

# Sports Media & Gender • JMC 4254

**Instructor:** Megan A. Duncan, Ph.D.

**Time:** 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday

**Place:** 125 Davidson

**Term:** Spring 2023

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**Office hours:**

11 a.m. to Noon Tuesdays in 148 Shanks

9:30-10:30 a.m. Wednesdays online:

<https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/97386738025>

## Welcome!

This is Sports Media and Gender. This is a special topics course for students in the School of Communication. It's the first time this course has been taught, and I'm so excited to bring it to you. It's timely: Fifty years after the law that gave women equal rights to men in education, including educational sports. It's important: Examples of ways female athletes and female sports journalists are treated differently are easy to find. We can do our part to improve those circumstances by learning about the stereotypes and misconceptions about gender in sports and sports media.

I'm excited to be here. Below, you'll find what I've spent a big chunk of time planning for us to do in the next 16 weeks. But, let's keep in mind that the plan may change because of circumstances beyond the control of me, our guest speakers, or the university. Let's respect each other, do our best, learn, think deeply, talk openly and have fun.

This is also your fair warning there will be puns, cheesiness and a general attitude of excitement that we get to spend three hours each week talking about sports and gender.

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## Course structure

This course has a main event: **April 11**. We will be putting together a public-facing afternoon for learning about sports and gender at Virginia Tech. I'm so excited about this aspect, and the possibilities that what we learn together will get the community involved and set a foundation for more recorded history of Virginia Tech sports. What we create together may even be used in future iterations of this course.

Much of the semester will be dedicated to putting that event together. For the first three-quarters of the semester we will plan, organize and execute the event as a group; additionally, each individual student will complete a journalistic project that directly relates to sports and gender here at Virginia Tech.

Along the way, we'll also learn about issues from history and today that concern both gender & athletes, and gender & sports journalism. The goal is to help everyone understand some of the stereotypes, concerns and controversies regarding athletes and gender so that the next generation of sports journalists can ethically cover thorny issues.

## Course Catalog Description

This is a special topics course for students in the School of Communication. This course taken Spring 2023 can be used for MJ Application or Theory Elective. A substitution may be required for the course to reflect on your DARS correctly. Please contact Ms. Garnand, if that is the case.

## Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify barriers to women and trans people to entering and succeeding as sports journalists
2. Identify key moments in women's athletics at the collegiate level, especially concerning the law known as Title IX
3. Identify key stereotypes associated with gender commonly applied in sports news coverage
4. Critically analyze news coverage of sports and athletes for the ways language and images reinforce gender stereotypes
5. Research the history of women's athletics using original documents and people sources
6. Write and produce multimedia in a journalistic style about a sports issue that is free of gender stereotypes
7. Apply communication skills with a large group about the production of a public-facing event while working on individual tasks

## Course Materials

This semester we will not be using a textbook. All assigned readings will be available for Canvas on the course page for that day's meeting. Generally, the heaviest reading will be on Tuesdays. Some reading assignments will be administered through Hypothesis, a social annotation software.

## Hypothesis

When reading assignments are administered through Hypothesis, you will leave either "page notes" or "annotations" in the document that other students can read and respond to with their own reactions. The annotations you leave in readings will contribute to your participation grade. We'll cover how to use annotations and page notes in the first few classes of the semester.

## Course Structure

This course is delivered in-person, live during our scheduled class session in 125 Davidson Randolph. Companion information for the live course is available in Canvas. Each week has a specific module. In that module, you'll find:

- **Weekly quiz.** Quizzes open Sunday and are due before class starts Tuesday. They cover the in-class material from the previous week and the readings (including the book chapter) that is assigned for that Tuesday. Quizzes are 10 points and usually take about 15 minutes. Two quiz grades drop from final grade calculation.
- **Readings.** Readings are uploaded as PDFs or URLs to news stories or essays. Each is linked in the "Training" section of the course day's Canvas page.
  - Read each link or PDF for understanding.
  - Read each one again, this time leaving annotations or page notes through the Hypothesis software.
    - "Substantial" comments address the context, meaning, implications, and connections of the reading. These comments use full sentences or significant phrases to add meaning or understanding to the reading, compare to other readings, or draw on additional context you have to contribute. A pattern of substantial comments will earn you participation points. Additionally, when you don't understand an idea or a passage, please flag that for me in the comments so that I can address it in class.
    - "Insubstantial" or "unsubstantiated" comments are insignificant comments (e.g. "interesting" or "good point") or comments that make claims without evidence (e.g. "this isn't true" or "women make up 25% of the U.S. population"). A pattern of insubstantial or unsubstantiated comments will not earn you participation points.
  - Participation in reading comments is combined with your in-class participation and attendance to form the basis of your "Theory and discussion participation" grade.
- **Individual Story: Sports and Gender.** You'll find the milestone assignments and associated assignment instructions for the individual story project in Canvas.

We'll be working on one portfolio-level multimedia journalism story throughout the semester.

