly Assignments	25%
Current Event Quizzes	20%
Weekly Class Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final	25%

## **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS**

Press Releases: Every other week you will be asked to write and turn in a press release pertaining to your assigned team to follow for the semester. These releases may be discussed openly by the entire class upon turning them in. You will be graded on what you write, as well as how you write. We will look for misspellings, grammatical errors, and even typos. If in doubt, refer to the Associated Press stylebook.

Quizzes: Bi-weekly quizzes will cover class discussions, guest lecturers, class trips and sports current events as covered in your readings.

## **WEEKLY CLASS PARTICIPATION**

We will expect full class participation each week. We will discuss publicity as an art and polish your skills through situational analysis. We will discuss current events and the public relations problems that they present. We will tackle the issues and create the solutions. We will also be asking for each of you to participate with our guest speakers rather than merely listen to a lecture. We want insightful questions and intriguing observations.

## **TEXTBOOK READING/QUIZZES**

There are no required textbooks for this course. We do, however, require a daily reading of the sports pages for the Los Angeles Times, espn.com as well as the daily top 10 list on Sportspages.com

## **MID-TERM EXAM**

There will be a midterm exam on everything covered up to that point in the class. We will discuss what to expect on the exam the week prior.

## **FINAL EXAM**

Your final exam will include all material covered throughout the semester, including lectures, class discussions, current event quizzes, guest lectures, and special trips and accommodations.

## **ATTENDANCE**

This is a weekly class, so we expect perfect attendance. We will also be making some trips to, games, etc., so we expect full attendance to these events and sessions as well, which will ordinarily take the place of our classroom meeting. If you cannot make a class or trip, you must let us know why in advance.

## **MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS OR EXAMS**

This will be permitted only upon written verification of medical emergency or illness.

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 15**

### **Introduction and Overview**

- Discussion of the structure of the class, trips away from the classroom, midterm, and final exam
- Sports PR introduction & definitions
- Review of sample press releases for your weekly assignments
- Assignment of teams to each of you for the semester

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 22**

### **Writing Press Releases**

- Formats
- Writing style
- Writing leads
- News judgment

**Guest Speaker: Toi Cook, Former NFL Player**

## **TUESDAY, JANUARY 29**

Press releases due at start of class

### **Managing the Media**

- Pinpointing key personnel
- Credentials
- Do's & Don't's
- Off-the-record
- Defining the Marketplace
- Outlets for coverage
- Forging relationships

**Guest Speaker: Krystal Shipp, NASCAR**

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 5**

Quiz # 1 at the beginning of class

### **Sports PR & the Internet**

**Guest Speaker: Ben Platt, MLB.com**

## **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 12**

Press releases due at start of class

### **Athlete Extreme Makeover:**

We will split you into groups and give you a scenario of a player or team scandal with poor public perception. It is your team's job to come up

with positive image building techniques within realistic reasoning. We will analyze your decisions as a group and accept or deny them as if we are the management team.

**Guest Speaker: Monica Sears, Golden Boy Productions**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19**

**Sports PR's ties to Worldwide Corporate Businesses**

**Quiz # 2 at the start of class**

**Interviews**

**Guest Speaker: Damon Haley, UMCA**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26**

**Lakers Game vs. Portland Trailblazers @ STAPLES Center**

Press Releases due at start of class

**TUESDAY, MARCH 4**

**Midterm Exam at the beginning of class**

**Guest Speaker: Catherine Seabring, Zambeziink**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 11**

**The Interview Process**

- The art of one-on-one interviews
- Key interview strategies and tips
- Organizing interviews

Press releases due at the beginning of class

**Guest Speaker: Brener Zwickel & Associates**

**TUESDAY, MARCH 18**

**SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS**

## **TUESDAY, MARCH 25**

### **The Role of Medicine in Sports**

- Injuries
- Medical terminology
- Privacy/legal issues

Quiz # 3 at the start of class

**Guest Speaker: Chip Schaefer, LA Lakers**

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 1**

### **In-game/Event PR**

- Live blogs and glogs
- Game stories

Press releases due at the start of class

**Guest Speaker: Jeff Garcia, Power 106**

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 8**

### **PR Resources**

- Media Guides
- On-line Reference Materials
- Stats
- Books
- Game notes

Quiz # 4 at the start of class

**Guest Speaker: TBD**

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 15**

Dodgers vs. Pirates @ Dodger Stadium

## **TUESDAY, APRIL 22**

### **Mock Press Conferences**

We will split you into groups. You will each be given a written scenario including a newsworthy topic. Your groups will have 30-minutes to prepare for a news conference conducted by yourself. Strategize with possible questions and answers and an opening statement regarding the announcement. The class will act as members of the media in order to grill you with questions. Upon completion, we will analyze your performance

**TUESDAY, APRIL 29**

**Course review**

**TUESDAY, MAY 6**

**Final Exam (cumulative)**