

Sociology 245: Sociology of Sport **Spring 2016 (3 credits), Tues, Thurs 1:25-2:40 PM (in Fine Arts 5062)**

Instructor: Professor Thomas Rotolo
Office: Wilson Hall 252
Office Hours: Tues, Thurs, 9-10 AM

Email: rotolo@wsu.edu (write "Soc 245" in subject line)
Phone: 335-4595

Course web page on Blackboard: learn.wsu.edu

Introduction

This course examines sport through a sociological lens. Outside the reporting of actual athletic events, most popular treatments of sport in the media involve examination of a specific athlete or team, or are designed to help improve performance in a sport. In contrast this course is organized around the study of social factors that impact sport. Social factors include our personal relationships to others, the organizations that structure our experiences with sport, aggregate group properties such as inequality and diversity, and the technology, social institutions, and culture that shape the opportunities available to us throughout our lives. We will explore how sociologists and other social scientists consider sport as an institution, a social product, and a focus of attention in society.

Course Objectives

A. Develop and refine creative and critical thinking skills

Millions of people worldwide are involved in sport, either as fans, spectators, or participants. Despite this exposure, most of what people know about sport is based on personal experience or information derived from the popular media. While these sources of information are useful, it is not always possible to obtain an accurate view of sport relying only on these sources, especially when it comes to understanding social factors because these things tend to escape our immediate attention. If we desire an understanding of the role of sport in society, we must move beyond local perceptions of sport by approaching the topic from different viewpoints – a focus that moves beyond individual experience.

Our examination of sport will consider a number of questions from a sociological perspective, such as:

- What are the social influences underlying sports participation and the administration of sports?
- How does the structure of major sports organizations, such as the NCAA, shape individual experience with sport?
- How do social problems like gambling, drug use, and violence impact sports?
- What are the social sources of cheating and fraud in sport?

This course will show that many of our experiences with sport are shaped by social factors. Your ideas about sport may change after completing this course. By learning how to think beyond individual experiences with sport, the course will improve your ability to think about, understand, and critically analyze sport.

B. Achieve a better understanding of one's self in society

In this course we will integrate your personal experiences and existing sport knowledge with sociological theory and empirical research on sport. You will achieve a better understanding of your place in society by considering the larger social and cultural settings in which all individuals are embedded.

Our analyses will be informed by the tools and perspectives of sociology – an approach that stresses the importance of social relations and recognizes the impact of diversity on social processes.

You will learn to reflect on sport from a sociological perspective *and* you will learn some sociology through our focus on sport. We will consider the influence of sport throughout the life course, from childhood to adulthood, paying special attention to social and cultural differences that play a key role in determining the sports that are played and valued. Major emphasis will be placed on sport in North America because this is a focus of our textbook. We will occasionally consider sports played elsewhere.

C. Build communication skills

As you participate in class discussion and submit written responses, you will improve your communication skills. In other courses, you don't know much about the topic before completing the course. This lack of knowledge and experience can make it difficult to contribute. Most of you have experience with sports, as fans, athletic participants, or both. A goal of this course is to teach you how to express your ideas clearly and concisely within a sociological framework.

Materials

There is one required book for the course. The textbook can be purchased at the Bookie or on-line. I do not have extra copies of the textbook for student use.

Eitzen, D. Stanley and George Sage. 2016. Sociology of North American Sport. 10th ed. Oxford University Press.

Additional readings will be announced in class and often these will be part of in-class assignments. Also, you will be required to view some videos in class. You will need on-line access to take tests and view your grades. Lecture notes will be posted on-line once a chapter is completed.

Grading

Your final grade in this course will be determined by your overall average score on five tests, along with a participation grade bonus that will likely add points to your final average. The amount of the bonus depends on the difference between your exam average and your total participation score at the end of the semester. I will provide you with more details about the mathematical computations behind this bonus upon request. For the syllabus, the grading formula is simpler to understand in words: If you score very poorly on the exams but you perfectly complete all the participation assignments, your grade will increase significantly. For instance, if you average 60% on your tests and earn full 100% credit on the in-class assignments, your final computed average will be 72%, or a C-. If your exam performance approximately matches your in-class participation score, then your final grade bonus will be very low because your engagement level in the class matches your performance on the exams. If your average score on the exams is lower than your in-class participation grade, then you will not receive any in-class bonus added to your final grade. Details of the participation assignments are provided below.

Finally, there is one other condition attached to the participation component of this course. This condition applies only if you do not earn an adequate proportion of the participation points. You must earn a minimum percentage of participation points to earn an A- or higher in this course.

If you fail to earn at least 70% of the participation points, then the highest grade you can earn in the class is a B+ even if your exam average is high enough for an A- or better.

Tests

This class will have five tests throughout the semester. The first test will be an on-line, timed, multiple-choice test. The on-line test will be open book and open notes, but you must complete the entire exam on your own, with no outside contact with or assistance from another individual. I hope to administer the remaining four tests on-line however this depends on the results from the first on-line test. I will explain this situation in more detail in lecture. Any in-class exam will be closed book and closed notes, and will be held during the lecture time on the date listed in the schedule.

You must take the test on-line on the assigned test date at **learn.wsu.edu**. The on-line site will allow you access to the exam starting at 12:01 AM on the test day and ending at 11:55 PM. Make-up exams must be arranged at least 24 hours prior to scheduled test date and will only be allowed for WSU-recognized absences. If you miss a scheduled test without a legitimate excuse, you will receive a zero for that exam. If you miss a make-up exam, you will receive a zero for the test.

