

SPORTS!

Summer Syllabus

Tommy Craggs

This class will be an introduction to sportswriting, as taught by the former editor of the website that put Brett Favre's privates on the internet. If that seems incongruous to you, it will be the purpose of the class to change your mind. We'll read lots of great sportswriting and lots of bad sportswriting, and we'll see, too, how the latter can very often lead to the former. You'll write a lot, and more importantly you'll be edited, hard. You'll take a field trip or two. You'll meet some honest-to-god sportswriters. (Imagine! Standing close enough to the great practitioners of the craft to see the mustard stains on their shirts!)

Course expectations: Don't plagiarize. Don't make stuff up. Don't be stupid. Attendance is a must. Participation and fervent disputation are encouraged. Your grade will be determined on the basis of your written work, which will be a mix of in-class and take-home assignments, plus a final project.

Each week's reporting/writing assignment will be edited at quick turnaround and you need to be prepared to do a rewrite when requested.

Tentative syllabus, subject to complete revision if I come up with some better ideas:

Week 1: Blogging. We'll talk about the advantages and disadvantages of writing about sports from your couch.

Week 2: Beat reporting/statistics. We'll talk about the advantages and disadvantages of writing about sports from a press box. We'll look at statistically informed sportswriting, and the idiotic civil war that erupted a decade or so ago over the rise of analytics.

Week 3: Column writing. How to craft an argument. How not to craft an argument. How not to come off like a dull, sermonizing crank less interested in sports as an entertaining spectacle than as an apparatus of moral justice.

Week 4: Features. We'll dissect some of the great works of sports journalism.

Week 5: Investigations/FOIA. We'll look at the many underutilized tools at an enterprising sportswriter's disposal.

Week 6: Scandal reporting/presentation of final assignments.