Changing the Face of Journalism

JOURNALISM AND SPORTS PROGRAM

MOREHOUSE COLLEGE
The motto of the Morehouse College Journalism and Sports Program – “Changing the Face of Journalism” – is both symbolic and pragmatic. It is symbolic because there are too few African American faces in prominent positions in print, broadcast and online media. It is pragmatic because if black people don’t have more impact on the media’s images of them, those images will be blurred or disfigured by racially based naiveté and bias.

“There is no such thing as objectivity in the media,” said the late journalist Ralph Wiley. “It’s a question of controlling one’s subjectivity as much as one can.”

Although sports reporting remains an emphasis, it is not the sole focus of our 18-credit minor. The Journalism and Sports Program gives students hands-on opportunities to develop into multi-skilled journalists whom the media industry aggressively seeks and demands.

Panel discussions, guest speakers and on-site reporting experiences have brought the real media world to our campus. Working on the print, online and television versions of The Maroon Tiger student news organization has given budding journalists creative and leadership experience.

We aim to produce the media’s next generation of image makers, from columnists to digital specialists. We also are producing future decision-makers who will become editors and online entrepreneurs. Some of our students will go directly into the media; others will become more polished in graduate schools.

I invite you to join the Journalism and Sports Program in our quest to produce the best.

Ron Thomas
Director
About the Program

The numbers say it all. Although nearly 65 percent of professional football players and 80 percent of professional basketball players are black, only 6 percent of newspaper sports journalists are African American.

That disparity shocked and inspired Spike Lee ’79 and his friend, the late Ralph Wiley, one of the first black sports columnists to work at a major daily newspaper, to propose a radical idea: Why not create a sports journalism program at Morehouse? The two men envisioned a program that would produce journalists who would present a fair and enlightened portrayal of black athletes.

In 2007, the Journalism and Sports Program was established as a general print journalism program with an emphasis on sports. In May 2010, the program achieved status as an academic minor at Morehouse.

In coming years, we expect to add new courses in advanced media technology, the business of sports, and the history of the black press.

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Journalist Ralph Wiley
Because its goals are noble, its impact is great, and its skills are transferable to every profession. Critical thinking, the ability to communicate, and a commitment to accuracy are welcome everywhere.

Previously at newspapers, “when the paper was put to bed” was the time at which the final edition was printed.

Now, the media never sleeps.

Advances in technology, changes in the way consumers access and use news and information, and the recent downturn in the economy have combined to transform journalism from what it was as recently as a decade ago. Significant changes in the industry include:

• **Demand for broader skill sets.** Journalists are being asked to do more than in the past. Specialty news beats are disappearing, and more reporters are generalists, expected to cover everything from politics, to business, from entertainment to sports. They also are expected to be able to write and edit for both print and online media, have strong computer skills, and know how to handle camera, audio and video equipment.

• **Impact of social media and the 24/7 news cycle.** With the pervasiveness of online news and social media – which both generate demand for around-the-clock information – a news story can continue to develop, literally hour by hour. At the same time, reporters are evaluated for the quality of their stories as much as for the number of their Facebook friends, Twitter posts and blog followers.

The Journalism and Sports Program recognizes that these and other changes in the industry mean that journalism education also must change. To be competitive, students graduating into today’s job market have to be smarter, faster, more tech savvy, and more career-flexible than previous generations of reporters. They must demonstrate solid reporting, writing, editing and communications skills, but also a sincere commitment to personal and journalistic ethics.
In addition to a solid curriculum, the Journalism and Sports Program offers relevant co-curricular activities, including forums, panel discussions from the worlds of media and sports, an internship program, and journalism training experiences.

Forums

We cover a wide range of topics related to journalism, student life, and sports.

