

Sociology 3061-090
SOCIOLOGY OF SPORTS
ONLINE

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feature within
CANVAS for all mail,
including mail with attachments. In a pinch, use timber@soc.utah.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday 4-6:30PM with Advanced Notice
Other times by appointment. I am around my office most of the day.



Course Access: This is an online class that can be “attended” from anywhere there is an internet connection. Assignments and discussions will be submitted or “satisfied” electronically. However, in order to take part in the course, you must have access to a computer that meets the system requirements. If you do not have your own system, you may use computers available to students located throughout the University of Utah campus. However, some of the material has an audio component, so you should have headphones or an earpiece if you are using a computer in a public place. If you are using a private system, you will need to ensure that it is compatible. You must also be able to view PowerPoint presentations, as well as have a Media Browser on your system. Students must be able to use an internet browser, send attached files via the mail feature within the course presence on CANVAS.

Course Description. This course explores the ways in which sports are entangled in social, cultural, political, and economic forces operating at many different levels, from the social psychological levels to the global level. On one hand the course deals with the multiple ways in which individuals are involved in sports organizations and activities, including our participation in sport for purposes of recreation and leisure, sports participation as self-expression and personal fulfillment, participation as spectators of sports and consumers of sports as entertainment commodities. On the other hand, the course deals with the organization of sports and sports organizations as particular representations of social organizations in general that can be analyzed in terms of goals and norms, social roles, manifest and latent functions, including all the complex social dynamics that characterize other social organizations, such as stratification (e.g., by race, class, and gender). The course will also deal with the political economy of big time sports, including major university and professional sports and their contradictory relationships to their institutional settings (e.g., in institutions of higher learning and in communities).

Objectives. Students will become familiar with basic information on the sociology of sports, and the course will provide the conceptual and theoretical tools to understand and analyze major social issues in relation to sports. They will also learn to apply general principles of sociology to the analysis and understanding of particular types of sports issues (e.g., leisure sports vs. organized sports), and they

will be able to critically evaluate the different types of sports in terms of their social uses. They will learn to apply social science theories and knowledge to sport-society issues, to locate social science scholarship on sports, to synthesize different sources of such scholarship, and to communicate as both amateur social scientists and as educated members of the public. In-depth reading, possible online group discussions, expert presentations, in-class exercises, individual presentations and online lectures will be used to achieve these learning objectives. The course will culminate with student presentations to the class on some important sports issue on which they have researched and developed an informed position or policy recommendation.

Evaluation. Students will be evaluated on the basis of three examinations, weekly participation in class Discussion, a research presentation, and commenting on classmates' presentations. The examinations and presentation each count for 22% of the final grade (the Assignments will count toward the grade for the presentation—see points assigned for each on CANVAS), class participation, including commenting on others' presentations as well as other possible special assignments will count for an additional 12% of your grade. **No extra credit work is available.** Reading should be completed for the date it is assigned. Online material often assumes that you have completed the reading. Most of the information in class will deal with general principles of the sociology of sports, and most of the reading assignments cover specific examples of how sociological principles can be used to gain critical insight into various issues in sports. Exams will cover both reading and in-class activities such as online lectures. **Since the material presented in class does not duplicate the content of the reading, it is important that students both complete all the reading and "attend" class.** Exams will require students to integrate diverse materials from class *and* reading in answering general questions, and it is extremely doubtful that satisfactory examination scores can be obtained without good understanding of both. **Exams are taken within CANVAS (under "Quizzes"), and they must be taken by deadline given. No make-up exams will be available for anyone.** However, there is a four day window during which each exam will be available for one hour. Each exam has 50 questions, and they are true/false, multiple choice, or very short answer.

CANVAS: The syllabus, assignments, lectures/PowerPoint presentations, announcements, etc. will be posted to the class presence at CANVAS. The "lectures" are organized into Modules, including one for each week of classes. These lectures include, at minimum, a PowerPoint presentation. In addition, a little over half the lectures have an audio lectures along with the PowerPoint. These are available as MP4 downloads (sometimes from a zip file). Sometimes the PowerPoint presentations have hyperlinks to web-based material of interest to the class. You can't get to the hyperlinks from the MP4s, so you'll have to click through the downloaded PowerPoints 'til you get to the hyperlink.

