

# SOC 201b: Sociology of Sport

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*Whenever I get the urge to exercise, I lay down until the feeling passes.*  
- Robert M. Hutchins, President of the University of Chicago

How many people around the world have a **fancy** for (i.e. desire) and are **fanatical** about (i.e. devotion) sport? How much money in the U.S. alone is spent on sporting events, sport media, sport apparel, advertising, and sundry other sport related products? How many people have been saved from crime, drugs, or poverty by sport participation? Why are men more likely to beat their wives following a sporting event than on other days? These are some of the interesting and important questions that sport sociologists try to answer. There are many institutions that sociology studies but probably none of them generate more fervent and devoted participation than do sport – similar to religion. Participation in sport also generates dread and revulsion in a good many people. Any institution as widespread as sport, that invokes such deep emotional and financial investment in as sport is of major sociological significance.

What we will study in this course is “modern sport” largely centered in the United States. Some characteristics of this sport form includes intense goal orientation, the use of technology and instrumental rationality in goal achievement, a focus on overcoming “natural” obstacles, an emphasis of productivity and embrace of precise measurements, a market orientation, and a deeply competitive nature expressed in a will to dominate. Most sport fans in the U.S. assume that this form of sport is a natural human expression. You will find, however, that modern sport is a remarkably recent invention with a very specific history stemming from the boarding schools of imperial Britain during the nascent years of industrialization. What many consider natural and universal is actually rather exceptional in the history of human societies. In this sense, the study of sport gives us a window into the nature of our own society. But more than simply reflecting a deeper core, sport is a constitutive element of contemporary life. Sport does not simply reflect society; it is a mechanism that drives contemporary global capitalism.

By the end of the course you will still enjoy watching the Colts, the Bulls, and/or the Indians “play”. But you will also realize that all that glitters is not gold. You may also gain a greater appreciation of sporting practices that do not stem from the boarding school tradition. At minimum you will understand that sport is more complicated than winning and losing or a person’s ability to attain a beautiful body.

## Course Goals

- Gain sociological knowledge and perspective on contemporary sporting practices
- Develop critical skills for the analysis of popular cultural forms

- Increase understanding of sociological theory and research methods
- Improve essay writing skills and ability to articulate complex arguments

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Students are required to keep up with the assigned reading, attend lectures, participate in discussions, and successfully complete the assignments. All of the assigned readings are available on Blackboard under “Course Documents” organized in folders by week of the semester.

#### Specifications and Policies for Written Assignments

Spacing – double-spaced

Font – Times or Times New Roman 12 point

Ink – black

Paper – white

Margins – 1 to 1.25 inches (sides, top, and bottom)

Citation style – APA or Chicago

Plagiarism – I will vigorously uphold DePauw University’s policy on plagiarism

Email – not accepted for submitting assignments

Late Policy – 10-point deduction 1st day; 3 points everyday thereafter

The following **do not** count as legitimate excuses for late assignments: printer problems, out-of-town guests, travel, other assignments, “I emailed it,” or hangovers.

### **Lead a Class Session**

Students must help lead two class sessions during the course of the semester. On the second week of class students will sign up to lead two class sessions. This will be done in groups of three. The groups need to decide how they will cover the material, if they want to supplement the material, and how they will conduct the class. Groups should be prepared to explain the main issues, concepts, and methods used in the reading. As well as answering questions, the groups need to generate questions and discussion. Perhaps the groups will show and lead discussion using video clips, music, or images. Trust me, the role of teacher is far more difficult than the student’s role – *be prepared*. Meet early to divide the work, plan for the presentation, and practice the presentation. Groups should meet with me the week before their presentation to go over the reading and the presentation. Each presentation is worth 10% of your final grade (20% combined).

### **Short Analytic Essays**

Students are required to submit 10 1-page essays on the assigned readings. These essays are due at the class meeting that the reading is assigned; only one essay can be turned in for credit per class session. Late essays will not receive credit so get started right away. Essays are graded on a credit/no-credit basis (i.e. no letter grade is assigned). Each analytic essay is worth 1% of your final grade (10% combined).