Each test will be scaled to 100 points. An on-line test will consist of approximately 30-40 multiple choice questions. You will have approximately 60 minutes to complete the on-line multiple choice questions. Tests will be based on class readings from the textbook and lecture material. The questions will be randomly generated from a large pool of questions – some are very easy, some are difficult. The majority of exam questions will have answers that can be found directly in the textbook or in the lecture notes. Other questions may cover in-class lecture material not in the book, such as current event discussions or videos. A few test questions in the pool require you to extend or apply class material so the answers will not be found directly in the book however you will not often see these questions on your test. If you read the chapters, attend lectures, pay attention and participate in class, you should pass the tests.

Additionally, there might be a short essay question on the last four exams. If a test includes a short essay question, the essay will be worth approximately 15% of the test grade. You will have additional time to complete the essay. The exact format of each test will be announced in class before the test date. For tests with an essay question, only a random subset of students will have their essays graded on each test. All students will have the same number of graded essay questions when the semester ends.

Participation

This class will have several in-class writing assignments that will be administered in lecture. The assignments are intended to increase your involvement and interest in the class. These activities relate to textbook material that we are covering in lecture, an in-class video, or current events. The short writing assignments will be worth 8 participation points. On some days course participation might simply involve the recording of attendance, in some cases once at the start and once at the end of class. Attendance will be worth 2 participation points. Some days will not have any in-class activity.

In most cases, if you complete the in-class assignment you will receive full credit for participation. If you are not engaged in the material (e.g., you are sleeping, playing with electronic devices, etc.) or you leave early, then your activity points for that day will be reduced or you will receive a zero for the assignment. If you disrupt others in class with talking or loudly leaving the classroom before lecture is over, you will receive a zero for the in-class participation component.

You will be allowed to make up your first two missed in-class writing assignments for full credit. You will have 24 hours to submit an on-line assignment on the course web site. The assignment will be posted after class, usually by 3:00 PM on the class day. If you miss class and don't submit the on-line assignment, you will receive a zero for the in-class activity. It is not necessary to email the instructor about an absence. Simply log on to the course web site and submit the assignment. No additional make-up points for the in-class activities will be given after your first two missed assignments.

University-sanctioned absences will be allowed with at least one week notice. Accommodations will be made if you miss class due to an emergency however you are missing class, so you are not participating. When computing your participation grade, I will allow two unexcused missed attendance days.

Final exam

The final exam is optional and will cover three previously considered chapters and a video shown the last week of class. The three chapters will be announced the last week of class. The final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3, from 1:00-3:10 PM. You may replace your lowest test score with the score on your final exam. The final exam may be on-line, but for now plan on an in-class, closed book exam.

Grading Scale

Your course grade will be determined with a percentage based on the total number of points earned. The grading scale may be adjusted slightly in your favor when determining your final letter grade.

A:	93% and above	B-:	80-83%	D+:	60-64%
A-:	90-92%	C+:	77-79%	D:	50-59%
B+:	87-89%	C:	70-76%	F:	Below 50%
B:	84-86%	C-:	65-69%		

Accommodation of a request to make exceptions to the grading scale for your particular situation would be very unfair to everyone else in the class. It would also violate university policy. Any request for special grading favors will be ignored (no email reply will be sent).

Schedule

Weeks 1-3: Sports: Society, Culture, History, & Values

Reading: Chapters 1, 2 & 3

Test 1: Thursday, January 28, Chapter 1, 2 & 3

Weeks 4-5: Sports: Social Problems, Social Inequality

Reading: Chapters 4 & 5

Test 2: Thursday, February 18, Chapters 4 & 5

Weeks 6-9: Sports: Youth, High School, & College Sport

Reading: Chapters 8, 9, & 10

Test 3: Thursday, March 10, Chapters 8, 9, & 10

Weeks 10-12: Sports: The Corporate Angle

Reading: Chapters 11 & 12

Test 4: Tuesday, April 5, Chapters 11 & 12

Weeks 13-15: Sports: The Corporate Angle

Reading: Chapters 13 & 15

Test 5: Thursday, April 21, Chapters 13 & 15

Week 16:

The 3 chapters covered on the final will be announced in class
Film in class, covered on final

Final: Tuesday, May 3, from 1:00-3:10 PM

Important Items

Attendance: Attendance will be recorded only as part of the in-class activities. Students who do not attend class the first week will be automatically dropped from the course. Students who join the course after the first week of class will not have the opportunity to make up any of the participation grades that were missed. If you enroll in the class after the first week, then you will receive a zero for all missed participation activities, including missed attendance days.

Email: I might make course announcements and updates via email. You are responsible for any information presented in email. Students are encouraged by WSU to make use of their wsu.edu email address for security purposes. Please make sure your email address is correct on zsis. To protect your privacy and security, I will not provide any information about your grades or your course progress over email.

Academic Integrity: There is no excuse for using someone else's work or ideas and turning them in as your own. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. You must complete all work on your own, especially the tests. On-line tests are open-book and open-notes, but you must complete the tests on your own. Any in-class tests will be closed-book and closed-notes, with no outside assistance from anyone. Some in-class activities might involve collaborative work, but these cooperative assignments will be announced clearly in class. Any student caught cheating on any assignment or exam will be given an F grade for the exam or assignment and will be reported to the Office Student Standards and Accountability. Information about student conduct standards and accountability can be found at conduct.wsu.edu. You are responsible for following the WSU conduct standards.

Recording prohibited: You may not record lectures or course material with any visual or auditory device (see disability statement below for exceptions). I will post chapter outlines for the textbook on the course web site prior to each exam.

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

Safety information: Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.