

Sociology 245: Sociology of Sport

Fall 2016 (3 credits), Tues, Thur 10:35-11:50 AM (in Todd 216)

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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 the 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, 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

One important outcome of this course is that you will have developed and refined your 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?
- Are college (NCAA) sports a business, an important part of the educational experience, or both?
- How do illegal activities 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 the assumptions we make about sport are incomplete, misleading, or incorrect. 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. In contrast, 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 exams and view your grades. Chapter outlines for the textbook reading will be posted on the course web site. Notes for in-class activities will NOT be posted; make a friend in class to get this material.

We will be using the Top Hat (www.tophat.com) classroom response system in class. You will submit class attendance and sometimes answer to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or via text.

Visit tinyurl.com/THStudentRegistration for the student quick start guide outlining how you will register for a Top Hat account and a brief overview of the system. An email invitation will also be sent to your email account.

Top Hat requires a subscription and can be used in other classes utilizing the system. There are three options to choose from (prices subject to change from those listed here): \$24 for 4 months of unlimited access, \$36 for 12 months of unlimited access, or \$72 for lifetime access.

Grading

Your final grade in this course will be determined by your average score (scaled to 100 points each) on four exams. You will have the opportunity to increase your average with an extra-credit participation grade and an optional, extra-credit final assignment.

Exams

This class will have four exams throughout the semester. The first exam will be on-line and timed, with multiple choice and true-false questions. The exam 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 exams on-line however this depends on the results from the first on-line exam. I will explain this situation in more detail in lecture. If forced to turn to in-class exams, the exams will be closed book and closed notes.

You must take the exam on-line on the assigned exam date at **learn.wsu.edu**. The on-line site will allow you access to the exam for two hours starting at 10:00 AM on the exam day and ending at 12:00 PM. Make-up exams must be arranged at least 24 hours prior to scheduled exam date and will only be allowed for WSU-recognized absences. If you miss a scheduled exam 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 exam.

As stated above, each exam will be scaled to 100 points. An exam will consist of approximately 30-40 multiple choice questions. You will have 60 minutes to complete an on-line exam. Exams will be based on class readings from the textbook, notes, and lecture material. Some lecture material might end up as questions on the exam but you will not find this material in the notes or textbook. This is another reason to come to class regularly, and pay attention in class. If you read the chapters, attend lectures, pay attention in class, you will pass the exams. Additionally, there may be a short essay question any of the last three exams. If these exams include a short essay question, the essay will be worth approximately 15% of the exam grade. If an essay question is included, you will have additional time to complete the essay portion. The exact format of each exam will be announced in class before the exam date. For exams with an essay question, you must complete the essay but only a random subset of students will have their essays graded on each exam. If you skip the essay, you will automatically receive a zero for that portion of the exam. All students will have the same number of graded essay questions when the semester ends.

Class Participation

Class participation activities are the “extra-credit” bonus opportunity for this class. The class participation bonus is based on: Attendance and several In-class Writing Activities. **If you earn at least 85% of the total attendance points, you will receive either a 3-point bonus added to your exam average, or I will curve your final grade to a C- if you average at least 55% on the exams.** You will receive only the point bonus or the curve (not both!), depending on what increases your final grade the most.

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

The total amount of class participation points is unknown at the start of the semester. Some days will not have any in-class participation activity, but after the first week of class most days will involve at least one Top Hat attendance opportunity. Often, course participation will only involve recording attendance with the Top Hat system. Attendance may be taken at multiple times throughout the class. You may also answer short questions with the Top Hat system. Unless announced otherwise, your responses to these questions will serve as another attendance marker for the day. **Class attendance will be worth a total of 2 points each day** and attendance must be recorded for all in-class Top Hat opportunities. If you miss even one attendance opportunity, you will lose all attendance points for that day.

In-class writing assignments are intended to increase your involvement and interest in the class. These activities will be short writing assignments relating to textbook material, lecture topics, an in-class video or media presentation, or a current event. **The in-class writing assignments are worth 5 points.** The assignments will be collected in lecture and will involve individual or group work.

The only way to receive credit for the in-class attendance opportunity is to attend class. If you miss an in-class writing assignment, you will have 24 hours to submit an on-line assignment on the course web site for partial credit (usually about half the full credit). The assignment will be posted after class, usually by 1:00 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 me about an absence. Simply log on to the course web site and submit the assignment. No additional make-up opportunities for the in-class activities will be given, except the in-class activity on the first day. **If you miss more than 3 writing activities, you will lose all participation points, even if you submit on-line make-up assignments.**

University-sanctioned absences will be allowed but you need to provide a complete listing of all such absences by the end of the second week of class. Additional excused absences will be considered but you must provide me with adequate notice. Accommodations will be made if you miss class due to an emergency however you are missing class, so you are not participating.

Final Assignment

There is no final exam in this course. However, an optional writing assignment will be due by 5:00 PM, December 8. You must attend class on Dec. 6 and Dec. 8 if you want full credit on the assignment. More details about the content of the assignment will be provided in class. The final assignment will be worth 50 points, so your final grade will be based on 450 total points instead of 400. (I will explain how this assignment can slightly increase your final grade. Your final grade will slightly decrease if your grade on the final assignment is lower than the average of your in-class exam scores.)

Grading Scale

Your course grade will be determined based on the average percentage from your four best exams.

A:	94% and above	C+:	77-79%	F:	Below 50%
A-:	90-93%	C:	70-76%		
B+:	87-90%	D+:	64-69%		
B:	80-86%	D:	50-63%		

Accommodation of a request to make an exception 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 1-4: Sports: Society, Culture, History, & Values

Reading: Chapters 1, 2, 3

Exam 1: Tuesday, September 13, Chapters 1, 2, 3

Weeks 5-8: Sports: Social Problems, Social Inequality

Tuesday, Sept 20: Deadline to drop course without record

Reading: Chapters 4, 5, 8

Exam 2: Thursday, October 6, Chapters 4, 5, 8

Weeks 9-12: Sports: Youth, High School, & College Sport

Reading: Chapters 9, 10, 11

Exam 3: Tuesday, November 1, Chapters 9, 10, 11

Weeks 13-15: Sports: The Corporate Angle

Thanksgiving Break, No class November 21-25

Reading: Chapters 12, 13, 15

Exam 4: Thursday, December 1, Chapters 12, 13, 15

Last week of class, December 5-9

Final writing assignment (Optional -- details provided in class)

Assignment Due by 5:00 PM, December 8

Important Items

Attendance: Attendance will be recorded 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.

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 zzusis. 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 exams. On-line exams are open-book and open-notes, but you must complete the exams on your own. Any in-class exams 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.