

What If I Told You?: The World through ESPN Films

(FYW 1256 – 01)

Spring 2020

Classroom: Johns Hall 106G
Class Hours: TR; 10:00 - 11:15 PM

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Office Hours: Monday 11:00 – 12:00; Thursday 11:30 – 12:30; **By Appointment

Goals of the Class

“Writing and Learning and Thinking are the SAME Process” – William Zinsser

“Trust `The Process`” – Nick Saban

So, what’s this class about? Writing. Okay, but what’s the class really about? Writing. No, but seriously what’s the class about? Writing.

The Furman First Year Seminar program may be one of the trickier components for first year students to figure out. What exactly are these classes? How do you pick them? What are they meant to do? How are they different from all other classes? Why do I have to take one? While all these questions are definitely valid, the real purpose of this program is quite simple, it’s about writing. More specifically, it’s about the writing process. And more elaborately, it’s about developing as a scholar through the writing process.

Thus, the goal of this class is directly in line with the overall program objective: to help you learn and improve your own writing process. Notice, the goal is not to become a “better writer.” That is a vague and inherently opaque goal. I have no idea what it means to be a better writer. And I’m actually quite certain there’s no such thing because it suggests that writing is a property of a person, and if that were true then it would be very difficult or perhaps impossible to change or improve one’s writing. People are not inherently better or worse writers because (if it has not sunk in yet, we should be getting close) writing is a process – an action.

That is not to say that there is not such a thing as better or worse *writing*, but that is quite different than better or worse *writers*. Writing as an action is something that can be studied, examined and evaluated. And not just the final product, but, much like the final score of a basketball game or the overall record of a soccer team, we can break down all of the components that produced the final piece of writing to analyze how each contributed to its effectiveness (or lack thereof). The goal of this type of investigation is to then apply what we have learned to make changes in our own pieces of the writing process so that we can create the type of writing that we set out to generate whenever we feel compelled to put our thoughts on paper, for whatever that purpose may be.

Oh, and this class has the added bonus of getting to talk about some pretty fascinating sports topics while we tackle this beast of an opponent that is the writing process.

Skills to be Achieved

I hope you will walk away with new/improved skills that you can directly apply to everyday discussions/debates, future classes, personal research, and your life.

1. Know and use all of the steps involved in the writing process.
2. Recognize and use an understanding of the “Writer’s Triangle” when constructing a written piece.
3. Be able to identify an author’s or filmmaker’s arguments about social issues.
4. Be able to appreciate and learn from the views of others as well as understanding the limitations of one’s own perspective.
5. Actively collaborate with peers to gain a deeper understanding of academic arguments.

Rules of the Game

There are three guidelines for this to be a successful class. The instructor will act as the head referee and reserves the right to throw a flag anytime any regulation has been violated.

1. Be Actively Engaged

- Be fully prepared for each and every class session. Do the required reading and out-of-class assignments to the best of your abilities.
- During discussions and activities (which will be a major portion of this class) the whole class will benefit if every student enthusiastically contributes.

2. Respect

- Your classmates/instructors time. Class will start and end on time (please do not walk in late and Do Not Pack Up Early). Also see rule 1 above.
- No cell phones out in class. Let me know if you have emergency.
- Classmates’ perspectives – Listen First, Think Second, Talk Third.

3. I’m the Coach but It’s YOUR Game

- My role is to efficiently guide the class through the issues and debates in the field. It is OUR responsibility as a class to fully examine and develop comprehensive resolutions to these problems.
- The More You Put In – The More You’ll Take Away

Academic Integrity

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the rules and regulations regarding academic integrity outlined in the *Furman Helmsman*. I will not tolerate academic dishonesty. This policy is a long and valuable tradition at Furman -- protect it. You will find a link to the integrity policy on our course web page.

