

SC359.01: SPORTS IN SOCIETY
Spring, 2012

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2:30-4:30 and by appt.

What I know most surely about morality and the duty of mankind I owe to sport....
Albert Camus

PREREQUISITE:

This course is for Sociology majors and minors only. Note that SC359 is NOT a university Core course.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE:

I assume that you are taking this course because you have some interest in sports, as a participant, a fan, or just as a TV spectator. As such, you are probably familiar with the simplistic cliches that praise sport ("Sport builds character") and with the equally facile criticisms ("Athletes are dumb jocks"). A sociological approach to sport will help us to discover how much or little truth there is in these cliches or critiques.

Sociology is the systematic study of human behavior as it occurs in and is influenced by social groups, institutions, organizations, and societies. Note the emphasis on "systematic." This means that we must go beyond (but not exclude) our personal experiences. We will use the theoretical frameworks and research methods of sociology to look at and better understand sport. I assume that sport, as a social phenomenon, is inherently neither good nor bad. Such value judgments are meaningful only after we place sport in a social context and examine the antecedents and consequences of sport in a specific social system.

Finally, I assume that sport presents us with a microcosm of our society. By looking at sport, we also look at and learn about our society. For example, looking at racism in sport should help us to understand racism in general.

READINGS: [NOTE: This list may be added to from time to time.]

There is one required text; this is available in the BC Bookstore and elsewhere.
Jay Coakley. *Sports in Society* (10th ed.).

In addition, you will have to **read and report on two additional books from the list below**. (Most of these will be available in the Reserve Room of O'Neill library; you might also find inexpensive used copies at Amazon or other outlets):

William G. Bowen & Sarah A. Levin: *Reclaiming The Game*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. **OR** James L. Shulman and William G. Bowen. *The Game of Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. GV351 .S48 Taylor Branch. *The Cartel: Inside the Rise and Imminent Fall of the NCAA* [Available only as a Kindle edition.]
Charles Clotfelter. *Big-Time Sports in American Universities*. Cambridge University Press. 2011.

- Keith Dunnavant, *The Fifty-Year Seduction: How Television Manipulated College Football*. Thomas Dunne, 2004. GV959.5.D86
- Eduardo Galeano. *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*. London: Verso, 1999. GV942.5.G35
- Billy Hawkins. *The New Plantation: Black Athletes, College Sports, and Predominately White NCAA Institutions*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2010.
- Walter LaFeber. *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* (revised edition). New York: W. W. Norton, 2002. GV884.J67 L34
- Reuben A. Buford May. *Living Through the Hoop: High School Basketball, Race, and the American Dream*. New York: NYU Press, 2008. GV885.7.M39
- Michael Robidoux. *Men at Play: A Working Understanding of Professional Hockey*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2001. GV848.4.C3.R623
- George Sage. *Globalizing Sport: How Organizations, Corporations, Media, and Politics are Changing Sports*. Boulder: Paradigm, 2010.
- Debra Shogan. *The Making of High-Performance Athletes*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press: 1999. GV706.5.S543
- Nancy Theberge. *Higher Goals: Women's Ice Hockey and the Politics of Gender*. Albany: SUNY Press, 2000. GV848.6.W65T54
- Loic Wacquant. *Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. GV1136.8 .W3213
- Taylor Branch. "The Shame of College Sports. *The Atlantic*. October, 2011. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/10/the-shame-of-college-sports/8643/>

Additional readings will be assigned from time to time; most of these will be on reserve in O'Neill or available electronically.

You should also make use of Coakley's online supplements. See: www.mhhe.com/coakley10e

All reading assignments should be completed prior to the corresponding class session. This is not a make-work request. Lectures are more comprehensible if you've read some related material beforehand. Studying is easier if you don't have to cram. And I DO value discussion in class; it is easier for you to participate in discussion if you know what we are talking about.

Your grade will be determined as follows:

- 5% -- Attendance at and brief report on two on-campus lectures. Dates and times TBA.
- 10% -- Miscellaneous short assignments
- 15% -- Mid-term Exam: Thursday, March 15. **MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!**
- 15% -- Two one thousand word book reviews (due at various times)
- 35% -- Term Paper: DUE no later than Friday, May 4 at 4:00PM
 >>> WARNING: LATE PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED! <<<
 >>> A paper is late if it arrives at 4:01! <<<
- 20% -- Final Exam: **THE FINAL EXAM IS ON THE DAY AND TIME SET BY THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR: MONDAY, MAY 14 AT 12:30 PM. NO EXCEPTIONS!** Do not ask for an alternative date. Do not buy airline tickets for an early departure. If you must get sick on that date, get very, very sick.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:

1. For all written work I expect to receive TYPED papers.
2. The papers are due on the assigned dates, at the beginning of class. None of the following excuses is acceptable: • My dog chewed it up. • My room was robbed last night. They got everything, even your paper. • I had it in my suitcase but the airplane lost it; you know how they are. • Didn't you get it? I put it in campus mail! (or e-mail!) • My roommate spilled coffee on it. • *Etc. ad nauseum.*
3. I expect your papers to reflect a university level of writing. Any paper that contains three or more misspelled words on a page, or contains gross grammatical errors, or is badly organized, may be penalized. Papers may be returned for rewriting. THEREFORE: (a) Please prepare your paper sometime before the eve of the due date. (b) Write a rough draft, show it to a friend for comments, then write a final copy; (c) Proofread your paper and have a friend also proofread it.
4. PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. It is your obligation to be fully aware of the Boston College policies on academic honesty. ANY violation may subject the offender to severe penalty, including course failure. If you are not familiar with the Boston College policy on academic honesty, see the Boston College Bulletin, or on the web at:
<http://www.bc.edu/integrity>
5. Keep copies of all of your work. Retain all of the work that is returned to you until after you have received your final course grade.

ATTENDANCE:

THREE unexcused absences are permitted during the semester. For each absence over three, the course grade will be lowered by one step (e.g., from a B+ to a B). The only "excused" absences are those presented to me in writing (a) by a health care practitioner certifying that you had a sound medical reason to be absent from class (and note that the BC Infirmary does **not** give out such notes) or (b) by your Dean certifying that you had a serious personal reason to be absent from class.

EXAMS, DUE DATES, ETC.:

Each exam will be based on reading material and class content. The mid-term will cover sections I-III (roughly) of the outline. The final exam will cover the entire course, with much emphasis on Sections IV and V. Except for extreme emergencies, I do NOT give make-up exams. If you anticipate any problems with an assignment due date or an exam date, you MUST notify me IN WRITING at least one week in advance. The date for the final exam is set by the University Registrar; I will make no exceptions for this.

IN THE CLASSROOM:

- I will always try to begin class on time; I also expect you to be here on time.
- All electronic devices (cell phones, computers, etc.) must be turned off during class.
- Unless you have a medical condition (of which you should notify me), please use the bathroom before class; do not leave the room for a bathroom (or other) break unless it is an emergency.
- The classroom is not a dining hall; no food is allowed; a liquid in a **spill-proof** container is allowed.
- Gentlemen do not wear hats in the classroom, except for religious reasons.

Approximate Course Schedule

(Dates for topics covered are tentative and subject to change.)

I. INTRODUCTION (Week of Jan. 17)

- A. Sociology and the Sociology of Sports: Why Study Sports?
READ: Coakley, Ch. 1
James, Ch.2, "Against the Current" from *Beyond A Boundary* (reserve)
Assignment #1 (Due Jan. 24)
- B. Sociological Theory and Sport (Jan 24)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 2
- C. A Brief Historical Perspective (Jan. 26)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 3
- D. *Sport and the Economy* (Feb. 2)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 11; Clotfelter, Chs. 1 & 8 (handouts)

University Lecture: Sport & Higher Education Thursday, Feb. 2 at 7:30 pm

II. SPORT, SOCIETY, AND VALUES

- A. Sport as a Shaper of Values (Jan. 31)
Read: Stevenson, "Becoming an International Athlete" (reserve)
Donnelly and Young, "Construction and Confirmation of Identity" (reserve)
Chambliss, "Mundanity of Excellence" (reserve)
- B. Sports for Children (Feb. 7, 14)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 4

III. SPECIAL TOPICS IN SPORT SOCIOLOGY

- A. Deviance and Violence (Feb. 21, 28)
READ: Coakley, Chs. 6 & 7
Wacquant, "The Social Logic of Boxing..." (reserve)
Kraeger, "Unnecessary Roughness" (reserve)

Spring Break: March 5-9

- B. Gender (March 13)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 8
Acosta & Carpenter, "Women in Intercollegiate Sport" (reserve)

University Lecture: Sport & Higher Education Wednesday, March 21 at 7:30 pm
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- C. Race, Ethnicity, and Class (March 20)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 9 & 10
Foley, "The Great American Football Ritual" (reserve)

Midterm Exam: March 23

**University Lecture: Sport & Higher Education
Tuesday, March 27 at 7:30 pm**

IV. SPORTS AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- A. Sports in High School and College (March 27, April 3)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 14

- B. Sport and Politics (April 10)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 13

- C. Sport and the Media (April 17)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 12

- D. Sport and the Economy (April 24)
READ: Coakley, Ch. 11

**THE TERM PAPER IS DUE APRIL 29 AT 3:00 PM
LATE PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED**

V. CONCLUSION

READ: Coakley, Ch. 16

**THE FINAL EXAM IS ON MONDAY,
MAY 14 AT 12:30 PM
NO EXCEPTIONS NO MAKE-UP EXAMS**