Your essay should provide a short summary of the assigned reading (your summary should be about 1/3 of your essay). This is followed by your personal response to the reading. A personal response includes the following: 1) Identification of author(s’) argument; 2) Your position vis-à-vis the argument—i.e. do you agree with the argument? 3) Explanation of your position. This is explained on the basis of personal experiences, observations, and/or other

readings. 4) What alternative interpretation and analysis can you provide for what the author(s) claim(s) in the reading?

### **Exams**

There will be three non-cumulative, take-home essay exams – two midterms and a final. For midterms, students will receive prompts on Monday of the exam week and should submit their responses on the following Friday at the start of class. The prompt for the final will be handed out on the last day of class and must be submitted on Monday May 12 by 9 AM. The exams will ask questions that require students to analyze and synthesize the assigned readings. Drawing upon class discussions will help you illustrate your discussion of the readings. Each exam is worth 15% of your final grade (45% combined).

### **Research Project and Term Paper**

All students must write a term paper that covers a topic within sport sociology. These projects will stem from interests of your choice but it must conform to one of the following three thematics:

1. Ethnography of a formal or informal sport team, club, or other sport association (e.g. YMCA, private gym, skater hangout, etc.).
1. Oral history on the role of sport in your family.
1. An archival study that answers a question on sport history from a sociological perspective.

#### Steps in the process of completing the research project:

1. Meet with professor to discuss project idea – this should be ongoing.
1. Write up research proposal.
1. Present project to class and receive feedback – 5 minutes (2/11).
1. Submit revised proposal with bibliography – talk to a librarian (2/20).
1. Submit rough draft of methods section (3/7).
1. Submit rough draft of literature review (3/31).
1. Submit term paper (4/28).
1. Present research findings to the class (4/28-5/7).

#### Term Paper

The topic of your research project should be expressed as a question. The more narrowly you phrase your question, the better. Your paper is to finish with an argument and a set of analyses (this argument and related analyses are *repeated* in the introduction). The paper is no less than 10 pages and no more than 12 pages.

#### Guideline to Writing the Term Paper

1. Introduce the topic (1 page)
  - a. Who or what are the subjects of this topic?
  - a. Why is a discussion of this topic important given the scope of this class?
  - a. What is your argument?
1. Literature Review – what other scholars have focused on this subject? (3 pages)
  - a. How have they examined it?

- a. What aspects did they fail to explore?
- a. How does your work cover the hole left by scholars?
- 1. Method Section – what research method will student take up? ( \_ to 1 page)
- 1. Findings – what did you learn from your investigation? (4 pages)
- 1. Discussion – conclusions and what other research does your study point? (1 page)
- 1. Who should read your work (besides me) and what do they stand to gain from having read it? ( \_ to 1 page)

Use each of the points in the preceding outline as the sub-headings in your paper. This way there is no question for both you and me that you have covered each of the points that you are supposed to cover for the assignment. This will also help you to receive a better grade for the work that you do.

Essays should conform to standards of college level writing. That means no spelling or grammatical errors. (If this is an issue for you, get a competent reader to help you copy edit your writing – don't assume friends, roommates, or siblings are competent.) Also, take advantage of the writing center to **improve your writing** –for appointments (x4039).

### Presenting Your Research to the Class

All students will present their research projects on the last two days of class. Students' presentations are based on their term papers. These presentations will answer the following questions:

- 1. Who and/or what is the subject of your study?
- 1. What other scholars have examined this subject? And, how are students' presentations different from other scholars' examination of the same subject?
- 1. What research method was exercised in order to gather data?
- 1. What did student learn from study?
- 1. What other study should be taken up by students?
- 1. Who should be familiar with students' study?

Students should prepare for 10-minute presentations followed by Q & A. Severe penalty exists for absences on any of the presentation days – your final grade will drop by one grade point (i.e. from an A to a B). The research project is worth 20% of your final grade.