Academic Accommodation

Students who need academic accommodation for documented disabilities should contact the Student Office of Accessibility Resources at 294-2302 or soar@furman.edu. Please do this early in the term and contact me soon afterwards. I am happy to meet your educational needs; however, I need as much time as possible to offer you the accommodation you are eligible to receive.

Attendance

Achieving our class and individual goals requires consistent daily attendance. The Exploratory Writing Assignments, which is one of the largest portions of your grade, **require attendance**.

If you know you'll be out of town and have to miss a class, please let me know **ahead** of time. If a family emergency comes up, please let me know.

Teams

A major portion of the course involves learning to help each other's understanding through collaborative teams. Throughout the course you will spend time working with your classmates to address and understand the key questions of the day.

The Playbook

Williams, Joseph M. and Joseph Bizup. 2017. Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace, 12th Edition. Boston, MA: Pearson. (Available in the Student Store) [Here on denoted **Style**]

{*RECOMMENDED*} Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. 2014. They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing. New York: W. W. Norton.

All other assigned readings will be posted on Moodle and should be completed **BEFORE** the class on which they are assigned and brought to class on the day for which they are assigned. [Here on denoted **MDL**]

Keeping Score

Your course grade is based upon the following:

1. **Exploratory Writes:** Most classes will involve some type of writing. Many of these pieces will be ways for you to expand and explore various aspects of the topics we are covering in class. Often they will be used to help you prepare for longer writing projects. Some of these assignments will need to be completed before class, others will be done during class. Some of these writings will be graded for content, others just for completion.
2. **Process Papers:** You will complete 3 “process” papers to focus on specific writing skills. These will be longer than the exploratory writing assignments but shorter than the final paper. The specific assignment and grading criteria used for each assignment will be posted with the release of the paper guidelines.
3. **Final Written Documentary:** The final project for this class will be a research-based paper. More details of this project will be discussed later, but for now it will be helpful to start considering the topic you may pursue. The overall goal of this final project is to create a “written documentary” that follows loosely along the framework of a *30 for 30* film. You will need to choose a sports topic that connects with a key social issue and conceive of an argument to make in terms of this intersection. Your paper will need to be supported by research to make its case and overall conclusions. There will be several component assignments throughout the term that will help you build up to this final paper.
4. **Class Contribution:** It is vital for the success of this class that everyone is fully prepared and actively participates in each class. This portion of your grade will be based on your attendance, being fully prepared, and active contribution to each class. I also reserve the right to include in-class “reading checks” as a part of this component, as necessary.

<u>Components of your Grade:</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Exploratory Writing	35	
Process Papers	40	[2/20; 3/24; 4/14]
Final Paper*	20	[5/4]
Class Contribution	5	
Total	100%	

*Note: A portion of this overall grade will come from the component assignments that are completed before the Final paper.

Grading Scale

I do not grade on a curve. At the end of the term, you will receive a letter grade, based on the following scale:

A	=	90-100	C	=	73-76
B+	=	87-89	C-	=	70-72
B	=	83-86	D+	=	67-69
B-	=	80-82	D	=	60-66
C+	=	77-79	F	=	<60

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

(Always check the Moodle page for a day's assignment, as they are subject to change.)

Reading Schedule

January 14th (Tuesday)

Introduction to Each Other & The Course

Question: Seriously, sports?

Goal: Understand the course goals and requirements.

January 16th (Thursday)

Sport as a Lens for Social Issues

Question: What is the sociological imagination? What does sociology force people to consider? How does this perspective help us understand grammatical "rules?"

Reading: [MDL] Mills, C. Wright. From The Sociological Imagination. Pgs. 13 – 18.

[Style] Lesson 1: Understanding Style; Lesson 2: Correctness. Pgs. 2 – 26.

Film: I Am Yup'ik: ESPN 30 for 30 Short.

