



# the comm-unity newsletter

## Profile: Manhattan College Professor and *Wall Street Journal* Editor, Jared Diamond

by Jilleen Barrett

After 11 and a half years of working as a sports journalist at the *Wall Street Journal*, Jared Diamond decided to add another job title to his resume: professor. Having spent his career covering Major League Baseball for one of the oldest papers in the country, he decided it was time to pass along his knowledge on all areas of the industry to rising professionals.

He wasn't exactly sure how to pursue this — so he simply started asking around at schools with communication programs near his home base of Jersey City if they would be interested in hiring him to teach a sports reporting class.

“I didn't know much about Manhattan when I reached out to the folks here — I knew where it was, I knew that there was sort of a communications program and a weekly newspaper, and I thought it might be a good place,” Diamond said. “It also looked to me that they didn't have a sports writing class that was currently being offered. So I just basically sent a cold email to the Communication Department here.”

When Diamond and the Communication Department worked out a plan for him to teach COMM 336: Sports Reporting and Writing, he figured out exactly what he wanted to include in his syllabus. He decided to have his students practice journalism by covering Manhattan College's D1 sports, and then turning stories in for edits like they would if they worked at a paper like the *Wall Street Journal*.

*“What I really wanted from the class was [for it] to be a class of practice,” Diamond said. “I really believe such an important part of a full journalism education is to go out and just do it.”*

Diamond feels part of the reason this works is because of the size of the school. It is easier to access members and coaches of the D1 teams at Manhattan than at a much larger school where “there's nine million reporters trying to cover the team.”

“It combines that small school feel with major Division 1 sports, meaning the students get to cover some really high quality teams,” Diamond says.

When Diamond created this plan for the class before starting to teach in fall 2021, he did

not know if it would be successful because he didn't yet know the students the way other communication faculty members did. However, like the rest of the professors, he now understands the drive and enthusiasm the students in this department have.

"I really didn't know what to expect, but quickly, I got to meet so many students that were super engaged and really interested in potentially pursuing journalism as a career and working really hard on *The Quad* and other extracurricular student media activities," Diamond said. "That made me really excited to know that ... even though it's obviously a smaller school, there were people in it that really were serious about pursuing journalism."

Diamond tried to tailor the class to be interesting to both journalism students and sports fans. He says that it is just as important for the class to be memorable and fun for students who want to learn more about the sports industry, as well as students who want to seriously pursue a career in reporting.

One aspect of the class that attracts both of these crowds is Diamond's connections to other sports journalists. Each week, he invites one of these connections to class to speak about their careers and the interesting experiences they have had in the sports journalism world.

Chris Bagdonas, a senior communication major with a sports media production concentration says he isn't pursuing journalism though he "would not close that door" if an opportunity arose. As a non-journalism concentration student, he says he still benefits from the class.

*"The guests definitely help in terms of getting a feel for what journalism in sports is like," Bagdonas said. "I've also been able to realize what a unique career it is ... it is extra cool to get to meet and hear from people I have seen on Twitter and the internet."*

Though he prioritizes the wants and needs of all students, Diamond strongly encourages students on the journalism track to take this class so he can help them grow into their career before they graduate.

"I really want to be there for those people, to be sort of that mentor figure who can really help push them along and get them to where they need to be in their career," Diamond said.

Students who are not interested in sports but want to have Diamond as a professor will get the chance, because department chair Michael Grabowski confirmed that Diamond will return to the college next fall to teach COMM 318: Advanced Reporting and Writing. The next chance to take Sports Reporting and Writing class will be in spring 2024.

"I've loved becoming a part of the Manhattan College community and can't wait to work with an even broader collection of students next year," Diamond said. ★