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## SMC303: Sport, Culture & Media

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### LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.*



*Photo by Neil Leifer*

**For those of us who love sport**, we almost set our watches by the sporting schedule and the deluge of information that surrounds it. Let's take football, example. High school football on Friday, college on Saturday (and those Tuesdays & Wednesdays!), NFL all day Sunday, Monday and Thursday nights and a steady stream of fantasy updates, NFL Live, SportsCenter, podcasts and tweets in between. And those odds and parlays!

For those in the sports communication business, that schedule easily sweeps us away into a busy oblivion. In between games and practices, there are news conferences, interviews, articles and scripts to write, statistics and rankings to process, tweets and multimedia content to disseminate, bags to pack and planes to catch.

It's no wonder we don't have much time to look away from our laptop, or phone and really examine the environment around us.

By "environment," I don't necessarily mean the faint smell of hot dogs and popcorn that waft up from the concourses and into the press box, or the beauty of Lake Washington that stretches out from the east end zone at Husky Stadium at the University of Washington in Seattle – the very scene I took in many Saturdays when I covered college football for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

Rather, I mean the dirty underbelly, the semi-hidden "environment" - at that same gorgeous college football stadium – where 70,000 mostly white/mostly well-off fans fill that stadium to watch young people of color bash heads for their entertainment. I mean the environment in which billionaire owners of sport franchises use the tax dollars of every-day Americans to pay for stadiums and arenas that those same spectators can hardly afford to enter. I mean the environment that demands the same banks that taxpayers bailed out in 2008 are still giving those same billionaire owners millions of dollars to put their names on those same stadiums and arenas. I mean the environment that insists we don't mix politics with our sport, that we believe in a level playing field for all and that conveniently ignores racism, sexism, classism and anything that might get in the way of our *entertainment*.

In this class, we will be turn our eyes from the games and will immerse ourselves into that environment – one that deals exclusively in power, money, influence and the role media plays to both reinforce and challenge it.

## OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this course, the assigned readings, class discussions and completed assignments should have helped you to:

- \* Develop and improve critical-thinking skills, specifically in the sport media arena;
- \* Gain a cultural and economic sensitivity surrounding such issues;
- \* Navigate the complex, capitalist landscape to identify research ideas and execute responsible research.

## REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- One text is required:  
["Kings and Pawns: Jackie Robinson and Paul Robeson in America" by Howard Bryant](#) (Mariner Books) *\*\*This book is not published until Jan. 20, 2026, but you are required to have it by the end WEEK 5.*

- All other readings will be posted to the course website at [mollyyanity.com](http://mollyyanity.com) and Brightspace.
- Brightspace will be used to post rubrics, submit assignments, record grades and to communicate with students.

### GRADING

Your grade will be comprised of the total score of the following:

Attendance	10%
Effective engagement/participation	25%
Presentation	15%
Paper 1	20%
Paper 2 (final)	30%

### GRADING SCALE

A = 100-93	C+ = 79-77	F = <60
A- = 92-90	C = 76-73	
B+ = 89-87	C- = 72-70	
B = 86-83	D+ = 69-67	
B- = 82-80	D = 66-60	

### EXPECTATIONS

I expect you to be honest, to come to class, to be prepared by doing the readings (etc.) before class, to engage and to be respectful. I also expect you to think critically.

You can expect me to listen to your concerns, to be fair, to provide you with feedback in timely manners and to help you succeed in this class and beyond.

### COURSE POLICIES

**\*Attendance:** I see the classroom as your “workplace” while you are in college. Thus, you should treat both your on-campus work the same way you would treat work attendance. Show up. Further, you’re paying to be in these classes. So, again, show up.

Those with perfect attendance will earn bonus points. Those missing one or two classes will not receive a penalty and can still earn 100 percent of the attendance points. Those missing more than two class sessions will receive a reduction in those points, up to 10 percent per absence beyond two.

Here is a list of [university-sanctioned absences](#).

- **IF YOU MISS CLASS, it is YOUR responsibility to make up work. Do not ask the professor what you missed; ask a classmate, consult the schedule, etc.**

**\*Engagement/participation points:** The effectiveness and success of this course are dependent on a robust and *prepared* discussion. As such, you are required to be

present, engaged and prepared by having done the reading and prepared notes on the discussion questions.

Other engagement notes:

- You will regularly present your ideas, your opinions. You may be challenged. Respectfulness and civility are expected -- so are your voice and uniqueness.
- While in class, I expect you to be on task. If you are working on other materials, devices or engaged in activities beyond the course, you may be asked to leave the room, which will count as an absence.
- Speaking of engagement – if you're here, you're off to a good start. Cut and paste this sentence into an email and send it to me no later than your first class session and I'll give you a 5% boost in the engagement/participation column.

### CONTACTING PROFESSOR YANITY

Reach me via email ([molly.yanity@uri.edu](mailto:molly.yanity@uri.edu)) or via [Starfish](#) or Brightspace.

I'll respond within 24 hours on normal weekdays and weekends, although I'll usually get back to you sooner. I routinely send out emails and may post announcements via Brightspace, so be sure to check your URI email and/or Brightspace regularly.

### OFFICE HOURS IN DAVIS 206\*

*Tuesdays 1-3 p.m., Wednesdays 10-11 a.m. or by appointment*

Zoom options are available.

Please [make an appointment through Starfish](#) or contact me by email.

*\*-Davis Hall is not ADA-compliant and does not have a working elevator. If this affects you, please just let me know; I'm happy to meet you elsewhere.*

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Familiarize yourself with URI's on [academic honesty](#) as outlined in the [University Manual](#).

In addition to the university's policy, my stance on the use of **artificial intelligence tools** is this: Your work is expected to be original and produced by you – which is the standard in the sport media and communication industries.

That said, we will discuss how AI may serve as a tool for your use, given that the product is fully original, vetted, fact-checked and accurate and you provide evidence as such. For certain assignments, you can choose to utilize AI tools to assist you. When you do, it is crucial to clearly document which tool you used, the prompts or questions you provided, and how you used the AI-generated output. However, you must also critically review and refine the AI's output to ensure the final work accurately reflects your own understanding and meets the academic standards expected by the university. Failure to properly document or cite use of AI will be considered a violation of the university's [Academic Requirements in the University Manual](#) (see 8.27.10 – 8.27.22).

**SYLLABUS REVISION DISCLAIMER**

I reserve the right to revise the syllabus, class schedule or assignment guidelines at any point during the semester if I deem changes are necessary. I will inform you of any changes in class, via email and on the course website in a timely fashion.

**OTHER RESOURCES**

- [Writing Center](#) Room 009, basement, Roosevelt Hall
- [Academic Enhancement Center](#) Fourth floor, Roosevelt Hall
- [Disability, Access & Inclusion](#) Room 302, Memorial Union
- [Hardship Assistance/Rhody Outpost](#) (food insecurity, housing insecurity – there is help)

**INFORMATION REQUIRED BY THE UNIVERSITY:**

Students' legal rights and the university's legal and procedural obligations:



COURSE SCHEDULE AVAILABLE HERE.