### **Class Participation**

The success of this class and your learning experience is dependent upon student engagement and participation. You should come to class prepared to constructively engage in class discussions. This means not only doing the reading but also taking some time to reflect on it and forming a position. I have one rule for class discussions: we criticize ideas, not people. Shyness is no excuse for not participating; it simply means you must make extra effort. Class participation is 5% of your final grade.

### **Grading Scale**

All assignments in this class are graded on a one hundred-point scale. There is no curve and I do not assign letter grades until posting the final grades. Your final grade will be determined

by a weighted average of all of the assignments – i.e. when the scores on all of your assignments are added together they will come out to some percent of 100 points.

100-94 = A	89-87 = B+	79-77 = C+	69-67 = D+	59 or below = F
93-90 = A-	86-84 = B	76-74 = C	66-64 = D	
	83-80 = B-	73-70 = C-	63-60 = D-	

### Important Dates

<u>Exams</u>	<u>Research Projects</u>	<u>Cancelled Classes</u>
2/25-29; 3/31-4/4; 5/7-5/12	2/11; 2/20; 3/7; 3/31; 4/28-5/7	??

### Class Schedule

#### 1. Jan. 28 – Feb. 1      **What We Call Sport: On the Origins of Modern Sport**

- Mon. Introductions & Welcome
- Wed. Dunning, Eric. "The Development of Modern Football." In *Sport: Readings from a Sociological Perspective*, edited by Eric Dunning, 133-151. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.  
Smith, Ronald A. "The First Intercollegiate Sport: Crew and the Commercial Spirit." In *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics*, 26-37. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Fri. Stoddart, Brian. "Sport, Cultural Imperialism, and Colonial Response in the British Empire." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 4 (1988): 649-73.

#### 2. Feb. 4 – 8      **Space: The "Final Frontier" or the Fabric of Everyday Life?**

- Mon. Bale, John. "Pure Segregation?: Sport and Space, Geometry and Territoriality." In *Landscapes of Modern Sport*, 67-99. London: Leicester University Press, 1994.
- Wed. Eichberg, Henning. "The Enclosure of the Body - on the Historical Relativity of 'Health', 'Nature' and the Environment of Sport." *Journal of Contemporary History*, 21, no. 1 (1986): 99-121.
- Fri. Silk, Michael. "'Bangsa Malaysia': Global Sport, the City and the Mediated Refurbishment of Local Identities." *Media, Culture & Society* 24, no. 6 (2002): 775-94.

#### 3. Feb. 11 - 15      **Looking Behind the Scenes – Ethnographic Sport Studies**

- Mon. Crosset, Todd. "Fans, Status, and the Gift of Golf." In *Inside Sports*, edited by Jay J Coakley and Peter Donnelly, 171-79. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Wed. Messner, M A. "Barbie Girls Versus Sea Monsters: Children Constructing Gender." *Gender & Society* 14, no. 6 (2000): 765-84.

- Fri. Curry, Timothy Jon. "Booze and Bar Fights: A Journey into the Dark Side of College Athletics." In *Masculinities, Gender Relations, and Sport: Research on Men and Masculinities*, edited by Jim McKay, Michael A Messner and Don Sabo, 162-75. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, Inc., 2000.

**Present Research Project to Class (2/11)**

**4. Feb. 18 & 20 Nose Bleed Seats – Stadiums & the Built Environment**

- Mon. Trujillo, Nick. "Interpreting (the Work and the Talk of) Baseball: Perspectives on Ballpark Culture." *Western Journal of Communication* 56, no. 4 (1993): 350-71.
- Wed. Eckstein, Rick, and Kevin Delaney. "New Sports Stadiums, Community Self-Esteem, and Community Collective Conscience." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26, no. 3 (2002): 236-48.

