(Intro to) Sports Writing and Reporting CMM 415-A

CRN 21755

University of New England

FALL 2025

Tuesday/Friday 11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m.   *   Marcil 303

"Losing feels worse than winning feels good."

— Vin Scully

René Magritte- *Le Joueur Secret (The Secret Player). 1927*

Instructor:	Jesse Miller	**E-mail**:	jmiller12@une.edu
Phone:	602-2871	**Office Hours**:	**Tuesday/Friday**: 10:00-11:00 pm; **Wednesday** 10:00-11:00 am and 1:00-2:00 pm; and by appointment. Sign up for times here or look for the link at the bottom of my email.

Course Description

Introduction to Sports Writing and Reporting offers a semester-long course focusing on craft, practice, voice, interviewing, and storytelling skills, all grounded in real-world experience. We'll be viewing our subject matter as a laboratory and lens through which to focus on the human experience. The course will include: Reading and discussion, on-the-ground reporting at local events, drawing out reticent interview subjects, narrative strategies, and drafting and revision as the foundation for serious sports writing and reporting.

Students will complete a series of smaller assignments – a reported column analysis project and a personal essay among them – and produce one meaty feature that is developed over the course of the semester and is suitable for publication. The course will conclude with a group video broadcast project or podcast— essentially a "Semester (or Season)-in-Review" focusing on local/UNE sports.

Learning Outcomes

This course gives students the opportunity to:

- Understand and employ terminology used in a sports department and/or television newsroom.
- Develop an awareness of the standards for professional ethics, behavior, and etiquette in the sports media environment.
- Appreciate the basic style, form, and guidelines followed in coverage of sports events.
- Cultivate skills needed to develop a story idea into a focused story.
- Complete work accurately under tight deadlines.

Required Course Materials
James R. Schaffer, Steve Schaffer, Amie Just, Kathryn T. Stofer: *Sports Journalism: An Introduction to Reporting and Writing* , 3nd edition (2024). ISBN: 1538196301

Additional readings and resources will be made available in the form of handouts and as links on our course site.

Communication Note

Emails should be addressed professionally, with a subject line that includes the name or number of the course, a salutation, and a signature including your full name. ALSO, there is an expectation that you will check your email at least every other day. Otherwise, you may miss vital and timely messages from me.

Course Activities
During this course you will complete a variety of short and longer-form assignments in several different mediums. This overview is intended to give you a sense of what's expected in the course.

Assignments Breakdown

- **Personal Narrative: "My Relationship With Sports" and (Pre)-Profile Presentation…**…………………………20% of your class grade (Weeks 2-5)

- **Game Coverage/Story Filed On-Time**… 20% of your class grade (Weeks 6-9)
- **Feature Story**… 20% of your class grade (Weeks 10-13)
- **Collaborative Broadcast/Podcast Project** …10% of your class grade (Weeks 14-15)

Note: these due dates are subject to change.

Course Requirements
All major written assignments must be typed. Work should also be proofread for spelling, capitalization, punctuation and usage. Print quality must be clear and legible. Assign page numbers, please.

A Note About Technology
We'll be using ePortfolio this term. Please bring your charged laptop to each class, as we will likely have some in-class writing or editing each day. Too, we'll likely be using Youtube and other digital tools this term to capture, reflect, improve on, and present our work this term. You will likely visit the UNE DigiSpace physically (or virtually) for assistance over the semester. I'm certainly here as a resource as well. If trying out a new digital tools isn't your cup of teas, please consider an adjustment now on day 1.

Grades
Citizenship Grade (Participation/engagement): 20%
Journals: 10%
Major Projects: 70%

Being a Citizen of the Class
A large portion of your grade (20%) in this class can be earned though your ability to demonstrate exceptional classroom citizenship. This grade is MORE than just class participation, but a holistic performance as a member of our learning community this semester. Your preparation, focus, willingness to do the work of the class, and attitude all shape this grade. Active participation in our discussions and workshops are *necessary* to succeed in this class. This is a process-oriented course requiring significant amounts of scaffolding writing, group work, rehearsal, revision, and discussion.

Test/Quizzes: I don't do tests. This is a project-based class designed to help you meet the demands of real-world communication as a person, student, and professional. But I sometimes will do a pop quiz to make sure you are keeping up with the work/reading.