- **Team meeting assignments.** Our teams will work together to plan, produce and execute the public-facing April 11 event on Virginia Tech's sports history. You will be assigned to at least one team to help make the event spectacular. If your team meets that day, you'll find a place to report on your team's progress in Canvas.
- **Class meeting pages.** For each of our class meetings, you'll find a page that outlines what we'll be talking about, provides links to things we'll use in class, and a reminder list of assignments due. These pages will help give you context to the class.

Each module is designed to run Sunday to Friday.

### Class Attendance

My expectation is for you to attend each class. I hope that's possible. I'm planning for a lot of class discussion and activity.

But, I won't be grading on attendance. Instead, I'll assess your class participation through weekly quizzes due before class starts each Tuesday. These quizzes check that you were paying attention during class (or got notes from someone if you missed class), and that you have done the work to prepare for the coming week.

You'll also receive two participation grades. One for theory and discussion days, and one for activities related to the April 11 event. Each participation grade will incorporate your attendance. While there's no specific number of allowable absences, do not worry that missing a class because of a single absence or emergency will doom your grade. Focus on making a habit of being in class when possible. Contact me if you'll need to miss an extended number of class sessions.

### Technology Requirements

This is a social media class, and I intend to make it interactive.

Students must be comfortable with:

- Uploading and downloading files from Canvas
- Using Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Using Adobe CC and/or design programs such as Canva
- Using email for communication
- Sending an email attachment
- Navigating the internet
- Using online search engines

Student technical support for this course is available through the Virginia Tech Customer Support Center **4Help**. Help is available 24/7 to reset passwords, monitor system outages, and answer questions on a variety of computer issues.

**For Canvas help or just to ask a quick question:** Click **Help** at the upper right corner of any screen within the Canvas.vt.edu domain and select one of the help options from the pop-up window. Canvas helpdesk consultants are available 24/7 via chat, phone, or through online tickets.

Students should bring their laptops with the required department software (Microsoft Office and Adobe Creative Cloud) to class each meeting. Students should use their laptops to stay engaged with course material and avoid getting distracted by non-classwork.

## #Academicsuccess

### Assignments

<b>Category</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>% of final grade</b>
Weekly quizzes	12 opportunities. <b>Top 10</b> count toward final grade.	15
Readings and participation	A holistic grade based on your attendance and participation in class discussions and comments on readings.	15
Individual Story: Sports and Gender	<b>8 parts. Lowest grade of parts 1-7 drops from final grade.</b>	35
	Story idea (5 points)	
	Proof of sourcing (5 points)	
	Q&A with one source (5 points)	
	Multimedia plan (5 points)	
	Complete draft of story (20 points)	
	Multimedia piece (10 points)	
	Peer reviews (10 points)	

	Everything completed (does not drop) (30 points)	
Team assignments	<b>3 parts</b>	35
	Team meetings (six meetings) - 5 points possible per meeting (lowest drops)	
	Team deliverables (30 points)	
	Individual participation in teams (15 points)	

### Grade calculation

	<b>A</b> 92.5-100	<b>A-</b> 90.0-92.49
<b>B+</b> 87.0-89.99	<b>B</b> 83.0-86.99	<b>B-</b> 80.0-82.99
<b>C+</b> 77.0-79.99	<b>C</b> 73.0-76.99	<b>C-</b> 70.0-72.99
<b>D+</b> 67.0-69.99	<b>D</b> 63.0-63.99	<b>D-</b> 60.0-62.99
<b>F</b> lower than 60.0		

### Late assignments

This course moves fast. Keeping up with deadlines is vital to avoid falling behind. Because assignments build on each other, you need to do them as they are assigned. However, I know sometimes life can interfere with your plans. In almost all grade categories, your lowest grade drops from final grade calculation. This gives you a little space to keep moving forward. Because I drop that lowest grade (including a zero), I use the following late grade policy.

Work that is turned in after the deadline:

- Is reduced by 10 percentage points if turned in one minute to 24 hours late. If an assignment turned in 8 hours late would have earned a 88 percent, the grade assigned will now be a 78 percent.
- More than 24 hours after the deadline, the grade becomes a zero.



## Course schedule

<b>Week</b>	<b>Quiz</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Individual assignment</b>	<b>Team assignment</b>
1		1.1 Introductions	1.2 History of women's sports		
2	0	2.1 Virginia Tech history	2.2 Event brainstorming		2.2 Team formation
3	1	3.1 Title IX history	3.2 Multimedia stories	IS: Story idea	
4	2	4.1 Title IX in universities today	4.2 Team meetings	IS: Proof of sourcing	4.4 Team meetings
5	3	5.1 Stereotypes in sports journalism	5.2 Team meetings	IS: Q&A with one source IS: Multimedia plan	5.2 Team meetings
6	4	6.2 Team reports	6.1 Travis Wells, guest speaker	IS: Complete draft of story	6.2 Team meetings
7	5	7.1 Interrogating sports journalism critically	7.2 One-on-One meetings		
Spring break					
8	6	8.1 Katie Barnes guest speaker	8.2 Team meetings	IS: Multimedia piece	8.2 Team meetings
9	7	9.1 Audiences for women's sports	9.2 Multimedia story peer review	IS: Peer reviews	
10	8	10.1 Masculinity and homophobia in sports journalism	10.2 Team meeting time	IS: Final completed everything	10.2 Team meetings
11	9	11.1 Event planning and story editing	11.2 Event dress rehearsal		



12		12.1 DAY OF EVENT	12.2 Gail Dent, guest speaker		
13	10	13.1 Harassment in sports journalism	13.2 Esports and gender		
14	11	14.1 Current events Part 1	14.2 Current events Part 2		
15	12	15.1 The future			

**\*Schedule is subject to changes, which will be announced in class and on Canvas.**

## #Yourresponsibilities

### Academic integrity

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states:

“As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code.

