

Public Relations & Social Media

SPRT 2060 SECTION A
FALL 2025

Course Information

Course Instructor: Stephanie Coratti
E-mail: scoratti@yorku.ca
Course Day & Time:
Tuesday 9:30am – 12:20pm

Class Location: MK 2055
Office Hours: By appointment only

Course Overview

Course Description

This course critically examines the role of public relations and social media in shaping the sport industry. Students will explore how sport communicate strategies reflect and influence broader social, political, and cultural dynamics. The course investigates how athletes, organizations, and fans construct identity, engage with audiences, and manage reputation in the digital era. Key questions include: How do digital tools reshape the business of sport media? In what ways does sport rely on public relations practices? How can sport itself be understood as a form of public relations? Key themes include media relations, crisis communication, branding, fan engagement, community relations, and the strategic use of public platforms.

Pre-Requisites:

Crosslisted to: AP/CMDS 2060 3.00

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze the function and impact of public relations and social media in sport.
2. Develop PR strategies and communication plans tailored to sport contexts.
3. Understand the ethical considerations of managing athlete and organizational reputations digitally and otherwise.
4. Apply foundational principles of crisis communication and media training.
5. Evaluate and analyze branding, fan interaction, and athlete advocacy.
6. Produce sport-specific content suited for public and media audiences.

Communication Guidelines

The main form of communication with you regarding this course will be through email and eClass. Please be sure that you **regularly check your YorkU email address** for announcements about the course.

Students are encouraged to communicate proactively to ask questions and get personalized help with this course. Email correspondence with Prof. Coratti is acceptable, but students should expect 24-48 hours turn-around time, and email responses will only occur during Mon-Fri business hours. No assignments will be accepted via e-mail.

Following the return of graded assignments, students may contact the marker/grader via email to discuss their grade (see Grade Appeal section for rules regarding this type of communication). The marker/grader will reply to emails within 48 hours.

For all email correspondence, please use your official YorkU email account and include the course code in the subject line. It is expected that the students will always communicate in a professional manner. Emails must include the full name of the student. Anonymous, unsigned, or disrespectful emails will be ignored and reported.

It is expected that you have read this syllabus and understand the information contained within it. Should you email the professor or marker/grader with questions that are answered in this syllabus, expect a response that will redirect you (“Read the syllabus”). Remember, a critical part of Public Relations is effectively informing yourself using materials already provided to you.

Required Course Materials

Required Textbook:

None. The course will focus on real and timely examples on a week-to-week basis for both discussion and analysis.

Required Readings:

Supplementary weekly readings (journal articles, case studies, news coverage) will be posted to the course site.

YorkU Technical Supports

Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., eClass, etc.) where students will interact with the course materials and each other.

Here are some useful links for computing information, resources, and help:

- ❑ [Student Guide to eClass](#)
- ❑ [Zoom@YorkU Best Practices](#)
- ❑ [Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide](#)
- ❑ [eLearning Getting Started \(LA&PS eServices\)](#)
- ❑ [Student Guide to Remote and Online Learning](#)

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as [Speedtest](#), that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the [University Information Technology \(UIT\) Student Services](#) web page or write to askit@yorku.ca.

Course Evaluations

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %
Personal Reflection – Sport, Social Media, and You	September 15 @ 11:59pm	5%
Online Quizzes	Quiz 1 – September 30 @ 11:59pm Quiz 2 – October 21 @ 11:59pm Quiz 3 – November 11 @ 11:59pm Quiz 4 – November 25 @ 11:59pm	30%
Communication Campaign	November 4 @ 11:59pm	25%
Personal Reflection – Looking Back, Looking Forward	November 18 @ 11:59pm	5%
Press Conference Simulation	Press Materials – November 24 @ 11:59pm Press Conference Simulation – December 2 (IN-CLASS)	25%
Participation & Weekly Engagement	Ongoing and assigned in class	10%
TOTAL		100%

Assessment Descriptions

Personal Reflection – Sport, Social Media, and You (5%)

Before getting started with tools and strategies, this assignment asks you to reflect on your own experiences, interests, and observations related to the course themes. Prompts are provided to help guide your reflection and writing.

