**COURSE TITLE:** KNES 465 (*Strategic Sport Communications*)

**STATEMENT OF RATIONALE:**

Research conducted on the Sport Management program at Towson University (DeLuca & Braunstein-Minkove, forthcoming) has demonstrated the need to incorporate more professional and experiential development opportunities for students in order to better prepare students for the highly competitive sports industry. This work has advocated a need to incorporate more applied, business-oriented courses into the curriculum in order to offer students realistic, pre-professional experiences that foster their skills and abilities, and give them important insight into the field(s) in which they are interested. Accordingly, this course will facilitate a practical experience in the area of sport communications with a specific focus on professional development skills through various applied tasks and responsibilities.

**STATEMENT OF OVERLAP:**

This will be an elective course in the Sport Management program. It does not overlap with any courses at Towson University.
COURSE TITLE: Strategic Sport Communication

COURSE NUMBER: KNES 465

CREDIT HOURS: Three Credits

PREREQUISITES: Declared Sport Management Major with Junior/Senior Standing or Instructor Permission

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Designed to develop practical skills and competencies in sport communication.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will examine communication theory, practice, and issues related to the sports industry and sport communication professions. Specifically, concepts and current issues related to the production of social media, broadcasting, print media, and public relations/crisis communications in the sports industry will be discussed and students will produce work from each of these industry segments.

COURSE OUTCOMES: The learning outcomes for this course are as follows:

1. Demonstrate proficiency in relevant theories of communication and applying those theories to the coursework assigned in each industry area.
2. Understand how to establish and maintain currency in relevant sport communication issues pertaining to best practices, ethics, and developing methods and technologies.
3. Demonstrate the ability to utilize AP style when writing a newspaper article fit for press on a tight deadline.
4. Demonstrate the ability to oversee the entire production of an audio podcast. This involves preparing the podcast rundown, scheduling guests (if applicable), researching the discussion topics, serving as the talent on the podcast, and performing any post-production duties necessary.
5. Analyze a sport communication crisis by applying best practices of crisis communication and communication theory.
6. Work collaboratively with group members to develop a needs analysis, social media consultation, and impact assessment for a sport organization.

REQUIRED TEXT AND ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Additional required readings will be assigned and provided by the instructor in online format in a timely manner.
COURSE EVALUATION:
1. Mid Term Exam 200 Points 20%
2. Final Exam 200 Points 20%
3. Pop Quizzes 50 Points 5%
4. Lead Off 50 Points 5%
5. Module 1 100 Points 10%
6. Module 2 100 Points 10%
7. Module 3 100 Points 10%
8. Module 4 100 Points 10%
9. Module 5 100 Points 10%

1000 Points 100%

GRADING (BASED ON EARNED POINTS IN THE COURSE):
935 – 1000 Points 93.5% – 100% A
895 – 934 Points 89.5% – 93.4% A-
865 – 894 Points 86.5% – 89.4% B+
825 – 864 Points 82.5% – 86.4% B
795 – 824 Points 79.5% – 82.4% B-
765 – 794 Points 76.5% – 79.4% C+
695 – 764 Points 69.5% – 76.4% C
665 – 694 Points 66.5% – 69.4% D+
595 – 664 Points 59.5% – 66.4% D
0 – 594 Points 0% – 59.4% F

Please be reminded the quality of your work determines the grade you earn. While specific assignment rubrics can be found on Blackboard, these basic standards to help guide you in your work.

A - Excellent: Your work impeccably follows the assignment criteria. It is insightful, well organized, uses multiple examples/support that manifest from course concepts and principles, and is free of APA, grammatical, mechanical and/or spelling errors. Your presentation is riveting, impactful and meaningfully appropriate, effective, and compelling demonstrating audience relation and inspiration.

B - Above Average: Your work follows the assignment criteria. It is insightful, well organized, uses multiple examples/support that manifest from course concepts and principles, and is free of APA, grammatical, mechanical and/or spelling errors. Yet, it falls just short of impeccably addressing the assignment criteria. Your presentation is impactful and meaningfully appropriate, effective, and compelling demonstrating audience relation and inspiration.

C - Satisfactory: Your work follows the assignment criteria in spirit (following most instructions), is accurate, provides support for your observations/contentions, and is mostly free of grammatical, mechanical and/or spelling errors. Formatting is in correct APA form. Your presentation is appropriate, effective, and compelling demonstrating audience relation and inspiration.
D - Unsatisfactory: Your work contains multiple grammatical, mechanical and/or spelling errors. It reflects minimal adherence to the assignment criteria. It may have serious APA errors. Your presentation is less than appropriate, effective, and compelling demonstrating audience relation and inspiration.