**Honor Code Pledge for Assignments:** The Virginia Tech honor code pledge for assignments is as follows:

*“I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment.”*

The pledge is to be written out on all graded assignments at the university and signed by the student. The honor pledge represents both an expression of the student’s support of the honor code and a commitment to uphold the academic standards at Virginia Tech.

1. All assignments submitted shall be considered “graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are to be completed individually unless otherwise specified.
2. The Academic Integrity expectations for Hokies are the same in an online class as they are in an in-person class. Hokies are expected to meet the academic integrity standards at Virginia Tech at all times.

3. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute academic misconduct. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct. Clarification is provided for each definition with some examples of prohibited behaviors in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual located at <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>
- o **CHEATING:** Cheating includes the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.
  - o **PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work, or attempts thereof.
  - o **FALSIFICATION:** Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any element of one's academic work, or attempts thereof.
  - o **FABRICATION:** Fabrication includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.
  - o **MULTIPLE SUBMISSION:** Multiple submission involves the submission for credit – without authorization from the instructor receiving the work – of substantial portions of any work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution of attempts thereof.
  - o **COMPLICITY:** Complicity includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct, or attempts thereof.
  - o **VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENTAL, PROGRAM, COURSE, OR FACULTY RULES:** The violation of any University, College, Departmental, Program, Course, or Faculty Rules relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).
  - *“If you have questions or are unclear about what constitutes academic misconduct on an assignment, please speak with me. I take the honor code very seriously in the course. The normal sanction I will recommend for a violation of the Honor Code is an F\* sanction as your final course grade. The F represents failure in the course. The “\*” is intended to identify a student who has failed to uphold the values of academic integrity at Virginia Tech. A student who receives a sanction of F\* as their final course grade shall have it documented on their transcript with the notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION.” You would be required to complete an education program administered by the Honor System in order to have the “\*” and notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION” removed from your transcript. The “F” however would be permanently on your transcript.”*

### **Ethics**

**As a course that will feature completing a journalistic story, I expect you to apply ethical decision making in the creation of your story. As me about any ethical questions. You should also draw on the principles you learned in previous courses, and the SPJ Code of Ethics: <https://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>**

## #Support

### Accommodations:

Accommodation recommendations from the Dean's office for ANY documented learning need (the Dean's office supplies such paperwork) will be honored. Please notify me in person by the second week of class to discuss how I can ensure that you have a comfortable and reasonable learning environment.

Any student who has been confirmed by the University as having accommodations for learning must notify me in person by the second week of class so that we can work together to ensure your learning needs are met. For more information about accommodations, please go to the **Services for Students with Disabilities** office website: <http://www.ssd.vt.edu/>

### Academic Support Services:

Any student needing academic support should investigate the University's services at <http://www.studentsuccess.vt.edu/index.html>

For complete information on student services at Virginia Tech, please see: <http://www.dsa.vt.edu>.

### Inclusion and support

I will honor your request to address you by your chosen name and pronouns. Please advise me of this early in the semester.

I respect and honor your cultural and religious holidays. If you have a religious or cultural observance that will coincide with this class, please let me know in an email or office hour meeting by the start of the third week of classes.

We're having a semester during a pandemic. Things are not normal, and I recognize that.

I want you to feel able to share your life experiences in classroom discussions and written work. I want you to trust that I will keep any information you share private. Please be aware that I do have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as a faculty member. This means I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on campus with the university Title IX Coordinator.

### Wellness

Supporting the mental health and well-being of students in my class is of high priority to me and Virginia Tech. If you are feeling overwhelmed academically, having trouble functioning, or are worried about a friend, please reach out to any of the following offices:

- Cook Counseling:

- o 540-231-6557 to schedule an appointment and/or 24/7 crisis support

- o [ucc.vt.edu](http://ucc.vt.edu) for more information
  - Dean of Students Office:
    - o 540 231-3787 for general advice
    - o 540-231-6411 for after-hours crisis
    - o [dos.vt.edu](http://dos.vt.edu) for more information
  - Hokie Wellness:
    - o [hokiewellness.vt.edu](http://hokiewellness.vt.edu) for more information about health and wellness workshops and consultations
  - Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)
    - o 540-231-3788 or [ssd.vt.edu](http://ssd.vt.edu) for more information about accommodations and other disability-related supports
- For a full listing of campus resources check out [well-being.vt.edu](http://well-being.vt.edu) .