

Public Relations & Social Media

SPRT 2060 SECTION A
FALL 2026

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 communication 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.

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 %
Sport, Social Media, & You – Your Sport Media Audit	September 22 @ 11:59pm	5%
Newsroom Challenges (Each challenge – 3.75%)	Challenge #1 – October 6 Challenge #2 – October 27 Challenge #3 – November 10 Challenge #4 – November 17	15%
Online Quizzes – Best 3 of 4 (Each counted quiz – 5%)	Quiz 1 – October 6 @ 11:59pm Quiz 2 – October 27 @ 11:59pm Quiz 3 – November 17 @ 11:59pm Quiz 4 – December 1 @ 11:59pm	15%
Integrated Sport Communication Campaign	November 10 @ 11:59pm	25%
Capstone: Sport Communications Media Day	Media Kit – November 30 @ 11:59pm Media Day – December 8 (IN-CLASS)	30%
Participation & Current Issues Engagement	Ongoing and assigned in class	10%

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %
TOTAL		100%

Assessment Descriptions

Your Sport Media Audit: Sport, Social Media & You (5%)

Before getting started with tools and strategies, this assignment asks you to reflect on your own relationship with sport, media, and social media while also taking a closer look at how sport content reaches and influences you. Students will complete a short personal reflection and media audit, examining the types of sport content they encounter, who is creating it, which platforms are being used, and what captures their attention. Prompts will guide students in connecting their own experiences and observations to key course themes such as audience, storytelling, branding, reputation, and digital communication.

Newsroom Challenges (15%)

Throughout the semester, students will complete four short, in-class Newsroom Challenges designed to simulate the fast-paced, practical nature of working in sport communications. Each challenge will ask students to apply course concepts to a realistic scenario, such as developing media materials, adapting content for social platforms, preparing key messages and responses for a spokesperson, or managing the first stages of a developing issue or crisis. These exercises are designed to build professional communication skills, strategic thinking, sound judgment, and the ability to work effectively under deadline.

Online Quizzes (15%)

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 – October 6: Weeks 1, 2, 3
- Quiz 2 – October 27: Weeks 4 & 5

- Quiz 3 – November 17: Weeks 6, 7, 8
- Quiz 4 – December 1: Weeks 9 & 10

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

Integrated Sport Communication Campaign (25%)

In this individual assignment, students will act as communication strategists responsible for developing an integrated public relations and social media campaign for a sport entity of their choice. This could include a professional or junior team, athlete, league, brand, event, governing body, or other sport organization.

Students will identify a specific communications opportunity or challenge and develop a strategy designed to address it. The campaign should clearly define the target audience, communications objectives, key messages, strategic approach, recommended channels and tactics, and measures of success. Students will also create sample communication materials that demonstrate how the campaign would be executed in practice.

The assignment is designed to simulate the planning, strategic thinking, content development, and decision-making required in a real-world sport communications role.

Participation & Current Issues Engagement (10%)

Public relations and social media are dynamic, fast-moving fields that require students to consider different perspectives, changing cultural contexts, and often make decisions without a single “right” answer. Throughout the semester, students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, case studies, practical exercises, and analysis of current issues in the sport industry.

Engagement will focus on applying course concepts to real-world situations, contributing thoughtfully to discussion, and demonstrating professional preparation and judgment. This component may also include smaller in-class submissions or activities, such as case responses, discussion exercises, and preparation as a participating journalist for the final Sport Communications Media Day.

Because these activities are designed to reflect the real-time and collaborative nature of professional communications work, no extensions or late submissions will be accepted for in-class activities. Students who are absent for a graded in-class submission will receive a zero (0) for that component.

Capstone: Sport Communications Media Day (30%)

In this final group assignment, students will operate as the communications team for a sport organization, athlete, league, or governing body and take part in a simulated live media day. Each group will be assigned a realistic scenario that may involve a major announcement, organizational issue, controversy, or crisis response. Students will be expected to prepare strategically, develop clear key messages, and respond professionally to media questions in real time.

Classmates will participate as journalists, using pre-circulated press materials to research the scenario, develop questions, and approach the media day from the perspective of an assigned outlet or reporter role.