F - Failing: Your work and/or presentation has failed to follow the assignment criteria. Your presentation is not civilly responsible to your audience. Your work is plagiarized or you have failed to turn in the assignment on the due date. You fail to attend your presentation date.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

Exams (Mid Term & Final):
Two exams will be given for this course (Mid-Term and a Final). Each exam will contain both objective and subjective questions. The Final Exam will be cumulative, but will be more highly geared toward the material covered in the second half of the semester. Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5

Pop Quizzes/Reading Assignments:
At least five (5) pop quizzes will be given during the semester. Each quiz will be very brief in nature and will cover the readings that were assigned for that particular class period. Quizzes will serve as a tool to ensure that all readings have been completed prior to attending class. Sometimes reading assignments will be required to cover more abstract material. The requirements for these assignments will be made available later in the course. Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6

Lead Off
Each student will begin each class by presenting an article pertaining to a current event relevant to both the topic of the lecture that day. Grading will be based on knowledge of the current event, questions asked of the class, and the participation stimulated in the class. The lead off will be roughly 5-10 minutes in length, but can be extended if the conversation remains healthy. Learning Outcome: 2

Module 1 Assignment: What Is Sport Communication?
In order to understand communication in a sports context, students must first understand the relevant theory related to communication. Students will be asked to write an essay what the word “communication” means to them and why communication is vital to the dynamic sports industry. Communication theories applicable to the practice and understanding of sport communication will be covered, and based on these theories, students will be asked to provide their own definition of communication and will be asked to defend their stance. Grading will be based on the persuasiveness of the essay, the defense of the stance chosen, and the description of the relationship that exists between sport and communication. Learning Outcomes: 1 and 2

Module 2 Assignment: Newspaper Write Up for a TU Athletics Contest
Early in the semester, the class will select a TU athletic event to attend as a class. Students will watch the game, and will then write a newspaper article for the game to hand in the next class period. Students should be sure to adhere to all AP guidelines and follow the procedures for newspaper writing that will be covered in class. Grades will be based on the adherence to AP Style, concise writing in inverted pyramid format, and meeting the word requirement. Learning Outcome: 3
Module 3 Assignment: Podcast
Students will be asked to complete a podcast individually on sports topics of their own choosing. Students may either use their own computers to record the podcasts, or may request time in Student Computing Services to utilize their recording devices.

Students are able to choose any topic they’d like and should treat the podcast as a professional recording. Each podcast should be planned and should include a number of segments. Podcasts will be 30 minutes in length. Students will be graded on their podcast preparation, length of the podcast, and their overall knowledge of the subject area. Students will also be required to turn in their rundown of the show on the due date. Learning Outcome: 4

Module 4 Assignment: Sport Crisis Communications Analysis
Students will be asked to choose a crisis in the sports industry, research the crisis and the communications, then to analyze the communications associated with the crisis. This will be a research-heavy assignment which will require lots of reading on the subject. Once students are well-versed in the topic, they will then analyze the crisis communications and describe what was done well and what could have been improved. Grading will be based on the extent of the research, the depth of the analysis, and a defense of the opinions formed. Learning Outcome: 5

Module 5 Assignment: Social Media Consultation
Students will form groups and will select a team for which to conduct a social media consultation. For this assignment, students will assume that they have been called in by a company to improve their social media communication efforts. Students will need to conduct a needs analysis, create a new or modified social media platform, then be able to explain what the group believes will result from the new social media efforts. Presentations will be 20 minutes in length and will be graded on their needs analysis, social media prescription and development, and a rationale for the changes. The grade will also be derived from the opinions of the instructor, the class, and the individual group members. Learning Outcomes: 6
COURSE CONTENT:

The course will address the following subject areas:

- **MODULE 1 – Sport Communication Overview and Theory**
  - Introduction to Communication Theory and its relevance to sport
  - Careers in Sport Communication
  - History of Sport Communication

- **MODULE 2 – Sport Publishing**
  - Print Media
  - Visual Communication
  - Sport Books
  - AP Style
  - Contemporary Issues in Sport Publishing

- **MODULE 3 – Sport Broadcasting**
  - History and Evolution of Sport Broadcasting
  - Broadcast Media Production
  - Ethics of Sport Broadcasting
  - Sport Films and Documentaries
  - Contemporary Issues in Sport Broadcasting

- **MODULE 4 – Sport Public Relations, Media Relations, and Crisis Communication**
  - Sport Public Relations
  - Media Relations
  - Sport Crisis Communication
  - Contemporary Issues in Sport Public Relations, Media Relations, and Crisis Communication