Students are advised to check CANVAS frequently for any changes or announcements pertinent to this class. Additionally, newspaper articles, journal articles or other media corresponding to course material will be periodically posted to CANVAS. Though not specifically assigned in the reading assignments listed below, students will find useful and relevant information in these articles and are encouraged to read them. Class Links on CANVAS will provide useful information when putting together your class presentation.

Accommodations for Disabled Students. If you have any condition, such as a physical or learning disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it or which will require academic accommodations, please notify me in the first two weeks of the course. To do so, you

may make an appointment to speak with me in my office, or come by during office hours. Written documentation of the disability should be submitted along with the request for special accommodation. Contact the Center for Disabled Student Services (160 Union, 581-5020) to facilitate requests.

Academic Honesty. It is assumed that the work you submit to me is your own work, and when you have used the ideas of others you have properly indicated that you have done so. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam, paper or project; failure in the course; and/or expulsion from the university.

Research Project and Presentation. A short research-based position project dealing with some aspect of *the sociology of sports* is required. One objective of the presentation assignment is to acquaint students with social science journals and social science research, and another key objective of the project is to use it as a basis for making a public presentation of an academic and/or public policy nature. The project will be accomplished in several steps.

First a topic must be chosen and submitted for approval. Possible topics include those covered in the reading, or others that seem to have relevance to sociology and sports, in combination. Do not choose a topic that does not have as an important focus some aspect of society, social relations, social organization, social psychology, etc. Some of you might be tempted to, say, look at the effects of running barefoot on marathon performance. This is not sociology. Don't do it. You may initially choose a broad topic that you will need to narrow down as you develop the presentation. You might think of it as a question. For example How do sports relate to the family? This is a broad question/topic you could choose, but it is too broad for a research presentation. Thus, as you do background reading you will need to focus on some aspect of Sports and Family. Perhaps it would be "Adolescent's participation in sports and satisfaction with family." Or it could be a very macro-topic, such as Does having a professional sports team generate employment and/or income for cities? You could look at issues related to race, class, or gender in connection with some aspect of sports (e.g., a particular sport or a particular level of sports like high school). However, stay away from non-sociological issues like the effects of race on athletic performance/skills. (This doesn't mean you can't take an issue like Why aren't there more African American quarterbacks? It just means that I don't want to see a serious consideration of bogus theories for answering this question. Stick to sociology. Or, it could be a question/topic that raises something like an ethical or philosophical issue, such as Should colleges and universities place so much importance on inter-collegiate athletics? You could then get into a kind of analysis of the arguments for and against that examine the relationship between research and learning vs. big-time college football, for example. The topic is to be turned in, in writing, by January 31. Use the Assignments bar on the left hand menu on the homepage for the course.

Second, once approved, you will locate five journal articles that deal with this topic, and you need to submit a list of them (cited in the style of the *American Sociological Review*) by February 28. The Assignment tab at CANVAS will have the instructions for this assignment and indicate that you need to list the articles in appropriate style. Again, this is where you will most likely need to narrow down the topic by choosing articles that focus on a similar aspect of the broad research question in which you are interested. We will discuss this "in class." Again, you will turn this in via the Assignment bar.

Third, an annotated bibliography is to be submitted by March 7. This involves short summaries of each article in addition to the simple citation. The short summaries should **not** quote or paraphrase the published abstract for the article. Instead they should include (a) a short description of the author's objectives (e.g., what was the major question(s) the author was trying to illuminate?), (b) a brief

discussion of the general theoretical approach; (c) a description of the nature of the data on which the conclusions were based and how the data were collected. Was it a survey, experiment, qualitative case study, theoretical or polemical treatment, or what? (d) a short summary of what the author(s) found and/or concluded. Each summary should be preceded by the full reference, being careful to properly format the reference and have it in alphabetical order by author's last name. Again, you will use the Assignment bar.

