

Department of English and Writing Studies

2225 F: Sports Writing
Fall 2013

Time/Room: Mondays 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Room UCC 53
Instructor: Mark Kearney

Office: Room 3270, Stevenson-Lawson

**Office hours: Wednesdays 2 pm to 4pm or by
appointment**



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Course Description and Objectives

For decades, the sports pages have been an integral part of the daily newspaper. Sports makes up its own section in practically every daily paper on the continent, and in the past 50 years or so has spread widely into the magazine world. Sports TV channels are an integral part of every cable operation and the sports themselves have become multi-billion dollar enterprises. The best sports writing combines elements of history, event coverage, biography, narrative, and opinion. This course will give you the chance to delve into these different genres while offering you the chance to talk about sports in class each week. You will develop skills in the ability to communicate information, arguments, and analyses accurately and reliably, orally and in writing to a range of audiences. You will also develop skills in researching and writing stories, revising and editing, and meeting the deadlines that sports writing often requires. Strong emphasis will be on the practicalities of writing for different audiences and in different sub-genres of the field.

Required Texts

In lieu of a text, you will be reading a variety of sources online throughout the course. You are also strongly encouraged to read about sports daily and to watch events on television.

Course Requirements

Covering first sports event	10%	Due Sept. 23
Covering second sports event	20%	Due Oct. 21
Sports column	20%	Due Nov. 11
Research presentations	10%	In Nov. TBA
In class work/quiz	10%	TBA
Sports Feature Article	30%	Due Nov. 25

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Assignment Format

All assignments should be double-spaced and as close to the assigned word count as possible. Emailed assignments may be acceptable in certain circumstances.

Submitting Assignments

I don't like to penalize late assignments; however, since one of the purposes of this course is to familiarize you with the writing profession, you need to know that deadlines are crucial. For this reason, all assignments will be due on the date specified unless you negotiate an extension at least 48 hours in advance. Following any other policy would be an injustice to you as a future writer. Assignments should be submitted in class or electronically if necessary. You may also place them in the drop box outside Lawson, Room 3270. **Late assignments will be penalized at 3% per day, including weekends.**

Attendance Policies

Because there is no final exam, attendance in this course is mandatory. I take attendance at the beginning of each class. Should you arrive late it's your responsibility to ensure that you aren't marked as absent by seeing me after class or during break. **Each missed class without proper documentation or discussion with me beforehand will reduce your final grade by 2%.** Attendance is important to improving as a writer. If you miss more than six hours of class meetings (the equivalent of two weeks of class meetings) your final grade will be penalized a full letter grade (an earned grade of 80% would be reported as a 70%); if you miss more than nine hours of class meetings, you will be penalized a further letter grade.

If your absence is extended and prolonged (over one week of continuous non-attendance), then you should discuss it with your academic advisor in your home faculty. That advisor may then contact me and your other instructors.

Note: a class meeting missed in order to write a test, exam, or other form of 'make-up class' in another course will count as non-attendance, and will attract penalties as defined above if applicable. Instructors at the University of Western Ontario shall not require a student to write a make-up test or similar at times which conflict with that student's other scheduled class times. If you are asked or 'required' to do this, you should immediately contact an academic counsellor in your Dean's office. If you elect to miss a class in order to write such a test, that is your choice; your absence will not be excused.

See also: 'Medical Accommodation Policy' below.

Scholastic Offences, including Plagiarism

The University Senate requires the following statements, and Web site references, to appear on course outlines:

"Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/schloff.pdf>.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks

where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy as above).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).”

Prerequisites

The University Senate requires the following statement to appear on course outlines:

“Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.”

The prerequisite for registration in this course is a) a final grade of 65 or more in one of Writing 2101, 2121, 2111, or 2131, or b) a final grade of 70 or more in Writing 1000F/G, or c) Special Permission of the Program.

Medical Accommodation Policy

For UWO Policy on Accommodation For Medical Illness, see:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medical.pdf>

(downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <https://studentservices.uwo.ca> under the Medical Documentation heading)

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical or other grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth 10% or more of their final grade** must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds cannot be granted by the instructor or the Program in Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication, and the Program requires students in these circumstances to follow the same procedure when seeking academic accommodation on non-medical (i.e. non-medical compassionate or other) grounds.

Students seeking academic accommodation **on medical grounds** for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments **worth less than 10% of their final grade** must also apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Where in these circumstances the accommodation is being sought on **non-medical grounds**, students should consult in the first instance with their instructor, who may elect to make a decision on the request directly, or refer the student to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty.

Students should also note that individual instructors are not permitted to receive medical documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for accommodation on medical grounds, or for other reasons (e.g. to explain an absence from class which may result in a grade penalty under an ‘Attendance’ policy in the course). **All** medical documentation **must** be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student’s home Faculty.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:

<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Special Requests: Special Examinations, Incomplete Standing, Aegrotat Standing

Please refer to the “Information for All Students in a Writing Course” for more detailed information. Briefly, remember that your instructor does not have the discretion to initiate, consider, or grant (or not) such requests; you must go directly to the Dean’s office of your home faculty.

NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER DECEMBER 6, 2013. OUTSTANDING WORK AS OF THIS DATE WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF ZERO.

Class Meeting Schedule

Date	Meeting focus	Readings
Week 1	Introduction/Sports Writing Basics	I will provide you a link to a current sports story in a newspaper from this week. Also read Chapter 1: From Sports Fan to Sports Reporter at this link: http://books.google.ca/books?id=vn30_SPU44C&printsec=frontcover&dq=field+guide+to+covering
Week 2	Writing a sports news story/Covering events	http://sportsfieldguide.com/sports/?p=1596 http://sportsjournalism.org/sports-media-news/mavericks-heat-nba-finals-provides-lesson-game-coverage-breaking-down-the-elements-to-create-a-compelling-recap/
Week 3	The art of interviewing and challenges with athletes, coaches, etc. Possible Guest Speaker Other types of sports coverage	http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/9428218/mike-cervenak-not-prospect
Week 4	Researching sports events. Knowing markets Why Numbers Count in Sports Writing	http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/9419687/chicago-blackhawks-win-2013-stanley-cup Bring a favourite recent sports column to the next class.
Week 5	Writing from Personal Experience and Opinion The Not So Typical Sport Story	Students will work in small groups to research a sports history question and present their to the class. Details TBA
Week 6	Thanksgiving holiday – no class	Read http://journalism.about.com/od/reporting/a/pressconf.htm
Week 7	Covering sports press conferences Possible in –class news conference	Read sample sports columns that I will provide.

Week 8	Following up on the conference Working towards the sports feature	Read http://www.grantland.com/story/_/id/9376010/rename-washington-redskins
Week 9	Workshop column Research Presentations Begin Details TBA in class	Read this sports feature: http://www.theglobeandmail.com/sports/hockey/hockey-night-in-hershey-minor-league-hockey-with-major-league-fans/article4709124/
Week 10	Guest Speaker?	
Week 11	Research Presentations cont'd. Column Discussions Workshop Features	Reading TBA
Week 12	Sports Writing in Other Media Film Presentation	
Week 13	Wrap up/More On Markets/Sports Writing Ethics	