Online Quizzes (30%)

Throughout the term students will be quizzed on course content (i.e., lecture, guest speakers, readings). These quizzes will be open book as they will be conducted online through eClass. Each quiz will be open for a period of time to allow for some flexibility but will be timed once a student starts and you will only be allowed one attempt. The student's best three of four grades will be counted.

The quizzes will cover the learning material from the following units:

- ☐ Quiz 1: Weeks 1, 2, 3
- ☐ Quiz 2: Weeks 4, 5
- ☐ Quiz 3: Weeks 6, 7, 8
- ☐ Quiz 4: 9, 10

The quizzes are an individual assessment and should be written without the assistance of your classmates.

Communication Campaign (25%)

In this individual assignment, you are a communication strategist tasked with developing a focused public relations and social media campaign for a sport entity of your choice. This could be a professional or junior team, athlete, league, brand, or event. The catch: the campaign must use an idea that is hypothetical and/or the opposite of a real-life strategy previously used (i.e.: illustrate how would you do things differently).

Your campaign must demonstrate a clear understanding of branding, storytelling, media strategy, and audience engagement. This assignment simulates the kind of planning, strategic thinking, and communication work you might complete in a real-world PR role.

Personal Reflection – Sport, Social Media, and You (5%)

As the course comes to a close, this reflection asks students to look back on the learning and engagement throughout the class, while also looking ahead to how the knowledge

may be applied in the future in academic, professional, and personal lives. This is a chance for students to pause and recognize the growth and developing perspective.

Participation & Weekly Engagement (10%)

Public relations is a dynamic and evolving field that requires an understanding of diverse perspectives, cultural context, and fast decision-making. Each week, the class will engage in discussion, critical analysis, and open dialogue around current topics in the sport space. These conversations are designed to help you navigate the complexities of sport PR, where there is rarely one “right” answer.

In addition to participation and engagement, this course will also feature other smaller assignments that will be incorporated in this grade, including submission opportunities (e.g.: preparing as a participating journalist for the final Press Conference Simulation). No extensions or late marks will be provided on classroom submissions. Students who miss submissions will be given a zero (0) on that assignment.

Press Conference Simulation (30%)

In this final assignment, students will work in groups to plan and deliver a simulated live press conference on behalf of a sport organization, athlete, or governing body. The scenario may involve a major announcement, launch, or crisis response. Groups must prepare as if they are a communications team addressing the media. Meanwhile, fellow classmates will act as journalists, preparing and asking questions based on pre-circulated press materials.

- Part 1 requires each group to submit a Press Kit to Professor and class a week prior to the live Press Conference Simulation. The class will have a dedicated Workshop to review materials and prepare from a journalist’s perspective.
- Part 2 requires each group to present and participate in a mini-press conference as if addressing real media. All group members are expected to participate as either a spokesperson, athlete, coach, or executive. The class (as journalists) will then have dedicated time to ask questions.

All instructions for assignments will be posted on eClass and discussed in class.

Late Work Policy

Assignments are due on the day and time noted in the assignment instructions. 10% will be immediately deducted if assignments are not submitted at the time of the dropbox closing. An additional 10% will be deducted each day (i.e., every 24 hours) — including weekends — until the assignment is submitted. Assignments will not be accepted after five (5) days (including weekends) have passed since the due date.

If a student is experiencing a personal situation that may warrant an extension, they must communicate with the instructor **in advance of the deadline. Examples of legitimate personal situations that may warrant an extension on an assignment include:**

- Incapacitating illness;
- Death in the family;
- Accommodations for religious observances – see YorkU policy below

Examples of UNACCEPTABLE reasons for missing a due date include:

- ☐ Vacations;
- ☐ Varsity sports practices;
- ☐ Work/volunteer schedules;
- ☐ Student's forgetfulness or carelessness in planning their schedule;
- ☐ Multiple assessments taking place on the same day.