Attendance Policy and Tardiness Specifics:

In alignment with the [University Attendance Policy](#), all students are expected to attend all classes for which they are registered and to hand all assignments in on time. Absences due to religious observances and scheduled varsity intercollegiate competition are necessarily excused. Additional absences may be excused at the discretion of the instructor and some form of documentation may be required. Details regarding course-specific attendance policies are at the discretion of the instructor and included in the course syllabus (below).

Students who are absent from class should:

- communicate in advance (whenever possible) the details of any absence to their faculty and other university-wide reporting mechanisms as applicable;
- engage in meaningful follow-up with the instructor to make up any missed work in a timely manner, as agreed upon by the instructor, and;
- adhere to specific attendance/absence policies as included in the course syllabus.

In this course specifically:

- You will earn "points" for each class you both attend and make meaningful contributions to the work of the class—discussion, peer review, groupwork, etc. (.5 for attendance and .5 for meaningful contributions). This semester, we have____**26**____ classes scheduled, so attendance and some meaningful contributions during each class session help you earn 1 point toward your overall class grade. This means it's possible to earn *more* than 25 points, or *bonus* points, towards your overall grade, even if you've missed some classes by exceeding a 23-class "threshold" of attendance and meaningful contributions.
- Occasional absence is to be expected. I'll keep a record of your attendance and will reach out if and when a pattern of absenteeism emerges. <u>You shouldn't expect to pass the class if you miss more than 4 classes.</u>
- When an absence is planned, follow the university's attendance policy and communicate with me directly and in advance to arrange for submission of assignments. If the absence is unforeseen, contact me as soon as possible and provide documentation of the reason for absence. Extenuating circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- You'll be responsible for remaining up-to-date and informed of our daily activities and of any changes made to the readings or assignments. If you've missed a class, you should consult the course site first (which will have the most recent version of our schedule and assignments), check in with someone from class next, and then with me if you still have questions.
- All missed work we do in this class will be your responsibility.
- It is not possible to "make-up" in-class work, including workshopping, or discussion, however, there is an option to earn full credit even if you've missed some classes (see above) as well as *bonus* points for showing up and making meaningful contributions beyond the "threshold" of attendance/meaningful contributions. I am happy to represent—as best I can—any class discussion you might miss during my office hours.

You are responsible for keeping yourself on task and keeping up with the assignments.

Late Work
The journalism world turns on deadlines. In order to succeed in this class, and in order for this class to succeed, you will need to complete the coursework on time. If you fail to turn in the assignment on time, your assignment grade will drop an entire letter, including MAJOR PROJECTS, e.g., a "B" becomes a "C" automatically. Each day that passes, the grade drops another letter. Anything more than 4 days late becomes a zero. If you are having difficulty meeting a deadline, please reach out to me as soon as possible by appointment, BEFORE the project is due. I am happy to work with you to get things back on track if you are dedicated to the task. I reserve the right to consider unusual and/or extenuating circumstances.

ePortfolio
We will be using an ePortfolio to capture your work, reflections, and revision this semester. We'll delve deeper into specifics, but for now, please know that the idea that this class, this community, is focused on incremental and noticeable development—your work starts somewhere and keeps going, and that "going" is what we intend to get into motion this term. I'm thinking in terms of life-long learning here. There's no such thing as mastery of a subject in a single semester, right?

Journals
You will be tasked with writing roughly a 15 or so journal entries. Treat the journals seriously and you will earn full credit. Journals are either/or: Completed and posted on time satisfactorily (within reason) or not done. Journal work, which is really GROWTH AND REFLECTIVE WORK, is done on time for full credit (FULL) or not at all (ZERO).

These entries could be a series of analytical questions or sometimes just an outline. ***<u>Entries should be 200-300 words if not otherwise indicated</u>***.

The purpose of the journal is to spend time away from the classroom thinking and reflecting in order to return with new ideas. These are very much writings for public consumption within the classroom, and I will likely draw on your responses to share with the class from time to time.

While I won't be scrutinizing these responses as carefully as, say, your major assignments, it is always important to proofread your communications for grammar and spelling. Too, textspeak/internet-y slang (e.g. "C u l8r" instead of "See you later") isn't quite appropriate for our intellectual forum. Plus, I'm old, and need you to help me understand what you're saying!