- The media’s coverage of President Barack Obama’s presidential campaign brought Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Les Payne and White House correspondent April Ryan to campus.
- “Life After the Locker Room” helped college athletes face the reality that the end of their athletic career is totally unpredictable. The New York Times sports columnist William C. Rhoden, who authored *Forty Million Dollar Slaves*, and 1968 Olympics hero Tommie Smith confronted them with that fact.
- Morehouse professors from different majors informed students about issues they would face while transitioning from a Historically Black College to a workplace or graduate school where they may be one of a few black people.
- ESPN’s Michael Wilbon, perhaps sports journalism’s most recognizable face, and Keith Clankscales, the creator of ESPN’s acclaimed “30 for 30” documentary series, have appeared on panels that informed students about career opportunities in the media and business side of sports.
- Belva Davis, the first black woman television reporter in the western United States, was interviewed by our journalism students about her book *Never in My Wildest Dreams: A Black Woman’s Life in Journalism*, that chronicles her 48-year career.
- Before television viewers saw Spike Lee’s documentary “Kobe Doin’ Work,” Morehouse journalism students previewed it and Lee was available to answer their questions. Lee’s impact on our program is ongoing.

Visiting Journalists and Sports Figures

Hearing directly from experts brings the newsroom to the classroom, as well as the general student body. Prominent journalists frequently give students tips about how to apply what they are learning. Lecture topics have included fact gathering, double-checking for accuracy, and enhancing descriptive writing by using all five senses during an interview.

For example:

- **How would you write a sharply worded column based on fact rather than fluff?** Who better to answer that than Pulitzer Prize nominee Derrick Jackson of the *The Boston Globe*?
- **How difficult was it to write a biography of a U.S. Supreme Court justice who refused to be interviewed by the authors?** Kevin Merida, national editor for *The Washington Post*, felt that frustration as he co-authored the book *Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas*.
- **Where do soldiers run if they are taking a shower when a mortar explodes in their military base camp?** To their clothes, or to a protective bunker? CNN reporter Moni Basu, who has covered the war in Iraq six times, described that dilemma to our students.
- **Sometimes famous athletes add to the mix,** such as the world’s most successful hurdler, Morehouse alumnus Edwin Moses ’78, and former NBA stars Dominique Wilkins and Chris Webber.
Professional Applications

What can journalism students do with their skills? A career as a reporter or editor for newspapers, online media, radio or television is the obvious answer. But there are loads of options within those categories. News, the arts, entertainment and sports articles must be written. Politicians’ votes and motives must be analyzed, and poll results must be interpreted. Editorial and opinion writers critique today’s issues. Photographers, along with layout designers, give them all visual appeal.

- What business or major personality figure can thrive without a skilled website designer or content editor who chooses the theme, selects the color scheme, attaches links and builds shopping carts that aid buyers?
- College athletic departments and pro sports teams all need media relations personnel, articles written in game programs, community outreach specialists, and personnel with crisis management skills. Players need well-informed agents. All of those roles make communications skills and sports background a high priority.
- In various businesses, marketing, public relations, corporate communications and event promotion spread the word, or shape it. Editors at publishing companies determine which manuscripts eventually reach the marketplace as books, or which greeting cards to choose from when important holidays arrive.
- Journalism also embeds accuracy and attention to detail into a student’s writing regimen, the perfect habits to have if a student becomes an attorney, researches acquisitions as a financial analyst, writes laboratory reports as a chemist, explains research results in an English master’s thesis, or writes an internal memo to a supervisor in any field.

In other words, regardless of their career choice, there are strong reasons for every Morehouse student to take at least one journalism course before he graduates.

GERREN KEITH GAYNOR

Class of 2011
Hometown: Brooklyn, N.Y.

Student at: Columbia University School of Journalism

Current Position: Writer at NewsOne.com

“’The Journalism and Sports Program was an invaluable tool in my journalistic development. Aside from employing the basic mechanics of news reporting, the program sharpened my critical thinking skills and gave me the confidence I needed, as a journalist, to engage the real world.’”
I entered Morehouse as a psychology major on a football scholarship with no idea what I wanted to do with my life. The summer after my freshman year, I interned at the Washington, D.C., NBC affiliate. I learned a few of the ins and outs of a newsroom and was able to see the production of the nightly news from the ground up. I was convinced at that point that journalism was the field for me.

The Program’s Curriculum

The Journalism and Sports Program offers a minor (18 credit hours) that every Morehouse student can take, regardless of his major. The minor is designed to provide a foundation in the principles of print journalism. All students can choose journalism courses as electives. Even if a student doesn’t want to become a journalist, your writing will become clearer, more concise, and better organized.