- **MODULE 5 – Sport Social/New Media**
  - Social Media Marketing
  - Website Development
  - Ethics of Social/New Media
  - Contemporary Issues in Sport Social/New Media
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPICS COVERED</th>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS DUE</th>
<th>READINGS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>BEGIN MODULE 1</strong></td>
<td>Students are expected to read and understand the course syllabus</td>
<td>Course Syllabus, Chapter 1, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Course Overview</td>
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<td>Introduction to Communication Theory</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Careers in Sport Communication</td>
<td>Students are expected to understand the Module 1 Assignment and to start their research</td>
<td>Chapter 1, Chapter 2, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Unlimited Effects Theory</td>
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<td>Uses and Gratifications Theory</td>
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<td>Agenda Setting Theory</td>
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<td>Innovation Theory</td>
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<td>Diffusion of Information/Modeling and Cultivation</td>
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<td>Interpretivist vs. Post-Positivist Views</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>History of Sport Communication</td>
<td>Module 1 Assignment – What is Communication</td>
<td>Chapter 3, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Cognitive Dissonance Theory</td>
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<td>Communication Accommodation Theory</td>
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<td>Groupthink</td>
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<td>Social Exchange Theory</td>
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<td>Social Penetration Theory</td>
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<td>Spiral of Silence Theory</td>
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<td>Uncertainty Reduction Theory</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td><strong>BEGIN MODULE 2</strong></td>
<td>Module 2 Assignment is presented to the students</td>
<td>Chapter 7, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Overview of Print Media and Vital Vocabulary</td>
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<td>Overview of AP Style</td>
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<td>Hard News vs. Soft News</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Selection and Attendance of a TU Sports Contest</td>
<td>Module 2 Assignment due the class meeting following event attendance</td>
<td>Chapter 7, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Discussion on the Challenges/Future of Print Media</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td><strong>BEGIN MODULE 3</strong></td>
<td>Module 3 Assignment is presented to the students</td>
<td>Chapter 8, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Introduction to Broadcast Media</td>
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<td>History of Broadcast Media</td>
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<td>ESPN’s Role in The Evolution of Sports Broadcasting</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Ethical Considerations of Broadcasting</td>
<td>Exam #1 is administered</td>
<td>Chapter 8, Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>Exam Review</td>
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<td>Week</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<td>Additional Readings</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Exam Discussion&lt;br&gt;Podcast Overview&lt;br&gt;Podcast Production</td>
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<td>Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Sports Films and Documentaries&lt;br&gt;Discussion of Oversaturation of Broadcast Outlets</td>
<td>Module 3 Due Module 4 Assignment is presented to the students</td>
<td>Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td><strong>BEGIN MODULE 4</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Public Relations – Myth vs. Reality&lt;br&gt;4 Models of Public Relations&lt;br&gt;Factors Impacting Persuasion</td>
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<td>Chapter 11 Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Media Relations&lt;br&gt;Press Releases&lt;br&gt;Media Kits&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Crisis Communication</td>
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<td>Chapter 11 Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Crisis Communication Case Study – NYC Marathon&lt;br&gt;Practical Crisis Communication Exercise – Press Conference</td>
<td>Module 4 Assignment Due Module 5 Assignment presented to students</td>
<td>Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td><strong>BEGIN MODULE 5</strong>&lt;br&gt;Introduction to Social/New Media&lt;br&gt;History of New Media&lt;br&gt;Social Media Usage Statistics&lt;br&gt;Social Media and Marketing Communications</td>
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<td>Chapter 9 Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Best Practices in Website Development&lt;br&gt;Social Media Consultation</td>
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<td>Chapter 9 Additional Assigned Readings</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Social Media Consultations – Module 5 Presentations</td>
<td>Module 5 Presentations Delivered</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Social Media Consultations – Module 5 Presentations&lt;br&gt;Exam #2 Review&lt;br&gt;Course Wrap Up</td>
<td>Module 5 Presentations Delivered Exam #2 Administered</td>
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COURSE POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Writing Specifications: All writing should be formatted to the following specifications:

- Completed on a word processor
- 12 pt. standard font (i.e. Times New Roman or similar font)
- Double spaced
- 1” margins on all sides
- Follow APA or AP guidelines for citing references and all in-text citations (whichever is required for the assignment)
  - Remember that APA Format includes a cover page and a reference page
  - Here is a website that will help on APA format: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/
  - Here is a website that will help with AP format: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/735/02/
- Writing must include page numbers
- Stapled

Late Work Policy: Students are expected to attend all classes. While points will not be awarded for attendance, it is expected as a professional disposition. In the event of an unexcused absence, students will not be allowed to make up any assignments or assessments that were missed. Late assignments will not be accepted unless a student has a documented valid excuse or has made advance arrangements with the instructor. Please review the Towson University Class Attendance/Absence Policy in the Towson University Undergraduate Catalog.

Towson University Cheating and Academic Dishonesty Policy: Cheating/academic dishonesty in any form is unacceptable at Towson University. Faculty set policies and determine classroom penalties. Cheating/academic dishonesty could result in failure, grade reduction, or disciplinary action by University authorities.

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Such behavior will result in a zero (0) and be figured into the final grade accordingly. Further, disciplinary action may also be pursued if deemed appropriate by the instructor. Any student found to be cheating will be strictly held to the Student Academic Integrity Policy. This policy can be found at the following link:

Office of Disability Support Services (DSS): Any student with a disability that requires special accommodations to complete course requirements must identify such needs with the Office of Disability Support Services at the beginning of the semester. Students seeking accommodations must identify themselves to DSS, request an appointment to discuss their needs, and provide DSS with up-to-date and complete documentation of their disabilities by a qualified professional. DSS determines what accommodations are reasonable on a case by case basis. They take into account the student’s disability and needs, nature of the learning task, course standards and essential requirements of the program of study, and educational environment. Students are encouraged to register with DSS as soon as possible after admission to the university to ensure timely provision of service. Further information is available at the DSS Office in the Administration Building room 232, by calling 410.704.2638, or visiting www.towson.edu/tu/dssl