Disruption Policy
If you bring your cell phone to class, please set it to vibrate or **SHUT IT OFF**. Please **KEEP YOUR PHONE OUT OF SIGHT**. Disruptions to the class will not be tolerated. Please do not text during this class. Please do not make or receive phone calls during class. Please stop trying to hide your phones in your laps—I can see them! Also, be courteous and respectful to the class when coming and going.

PLEASE do not start packing up your materials until class has ended.

PLEASE do not use headphones in this class—even in just one ear!

PLEASE, when using your laptop, focus on our class work. I notice when you are breaking focus.

PLEASE do not get up during class to throw out your trash or leave the room unless it is an emergency. If a pattern of disappearance emerges, we'll need to have a conversation.

External discussions and chatting during class will not be permitted. I will eliminate unwanted talking by first addressing the problem with you. The second step could be to change your seat. Lastly, if the issue keeps up, you will leave my classroom. I reserve the right to assign seating arrangements at *any time* during the semester.

Food and drinks are permitted in the classroom as long as they are not a distraction.

Following these guidelines shows respect for your me, your classmates, and the overall learning environment of the class.

Use of AI Text Generator/ChatGPT and Other Unauthorized Tools:

Our class **prohibits** the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) programs (ChatGPT, ClaudeAI, Grammarly, etc.) for any work or assignments. The reading, writing, and critical thinking activities [faculty should modify activities list, as appropriate] central to the course learning outcomes cannot be developed when AI is used. Submitting work partially or completely generated using AI is not allowed. It will be treated as a violation of the university's Policy on Academic Integrity.

Note: Some students might not be aware they are using AI assistance with Grammarly's AI function. A quick Google search reveals the following way to disable it:

Your Grammarly settings can be found on your Account Settings page. If you no longer wish to use Grammarly's generative AI features, open your account settings, go to the Feature customization page, and switch off the generative AI settings.

UNE and College of Arts and Sciences Academic Policies and Student Information

See https://www.une.edu/catalog/2025-2026/undergraduate/academic-policy for general university undergraduate academic policies and https://www.une.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/student-handbook for the current version of the UNE Student Handbook. College of Arts and Sciences academic policies and procedures are found here: https://www.une.edu/cas/academic-policies.

GRADING SCHEMA

All courses in the College of Arts and Sciences use the common grading scheme to convert weighted percentages to their corresponding letter grades:

A	93.0-100%
A-	90.0-92.9%
B+	87.0-89.9%
B	83.0-86.9%
B-	80.0-82.9%
C+	77.0-79.9%
C	73.0-76.9%
C-	70.0-72.9%
D	60.0-69.9%
F	<60%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

THE UNE STUDENT HANDBOOK STATES:
The University of New England (UNE) values academic integrity in all aspects of the educational experience. Any behavior that provides a student with an advantage or provides another student with another advantage or disadvantage may be considered academic misconduct. Academic misconduct in any form undermines academic integrity and devalues the original works and contributions of others. It is the responsibility of all members of the university community to actively uphold academic integrity. (UNE Student Handbook, 2025, p. 21)

At UNE, the term "academic misconduct" includes, but is not limited to:

a. Cheating:
- Copying from another individual's academic work, test, quiz, or other assignment.
- Receiving, providing, and/or seeking assistance/aid from another individual to complete academic work, test, quiz, or other assignment.
- The use of materials or devices during academic work, test, quiz, or other assignment which are not authorized.
- Possession or use of current or previous course materials without the instructor's permission.
- Obtaining, or coercing another person to obtain, an unadministered test, test key, homework solution or computer program/software.
- Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself, to complete academic work.