<http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=14832535>

WEEK 2 Film: *The Marinovich Project*

January 21st (Tuesday)

Parents' Rules and the Moral Socialization of Youth

Question: What impact do the rules of Little League have on the development of the children involved? How are parents shaped by and shape the lessons Little League imparts to adolescents? What are the specific morals of Little League and how they transmitted to the participants? How do the boys know what is appropriate behavior? What does Fine argue the boys "really" learn? How do we see the concepts Fine notes in Todd Marinovich's story?

Reading: [MDL] Fine, Gary Alan. With the Boys, Pgs. 25 – 40; 59 – 78.

January 23rd (Thursday)

Writing Process: “Somebody Needs to do Something”

Question: How is Danny’s story similar to and different from Marinovich’s? What should be the driving pattern of all sentences? Why does this pattern increase clarity in your writing?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 3: Actions. Pgs. 28 – 45.

Film: Kid Danny: ESPN 30 for 30 Short.

<http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=11311860>

Week 3 Film: *Branded (IX for IX)*

January 28th (Tuesday)

Creating and Reifying Gender Through Sports

Question: What does it mean to be a “female” athlete? How do sports create, maintain, exacerbate, or contradict the social construction of gender? What bind do many female athletes find themselves in? What has created this bind? How can they fight against it? How has the meaning of being a female athlete changed over time?

Reading: [MDL] Cahn, Susan K. Coming on Strong, pp. 1-6

[MDL] Shapiro, Samantha. 2012. “Caught in the Middle.” *ESPN the Magazine*.

[MDL] Ryan, Joan. 1995. Little Girls in Pretty Boxes, pp. 1 – 15.

January 30th (Thursday)

Writing Process: Filling in the X’s and O’s

Question: What is the “character” in a sentence? How do you make sure it is the central agent in a sentence? How does this process enhance the clarity of your writing?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 4: Characters. Pgs. 46 – 63.

Week 4 Film: *Let Them Wear Towels (IX for IX)*

February 4th (Tuesday)

Sport as a Gendered Institution

Question: How is gender inequality perpetuated at the institutional level? What is the glass escalator and the glass ceiling? What particular aspects about sports make these barriers even more difficult to overcome? How could this inequality be changed?

Reading: [MDL] Williams, Christine. "Still a Man's World: Men Who Do 'Women's Work.'" Pgs. 408 – 417.

February 6th (Thursday)

Writing Process: More than a Sum of its Parts

Question: What are the key strategies to keep in mind when starting to put sentences together? What is the difference between cohesion and coherence? How can you construct your combinations of sentences to achieve both?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 5: Cohesion and Coherence. Pgs. 64 – 78.

Week 5 Film: *Ghosts of Ole Miss*

February 11th (Tuesday)

The Creation and Meaning of Race

Question: What does it mean to be Black in the United States? How has this meaning changed over time? How have sports played a role in this change? How has it provided opportunities? How have sports presented barriers? What does this process tell us about the overall meaning of race?

Reading: [MDL] Bissinger, H. 1990 Friday Night Lights. "Black and White" Pgs. 89 - 110.

[MDL] Walton, Anthony. My Secret Life as a Black Man. Pgs. 198 – 203.

February 13th (Thursday)

Writing Process: Identify Your Opponent

Question: According to Graf and Birkstein what is the key in establishing the purpose/motivation for any piece of writing? To accomplish this strategy what steps must you accomplish first?

Reading: [MDL] Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. 2014. They Say, I Say. Pgs. 1 – 10; 19 – 41.

Week 6 Film: *Youngstown Boys*

February 18th (Tuesday)

Social Structures and the Consequences of Race

Question: How does Wilson explain the creation and maintenance of racial inequality in the United States? How do these factors relate to the culture of poverty? What are its effects? How does Anderson's study illustrate Wilson's argument? According to Massey and Denton, how did racial segregation occur, and what consequences has it had? How is Massey and Denton's explanation of the causes of racial inequality similar and different from Wilson's? How does Maurice Clarett's life support these theories?

Reading: [MDL] Wilson, William Julius. "Jobless Poverty." Pgs. 651–659.