Missed Tests and Exams

Students are strongly urged not to make any commitments (e.g., travel or vacations) during the examination period as unforeseen circumstances can result in exams being rescheduled. Consequently, students are required to be available for examinations during the examination periods of all terms in which they register.

Please review York University's [deferred standing policy](#) if students believe they will not be able to complete the final exam.

Grade Appeals

Any problems associated with your graded work (grading error, missing graded assignment) **must be brought to the attention of the teaching team (Prof. Coratti and marker/grader) within one week after graded material has been returned**. Otherwise, the teaching team will not be able to negotiate an alternate arrangement with you. Therefore, stay on top of things, monitor your work, and make sure to inform the teaching team immediately if there are perceived problems.

The teaching team will not entertain any end of semester negotiations about grades. However, the teaching team will support you in every way possible during the semester to ensure that you perform to the best of your ability as long as you communicate any difficulties or concerns with the material with the professor. Therefore, it is recommended that you take full advantage of the opportunities to communicate with

your professor to ensure your success. Your grade in the course is a direct reflection of your engagement in your own learning process.

How to Use Citations in this Course

This course and the discipline of sport management relies on APA formatting for citations. It is recommended that students acquire the APA manual and/or use the on-campus resources noted below.

APA. (2020). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, (7th ed.). This is the standard publication manual for APA formatting and will serve as an excellent resource throughout your studies. It is available at the bookstore and a copy is on reserve at the library.

Resources to help with citations:

- [I need to cite and reference, Learning Commons](#)
- [Drop-in Research Support](#), YorkU Libraries
- [Writing Centre](#)
- [SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit](#)

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University [Academic Calendar](#).

Grade	Grade Point	Percent Range	Description
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional
A	8	80-89	Excellent
B+	7	75-79	Very Good
B	6	70-74	Good
C+	5	65-69	Competent
C	4	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55-59	Passing
D	2	50-54	Marginally Passing

Grade	Grade Point	Percent Range	Description
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

Course Schedule

Important Dates

- ☐ October 11-17, 2025 – Fall Reading Week
- ☐ November 4, 2025 – Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade
- ☐ December 2, 2025 – Last day of fall classes
- ☐ December 3, 2025 – Fall study day
- ☐ December 4, 2025 – Exam period begins

Explore the York University [Academic Calendar](#) to find a list of important dates, such as class start/end dates, drop deadlines, holidays and more.

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Topic(s)	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates
Week 1 Sept. 9	<input type="checkbox"/> Course Overview <input type="checkbox"/> Introduction to Public Relations & Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Key Terms & Fundamentals		Assigned: Personal Reflection – Sport, Social Media, and You (Due: Sept. 15 @ 11:59pm)
Week 2 Sept. 16	<input type="checkbox"/> History and Foundations of Sport Public Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Evolving Digital Landscape <input type="checkbox"/> Sport as public spectacle and institution		Due: Personal Reflection – Sport, Social Media, and You (Sept. 15 @ 11:59pm)

Week	Topic(s)	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates
Week 3 Sept. 23	<input type="checkbox"/> Storytelling and Branding in Sport: Athlete and Organizational Identity		Assigned: Communication Campaign (Due: Nov. 4 @ 11:59pm)
Week 4 Sept. 30	<input type="checkbox"/> The PR Function in Sport Organizations: Internal vs. External Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Media Relations <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Relations		Quiz #1 – Sept. 30 @ 11:59pm
Week 5 Oct. 7	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategic Communication & Planning: Message Development, Timing, Audience Segmentation		Assigned: Press Conference Simulation (Press Materials due Nov. 24 @ 11:59pm; Simulations IN-CLASS Dec. 2)
Reading Week Oct 11-17			
Week 6 Oct. 21	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Relations: Fan Engagement and Community Building		Quiz #2 – Oct. 21 @ 11:59pm
Week 7 Oct. 28	<input type="checkbox"/> Media Training and Interview Skills		
Week 8 Nov. 4	<input type="checkbox"/> Crisis Communication in Sport: Case studies in missteps, apologies, recoveries		Due: Communication Campaign (Nov. 4 @ 11:59pm)
Week 9 Nov. 11	<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy and Athlete Activism: Power, politics, and using platforms for change <input type="checkbox"/> Legal and Ethical Considerations: Privacy, Misinformation, Cancel Culture, NIL Rights		Quiz #3 – Nov. 11 @ 11:59pm Assigned: Personal Reflection – Looking Back, Looking Forward (Due Nov. 18 @ 11:59pm)