- Uploading, downloading, or accessing complete or incomplete academic work, test, quiz, or other assignment without the prior approval of the instructor.
- Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit.
- Altering and/or destroying the work of another student.
- Failing to comply with instructions given by the person administering the academic work, test, quiz, or other assignment that results in academic misconduct not enumerated above.

b. Plagiarism/Self-Plagiarism:
- The representation of words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, other expression, or media of another as one's own and/or failing to properly cite direct, paraphrased, or summarized materials.
- The submission of the same academic work more than once without the prior permission of the instructor and/or failure to correctly cite previous work written by the same student.

c. Collusion
- Any unauthorized collaboration or attempted collaboration with another individual to complete academic work, test, quiz, or other assignment that results in similarities in the work, including, but not limited, to providing unauthorized assistance to another student and/or allowing another student access to completed academic work.

d. Falsifying Academic Records
- Altering or assisting in the altering of any official record of the University and/or submitting false information.
- Omitting requested information that is required for, or related to, any official record of the University.

e. Misrepresenting Facts
- Providing false grades or falsifying other academic information.
- Providing false or misleading information in an effort to injure another student academically.
- Providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive credit for attendance or a postponement or an extension on academic work, test, quiz, other assignment.

f. Violation of Professional Standards
- Any act or attempted act that violates specific Professional Standards or a published Code of Ethics.
  NOTE: *Students may be held accountable under this policy based on the applicable standards of their college or school of enrollment, declared major, degree program, and/or pre-professional program.*

g. Unfair Academic Advantage
- Any other action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or may result in creating an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for another student.

The University procedures for reviewing and reporting charges of academic misconduct are found on page 111 of the 2025 UNE Student Handbook. The College of Arts and Sciences policy on reviewing alleged acts of academic misconduct can be found at https://www.une.edu/cas/academic-policies.

MIDTERM ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS

The University of New England is committed to the academic success of its students. At the midterm of each semester, instructors will report the performance of each student as SATISFACTORY (S) or UNSATISFACTORY (U). Instructors will announce when these midterm academic progress reports will be available for viewing via UNE Compass. This early alert system gives all students important information about progress in their courses. Students who receive an UNSATISFACTORY midterm report should take immediate action by speaking with their instructor to discuss suggestions for improvement such as utilizing the services of Academic Coaches, the Student Academic Success Center, the Student Counseling Center, and other student support services.

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS CENTER (SASC)

The Student Academic Success Center offers a range of free services to support your academic achievement, including tutoring, reading & writing support, digital project support, learning skills development, and many online resources. To see and schedule available appointments, go to https://une.tutortrac.com or visit the Division of Student Success Desk on the second floor of Ripich Commons. To access our online resources, including links, guides, and video tutorials, visit https://une1.sharepoint.com/sites/SASC.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The University of New England is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body and will make reasonable accommodations for students with qualified disabilities. Any student eligible for and needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a disability is encouraged to request accommodations through the UNE Student Access Center. Registration with the Student Access Center is required before accommodation requests can be granted. Visit https://www.une.edu/student-access-center for more information.

LIBRARY SERVICES

UNE Library Services provides the tools and support you need to succeed in this course and beyond. Access books, articles, videos, and other credible resources through library.une.edu and your Research by Subject guide. Need help with your research? UNE librarians are here for you! Whether you're developing a search strategy or citing your sources, you can Ask a Librarian or connect directly with your subject librarian.

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Tentative Course Schedule:

Week 1: Course Overview

Week 2: Sports Life/Working with Sources/ Navigating Social Networks/Covering the Game/ Personal Narrative

Week 3: Asking Questions/Writing the Story/ Personal Narrative and Workshopping

Week 4: Choosing the Words/Following Style/(Pre)-Profiles/Prepping for Gamers/Prepping for Profiles

Week 5: Making Numbers Count/(Pre)-Profiles Presentations/Reflection

Week 6: Gamers

Week 7: Gamers and Workshopping

Week 8: Gamers and Workshopping

Week 9: Gamers and Workshopping

Week 10: Seeking Justice/Profiles

Week 11: Profiles Workshopping

Week 12: Profiles Workshopping

Week 13: Broadcast/Profiles Workshopping and Reflection

Week 14: Podcast/Broadcast

Week 15: Podcast/Broadcast Reflection

WEEK 1

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29
1. Introductions—interview a neighbor
2. Syllabus rules/regs/etc.
3. Try, care, be generous of spirit
4. The importance journalism

Assignment:

1. Read chapter 1 and 1. **JOURNAL# 1:** What are the big takeaways from chapters 1 and 2? In a full journal entry, help explain the significance of what you found important and what you connected with in the chapter. (150 words/chapter).

Please bring your laptops next class, and from here on out.