[MDL] Massey and Denton. "American Apartheid."

{Strongly Recommended}[MDL] Anderson, Elijah. "The Code of the Streets." Pgs. 109 – 121.

February 20th (Thursday)

Writing Process: Game Prep

Goals: Learn how to effectively conduct academic research. Become familiar with different resources the library offers. Be able to recognize and assess the advantages and disadvantages of different sources based on the needs of a given project.

Reading:

Process Paper #1 DUE

Week 7 Film: *I Hate Christian Laettner (can stop at "Greatness" section)*

February 25th (Tuesday)

Identity and the Creation of the Other

Question: What are the possible explanations for why humans hate? How is hate a social or group level process? How would each of these different theories on hate explain the hatred of Christian Laettner?

Reading: [MDL] Sternberg, Robert J. and Karin Sternberg. 2008. The Nature of Hate. Pgs. 16 – 21; 26 – 38.

[MDL] Taylor, D. M. and Moghaddam, F.M. 1994. "Social Identity Theory." In *Theories of Intergroup Relations, 2nd Edition*. Pgs. 77 – 85.

February 27th (Thursday)

Writing Process: Paring Down the Playbook

Question: Why is concision a desirable goal in writing? Why is it difficult to achieve? What specific strategies can you employ to improve the concision in your writing?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 9: Concision. Pgs. 122 – 136.

Week 8 Film: *The U*

March 3rd (Tuesday)

Students Athletes, Athlete Students, and Plain Old Students

Question: Why are athletics sponsored by colleges? How do universities as institutions handle the balance between athletics and academics? How do individuals (both students and staff) handle this balance? How do athletics contribute or minimize the academic mission of non-athlete students?

Reading: [MDL] Yost, Mark. Varsity Green. Introduction and Chapter 1.

[MDL] Kane, Dan and Jan Stancill. 2014. “Fake-class Scheme Aided UNC Players’ Eligibility, Wainstein Report Says.” *Raleigh News & Observer*.

<http://www.newsobserver.com/2014/10/22/4256604/fake-class-scheme-aided-unc-players.html>

March 5th (Thursday)

Writing Process: The Penalty Box of Ethics

Goal: Understand why plagiarism is harmful. Learn what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

*Reading: [MDL] Yoder, Matt. 2012. “ESPN, Bruce Feldman Source Controversy.” *The Huffington Post*.*

March 10th (Tuesday)

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

March 12th (Thursday)

NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

Week 9 Film: *Pony Excess*

March 17th (Tuesday)

You Can't Leave College Behind

Question: How are big time athletic boosters shaping college athletics? How is this influence different from that of corporations? How do universities manage the influence and power of big time boosters? In what ways has this process played out at Furman?

Reading: [MDL] Yost, Mark. Varsity Green. Chapters 6 and 8.

March 19th (Thursday)

Writing Process: Spike but Don't Celebrate

Question: What is "emphasis" in writing? How can you create emphasis in your writing? How do you do so at the sentence level? How do you do so at the paragraph level?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 6: Emphasis. Pgs. 79 – 92.

Week 10 Film: *The Two Escobars*

March 24th (Tuesday)

Who and What is Deviant?

Question: According to Conflict Theory how does something come to be defined as deviant? If this theory is correct, who is most susceptible to be labelled as deviant? How do we support for this perspective through the Columbian and Brazilian soccer examples?

Reading: [MDL] Quinney, Richard. Social Power: Conflict Theory of Crime. Pgs. 53 – 58.

[MDL] Foer, Franklin. 2004. "The Survival of the Top Hats." In How Soccer Explains the World. Pgs. 115 – 140.

Process Paper #2 DUE

March 26th (Thursday)

Writing Process: Defining a Purpose

Question: Where should the motivation for your writing be defined? What are the methods for establishing this motivation? How can the Conclusion help clarify the motivation?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 7: Motivation. Pgs. 94 – 108.