**Submit Revised Research Proposal (2/20)**

**4. Feb. 25 – 29 Midterm I**

**4. March 3 – 7 Big Business & Big Fun – The Sport-Media Complex**

- Mon. Jeffrey Montez de Oca. "A Cartel in the Public Interest: NCAA Broadcast Policy During the Cold War." *American Studies* (forthcoming).
- Wed. Messner, Michael A., and Jeffrey Montez de Oca. "The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30, no. 3 (2005): 1879-910.
- Fri. Rowe, David, Jim McKay, and Toby Miller. "Come Together: Sport, Nationalism, and the Media Image." In *Mediasport*, edited by Lawrence A. Wenner, 119-33. London: Routledge, 1998.

**Submit Methods Section (3/7)**

**4. March 10 – 14 Difference & Identity I – Gender**

- Mon. Grindstaff, Laura, and Emily West. "Cheerleading and the Gendered Politics of Sport." *Social Problems* 53, no. 4 (2006): 500-18.
- Wed. Cahn, Susan K. "From the "Muscle Moll" to the "Butch" Ballplayer: Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in U.S. Women's Sport." *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 2 (1993): 343-269.
- Fri. Walton, Theresa. "Pinned by Gender Construction?: Media Representations of Girls' Wrestling." *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*; 14, no. 2 (2005): 52-96.

**8. March 17 –21 Difference & Identity II – Race**

- Mon. Spencer, Nancy E. "Sister Act VI: Venus and Serena Williams at Indian Wells: "Sincere Fictions" and White Racism." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 28, no. 2 (2004): 115-35.
- Wed. King, C. "Staging the Winter Olympics." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 31, no. 1 (2007): 89-94.

Fri. Hartmann, Douglas. "Rush Limbaugh, Donovan McNabb, and "a Little Social Concern"." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 31, no. 1 (2007): 45-60.

**9. March 24 – 28 Spring Break**

**10. March 31 – April 4 Midterm 2**

Submit Literature Review (3/31)

**11. April 7 – 11 “In Just Seven Days...” – Bodies & Training**

Mon. Klein, Alan M. "Little Big Man: Hustling, Gender, Narcissism, and Body Building Subculture." In *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, edited by Michael A Messner and Donald F Sabo, 127-40. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, 1990.

Wed. Shogan, Debra. "Disciplinary Technologies of Sport Performance." In *Sport Technology: History, Philosophy and Policy*, edited by Andy Miah and Simon B Eassom, 93-109. New York: Elsevier Sciences Ltd., 2002.

Fri. Markula, Pirkko. "The Technologies of the Self: Sport, Feminism, and Foucault." *Sociology of sport journal* 20, no. 2 (2003): 21.

**12. April 14 – 18 Sport, Citizenship, and the Democratic Ideal**

Mon. Eitzen, Stanley. "The Democratic Ideal and School Sport." In *Fair and Foul: Beyond the Myths and Paradoxes of Sport*, 93-103. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

Wed. Sorek, Tamir. "Arab Football in Israel as an 'Integrative Enclave'." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 26, no. 3 (2003): 422 - 50.

Fri. Montez de Oca, Jeffrey. "'As Our Muscles Get Softer, Our Missile Race Becomes Harder': Cultural Citizenship and the 'Muscle Gap'." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 18, no. 3 (2005): 145-71.

**13. April 21 – 25 Commodification & Globalization – “I’m Liking It!”**

Mon. Whitson, David. "Circuits of Promotion: Media, Marketing and the Globalization of Sport." In *Mediasport*, edited by Lawrence A. Wenner, 57-72. London: Routledge, 1998.

Wed. Falcous, Mark, and Joseph Maguire. "Globetrotters and Local Heroes? Labor Migration, Basketball, and Local Identities." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 22, no. 2 (2005): 137-57.

Fri. Stevenson, Deborah. "Women, Sport, and Globalization: Competing Discourses of Sexuality and Nation." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26, no. 2 (2002): 209-25.

**14. April 28 – May 2 Presentations**

**15. May 4 & 7 Presentations**

Final exam is due Thursday May 12 by 9 AM in my office.