This is a general journalism program, meaning that students with a wide variety of interests – politics, entertainment, societal issues, science, race and gender, the law – will be able to explore them through story assignments and class discussions. Also, as its founders Spike Lee ‘79 and Ralph Wiley desired, this is one of the nation’s few journalism programs that emphasizes sports. This emphasis helps prepare students for careers throughout the sports industry, such as being a player’s agent.

Each English and kinesiology course in the minor includes at least two weeks of sports coverage.

STEP 1: Take English 258 Basic News Writing, the introductory course

STEP 2: After completing the introductory course with a C or better, take any of the three other required courses

- English 378 Sports Reporting
- English 388 New Media Technology or English 368 Advanced News Writing: Crafting the Complex Article. If you sign up for the minor, take all required courses before you graduate.

Total required credits: 12 hours

STEP 3: The remaining 6 credit hours for the minor can consist of:

- a. A journalism or sports-related internship and any journalism elective, or b. Kinesiology 100 History and Principles of Health and Physical Education. and any journalism elective listed below:
  - Economics 202 Principles of Microeconomics
  - History 222 African American History since 1865
  - Kinesiology 162 Organization and Administration of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Athletics
  - Philosophy 302 Introduction to Philosophical Ethics
  - Political Science 477 African Politics
  - Political Science 490 Conflict and Conflict Resolution
  - Psychology 303 Social Psychology
  - Sociology 156 Men in Society

Off-campus Learning Opportunities

The classroom extends beyond the campus borders as students are transported to special learning environments, such as:

- broadcast studios at CNN and Turner Sports,
- the press box for the NBA’s Atlanta Hawks, where students cover an NBA game under deadline pressure,
- the National Association of Black Journalists Convention.
MOREHOUSE COLLEGE AT A GLANCE

DESCRIPTION
Founded in 1867 as the Augusta Institute in Augusta, Georgia, Morehouse College is the nation’s largest liberal arts college for men. Morehouse graduates approximately 500 students each year, historically conferring bachelor’s degrees on more African American men than any other college or university in the United States. The 66-acre campus is located just three miles southwest of downtown Atlanta.

MISSION
The mission of Morehouse College is to provide a comprehensive academic, social and spiritual experience that prepares its students for leadership and success in the larger society.

PRESIDENT
Dr. Robert M. Franklin ’75 is the 10th president of Morehouse College. He is a former president of the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC), the graduate theological seminary of the Atlanta University Center consortium. At Emory University, Franklin served as the Presidential Distinguished Professor of Social Ethics and was a senior fellow at the Center for the Study of Law and Religion at the law school.

ENROLLMENT
With an enrollment of approximately 2,500, the student body represents more than 40 states and 14 foreign countries.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS
Morehouse operates under the semester system offering the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees. The College offers 26 majors in three academic divisions: Humanities and Social Sciences, Science and Mathematics, and Business Administration and Economics, and a dual-degree program in engineering with the Georgia Institute of Technology.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS
Special programs include Phi Beta Kappa, Honors, Study Abroad, The Andrew Young Center for International Affairs and Global Education, and Research Careers. The College also houses the Morehouse Research Institute, The Leadership Center at Morehouse College, The Morehouse Male Initiative and the CLA Journal.

FACULTY
166 full-time, 67 part-time; 100% of tenured and tenure-track faculty holds terminal degrees

ATHLETICS
Morehouse is a member of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SIAC) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Division II. Varsity letter sports include football, basketball, tennis, golf, cross country and track and field.

AFFILIATIONS
Morehouse is a member of the Georgia Research Alliance, the Associated Colleges of the South, and the Atlanta University Center, a consortium of five historically black institutions, including Clark Atlanta University, Interdenominational Theological Center, Morehouse School of Medicine and Spelman College.

ACCREDITATION
Morehouse is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award baccalaureate degrees. Morehouse is one of five Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and one of four undergraduate institutions in Georgia, with a Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society chapter. The College also is one of only four liberal arts colleges in the nation with accreditation from both the International Association for Management Education and a Phi Beta Kappa chapter.

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