Week 11 Film: *No Crossover*

March 31st (Tuesday)

A Life on the Run

Question: How did Michael's neighborhood socialize him? What were structural constraints that he faced because of his neighborhood? How does his story fit or contradict Goffman's research? How does the Tuohy's intervention in Michael's police situation actually further support Goffman? How is the Tuohy's proposed solution positive and how is it limited (i.e., why are they not thinking sociologically)?

*Reading: [MDL] Goffman, Alice. 2009. "On the Run: Wanted Men in a Philadelphia Ghetto." *American Sociological Review* 47: 339 – 357.*

{Strongly Recommended}[MDL] Lewis, Michael. The Blind Side. Pgs 261 – 282.

April 2nd (Thursday)

Writing Process: Identify and Attack Their Weakness

Question: Once you have identified and clarified the argument you are addressing in your writing, how can you respond? What the advantages and disadvantages with each tactic? How can you minimize some of these potential concerns?

Reading: [MDL] Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. 2014. They Say, I Say. Pgs. 55 – 67; 78 – 101.

Week 12 Film: *Fantastic Lies*

April 7th (Tuesday)

NO CLASS - FURMAN ENGAGED

April 9th (Thursday)

Causing Change: Social Movements and the Media

Question: What is a social movement? What "tools" does a social movement need to be successful? How do they access and use these tools? What types of movements were involved in the Allen Iverson case? The Duke Lacrosse case? How were these movements similar and different? How were there cultural resources different? How did this contribute to their effectiveness?

*Reading: [MDL] Williams, Rhys. 1995. "Constructing the Public Good: Social Movements and Cultural Resources." *Social Problems*. Pp. 124 – 129.*

[MDL] Rabinowitz, Dorothy. 2014. "A Dishonest Rewrite of the Duke Lacrosse Case." *The Wall Street Journal*.

Week 13 Film: *Who Killed the USFL?*

April 14th (Tuesday)

It's a Business: Sports and Economics

Question: What are the "structural" aspects of the NFL that lead to Goodell's high salary? How does the NFL represent or support Power Elite Theory? What are the consequences of the Power Elite?

*Reading: [MDL] Kimes, Mina. 2016. "Why on Earth Does Roger Goodell Make So Much Money?" *espn.com**

[MDL] Mills, C. Wright. 1956. "The Power Elite." Pgs. 335 – 341

Process Paper #3 DUE

April 16th (Thursday)

Writing Process: A Season Long Game Plan

Question: What is "global" coherence? What are the key elements of a paper that contribute to its global coherence? What are different general frameworks for creating global coherence?

Reading: [Style] Lesson 8: Global Coherence. Pgs. 109 – 120.

Week 14 Film: *Broke*

April 21st (Tuesday)

A Way Out: Sports as a Mechanism of Mobility

Question: How can sports serve as a mechanism for class mobility? Is this idea a myth? If so, why does this myth prevail? How is this myth similar or different from other mobility myths? How are sports similar or different from other mechanisms for mobility?

*Reading: [MDL] Dubrow, Joshua K. and jimi adams. 2010. "Hoop Inequalities: Race, Class and Family Structure Background and the Odds of Playing in the National Basketball Association." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 47: 43 – 59.*

[MDL] Sage, George H. and D. Stanley Eitzen. 2012. "Is Sport a Mobility Escalator." Pgs. 188 – 198.

April 23rd (Thursday)

Sport as a Lens for Social Issues: What Have We Learned

Question: What have sports taught us about the world? How has our writing developed our learning? How did the “process” work?

Reading: TBD

April 28th (Tuesday)

Writing Process: Learning from a Loss

Goals: Learn how to effectively review papers. Understand how to use reviews and feedback to more effectively revise your own papers. Develop strategies for editing and revising your writing. Understand the challenges in revision.

May 4th (Monday)

Final Papers Due - 11:00 AM