Fourth, you will produce a short PowerPoint presentation based on the work you have done. The presentation will include an introduction of the topic, a discussion of the research you have found including its principal findings and controversies, *and a conclusion*. The presentation may be either one based only on a review of the research literature on a topic or it may include, in addition, data that you find and bring to bear on the topic. You may make use of materials other than the research articles, but the research articles must be part of it. The presentation is due by April 18.

Fifth, after we make the presentations available to everyone in class, each of you will look at at least four other presentations and write at least two comments or questions to the author of each of these four presentations. I will let you know how to choose which ones to look at. Your comments must reach the discussion board by May 2.

Required Text Book and Reader: (1) D. Stanley Eitzen and George H. Sage, *Sociology of North American Sport*, 9th edition. Paradigm Publishers. Boulder, Colorado; 2009. Paperback.

Topic and Reading Schedule

Lectures will not necessarily correspond with reading assignments – familiarity with both important.

Date	Class Topic	Reading/Lecture Schedule (Due by this date)
Week 1. 1/6	Course organization; What is the Sociology of Sports?	Chapter 1 Text
Week 2. 1/13	Social and Cultural Reasons for the Importance of Sports in American Society and in the World; Doing Research on Sports	Chapter 2 Text
Week 3. 1/21	Social Values and Sports Choosing at Presentation Topic.	Chapter 3 Text
Week 4. 1/27	Sports and the Life Cycle: From Playground to Armchair Quarterback	Chapter 4 Text

January 31 Submit Presentation Topic

Week 5. 2/3	School and Sports. How Did that Happen? Why Does it Persist? EXAM 1 (by February 6, Midnight; Online, details to be announced)	Chapter 5 Text
Week 6.	College and Sports. Huh? Why?	Chapter 6 Text

2/10

Week 7. Social Problems and Sports in North America: Chapter 7 Text
2/17 Drugs, Violence, Gambling, Eating Disorders
Finding appropriate references (i.e., journal articles).

Week 8 Hallelujah!
2/24 Sports and Religion: WWJD (if He were a QB)? Chapter 8 Text
February 27 Submit Reference List

Week 9. Sports and Politics Chapter 9 Text
3/4 **March 6 Submit Annotated Bibliography**

Week 10 SPRING BREAK
3/10

Week 11. Sports and the Economy Chapter 10
3/17 **EXAM 2 (by March 20)**

Week 12. Sports and Mass Media Chapter 11 Text
3/24

Week 13. Sports, Stratification and Social Mobility Chapter 12 Text
3/31 Sports and Race/Ethnicity Chapter 13 Text

Week 14. Sports and Gender Chapter 14 Text
4/7

Week 15. The Future of Sports and Leisure Chapter 15 Text
4/14 **April 17 Submit PowerPoint Presentation**

Week 16. Post Game Wrap-Up.
4/24 **EXAM 3 (by April 30)**
May 2—Comments Due on 4 Peers' PowerPoint Presentations

IMPORTANT DATES

January 30 Submit Presentation Topic. One short paragraph listing the topic and describing what you mean and what it has to do with both sports and sociology.

February 6 Exam I must be completed by midnight.

February 27 Reference list (see instructions, above, under “ Research Presentation”).

March 6 Annotated bibliography due (see instructions, above, under “ Research Presentation”)

March 20 Exam II must be completed by midnight

April 17 Submit PowerPoint Presentation

May 2 Exam III must be completed by midnight

May 2

By this date, you should have commented or asked questions on 4 of your classmates' PowerPoint Presentations

Possible Supplementary or Alternative Books:

Jay J. Coakley. *Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies*. 7th edition). WCB. McGraw-Hill. Boston. 2001.

D. Stanley Eitzen, *Beyond Fair and Foul: The Myths and Paradoxes of Sports*. 4th ed., 2009. Rowman and Littlefield.