Week	Topic(s)	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates
Week 10 Nov. 18	<input type="checkbox"/> Measuring Impact: Analytics, engagement metrics, and evaluation strategies <input type="checkbox"/> Disruptions & Innovations		Due: Personal Reflection – Looking Back, Looking Forward (Nov. 18 @ 11:59pm)
Week 11 Nov. 25	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop – Review Press Materials and develop line of questioning for Press Conference Simulations (Dec. 2)		Due: Press Conference Simulation – Press Materials (Nov. 24 @ 11:59pm) Quiz #4 – Nov. 25 @ 11:59pm
Week 12 Dec. 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Press Conference Simulations <input type="checkbox"/> Course Wrap Up		Due: Press Conference Simulations – IN-CLASS (Dec. 2)

***Please note that the course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.**

****All students are responsible for accessing any additional reading content noted by the professor through the library unless otherwise directed.**

Course Policies

Please review the course policies in this section. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:

- ☐ [Student Rights & Responsibilities](#)
- ☐ [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#)

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. As a York student, you are responsible for understanding and upholding academic integrity by

completing your own work. Connect with reliable [on-campus resources](#) that can support your work in ways that uphold academic honesty values of honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility, and courage. To better understand the serious consequences of breaching academic honesty policies, familiarize yourself with the [Academic Conduct Policy and Procedures](#). You can learn more about upholding academic integrity in your courses by exploring the [Guiding Principles for LA&PS](#) webpage.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created (in whole or part) through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's [Senate Policy on Academic Honesty](#). Using AI apps such as ChatGPT, GPT-3, DALL-E, translation software among others to complete academic work **without your instructor's knowledge or permission**, is a breach of academic honesty. For more information, please review [AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students](#).

If you're not sure whether using an AI app for your academic work is acceptable, it is recommended that you:

- ❑ Carefully review the guidelines for your assessments
- ❑ Check for any messages from your instructor on eClass
- ❑ Ask your instructor or TA if they are permitting the use of these tools

Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin (via the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website. York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Accessibility

York University is committed to creating a learning environment which provides equal opportunity to all members of its community. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with your instructor as early as possible. For students with disabilities, contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) to

coordinate academic accommodations and services. Accommodations will be communicated to Course Directors through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and making reasonable and appropriate [accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance](#). Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a [Religious Accommodation for Examination Form](#) at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's [Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#), [Academic Integrity](#), and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Student Support and Resources

York University offers a wide range of student supports resources and services, including everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- [Academic Advising](#) is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- [Student Accessibility Services](#) are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.

- [Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing](#) offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- [Peer-Assisted Study Sessions \(PASS\) Program](#) provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- [Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele \(SNACK\)](#) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- [The Writing Centre](#) provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- [Centre for Indigenous Student Services](#) offers a community space with academic, spiritual, cultural, and physical support, including writing and learning skills programs.
- [ESL Open Learning Centre \(OLC\)](#) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- [Learning Skills Services](#) provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- [Learning Commons](#) provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- [Roadmap to Student Success](#) provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- [Office of Student Community Relations \(OSCR\)](#) is responsible for administering the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) and provides critical incident support.
- [Peer Mentorship](#) helps students transition through their first year by connecting them with upper-year students. The mentors can help find supports and resources. They also lead a community hub on campus.
- [goSAFE](#) is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit [Student Support & Resources](#).