- **Part 1 – Media Kit:** Each group will prepare and submit a professional media kit in advance of Media Day. Materials may include a news release, media advisory, background information, key messages, anticipated Q&A, social media content, and other relevant communications materials. A dedicated in-class workshop will allow students to review the materials and prepare from both the communications and journalist perspectives.
- **Part 2 – Live Media Day:** Each group will conduct a simulated press conference, with members participating in appropriate roles such as communications lead, executive, athlete, coach, or other spokesperson. Following opening remarks, participating journalists will ask questions based on the scenario and press materials. Groups should be prepared to manage difficult questions and adapt their messaging as the situation develops.

To reflect the unpredictable nature of real-world sport communications, groups may also receive new or unexpected information shortly before or during the simulation and will be expected to adjust their approach accordingly.

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
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

Course Schedule

Important Dates

- October 10-16, 2026 – Fall Reading Week
- November 10, 2026 – Drop deadline: Last date to drop a course without receiving a grade
- December 8, 2026 – Last day of fall classes
- December 9, 2026 – Fall study day
- December 10, 2026 – 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. 15	• Welcome to Sport PR • Course Overview & Expectations • What is Sport PR? • Key Terms & Fundamentals • Who controls the sport story today?		Assigned: Sport, Social Media and You – Media Audit (Due: Sept. 22 @ 11:59pm)
Week 2 Sept. 22	• The Sport Media & Communications Ecosystem • Evolution of Sport Media – History and Foundations of Sport Public Relations • Evolving Digital Landscape • Sport as public spectacle and institution		Due: Sport, Social Media and You – Media Audit (Sept. 22 @ 11:59pm)
Week 3 Sept. 29	• Brand, Storytelling, & Identity in Sport • Storytelling and Branding in Sport: Athlete and Organizational Identity		Assigned: Integrated Sport Communication Campaign (Due: Nov. 10 @ 11:59pm)

Week	Topic(s)	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates
Week 4 Oct. 6	• Media Relations: Getting the Story Told • The PR Function in Sport Organizations: Internal vs. External Communications • Media Relations • Stakeholder Relations	NEWSROOM CHALLENGE #1 (IN CLASS) – The Media Desk	Quiz #1 – Oct. 6 @ 11:59pm (Covers Week 1, 2, & 3)
Reading Week – October 10-16			
Week 5 Oct. 20	• Strategic Communications: Start with the Why • Planning: Message Development, Timing, Audience Segmentation		Assigned: Capstone – Sport Communications Media Day (Media Kit due Nov. 30 @ 11:59pm; Media Day IN-CLASS Dec. 8)
Week 6 Oct. 27	• Social Media Strategy & Content in Sport • Platforms, Content pillars, social voice, content calendars, fan generated content • Reactive vs. Planned content	NEWSROOM CHALLENGE #2 (IN CLASS) – The Social Desk	Quiz #2 – Oct. 27 @ 11:59pm (Covers Week 4 & 5)
Week 7 Nov. 3	• Community Relations, Fan Engagement & Stakeholders • Community relations as strategic PR • Community investment and fans as stakeholders • Cause marketing • Sponsors and community partnerships		

Week	Topic(s)	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates
Week 8 Nov. 10	• Media Training & Interview Skills • Message discipline • Key messages and proof points • Interview preparation • Bridging & flagging • Issues & Crisis Communication • Crisis response • Speed vs. Accuracy • Recovery	NEWSROOM CHALLENGE #3 (IN CLASS) – Behind the Microphone	Due: Integrated Sport Communication Campaign (Nov. 10 @ 11:59pm)
Week 9 Nov. 17	• Athletes, Advocacy, Ethics, and Digital Reputation • Athlete Activism: Power, politics, and using platforms for change • Legal and Ethical Considerations: Privacy, Misinformation, Cancel Culture, NIL, AI	NEWSROOM CHALLENGE #4 (IN CLASS) – The First Hour	Quiz #3 – Nov. 17 @ 11:59pm (Covers Week 6, 7, & 8)
Week 10 Nov. 24	• Integrated Communications & Measurement • Measuring Impact: Analytics, engagement metrics, and evaluation strategies • Disruptions & Innovations • Bringing PR, social, community, and media together • KPIs • Outputs vs. Outcomes		

Week	Topic(s)	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates
Week 11 Dec. 1	Workshop – Review Media Kits and develop line of questioning for Media Day (Dec. 8)		Due: Sport Communications Media Day – Media Kit (Nov. 30 @ 11:59pm) Quiz #4 – Dec. 1 @ 11:59pm (Covers Week 9 & 10)
Week 12 Dec. 8	- Capstone: Sport Communications Media Day - Course Wrap Up		Due: Media Day – IN-CLASS (Dec. 8)

***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](#).