

University of Florida, Fall 2018
Sport, Identity, and Conflict

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Time: Tuesday 1:55-4:55

Location: 0108 Matherly Hall

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Sport is popularly considered as a sphere separate from ‘important’ aspects of social and political dynamics. Studies in the social sciences have proven the opposite: both active and passive involvements in competitive sports take part in shaping and undermining social structures, political mobilizations, collective identities, patterns of dominations, and more. This course takes a global and comparative perspective to follow the processes through which national, racial, ethnic, civic, religious, local and gender identities are constructed by sport. Special emphasis is given to: the significance of sport in deeply divided societies; sports as a political battleground for the production of meanings in ethno-national conflicts and colonial contexts; and the implications of sport globalization on various collective identities. Theoretical themes are illustrated through various particular case studies from around the globe, including North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, India, the Middle East, and Papua-New Guinea.

Assignments

Attendance: The course is heavily based on class discussions. Therefore, class attendance is mandatory.

Class Participation - Students are expected to show up in class after reading the relevant materials for discussion and preparing critical comments they can share with other students. Discussions should be based on the assigned reading (%15 of your grade).

Reading commentary

Students are expected to upload to Canvas a brief but thoughtful commentary (approximately 300 words) referring to the weekly reading assignment before class. Remember – a commentary is not a summary. This can be in the form of a narrative, an analytical critique, or an essay illustrating the connection between a theme raised by an author and a corresponding social issue, or a comparison between the assigned text and other texts discussed in the course. Commentary

will be graded twice during the semester, once on 10/9 (14%) and once at the end of the semester (16%).

Facilitating a class discussions

Each student will be responsible for leading a discussion for one session, based on the weekly readings. The facilitation will begin by presenting an introductory critique of the text(s) and raising a few questions to the class. Facilitators should prepare their critique and questions in advance of their session and put together a written critique of the readings in the form of a single paper (maximum 800 words), which should then be submitted in lieu of the individual reading response for that week, but at least 24 hours before class (10%). The discussion should be coherent and sharply focuses, and should last approximately 30 minutes.

Final Paper

Students are expected to choose a topic for their paper in one of the following formats: 1) A library research with a comparative focus 2) An ethnographic or interview-based research in or around the campus 3) A quantitative research based in case you have access to relevant data or able to collect them during the course. The expected length depends on the format you choose, but in any case it should not be longer than 3,000 words. The subject matter and basic argument of the paper should be submitted in the form of a written abstract consisting of one or two paragraphs, no later than 9/11. It is the student's responsibility to get a final approval of the topic no later than 9/25. This final approval is worth %5 of the final grade. A first draft (15% of the final grade) will submitted by 11/20), and the final version by 12/6 (25% of the final grade).

Schedule

8/28: Introduction

Movie: Not Just a Game (Dave Zirin, 2010).

9/4: Sports and Modernity

In order to understand what makes sport a powerful social force we have first to understand it in its historical context. We will discuss three relevant theories about the relation between sport and modernity, Norbert Elias' "The civilizing process", and Allan Guttmann's "Weberian theory about sport as the ultimate expression of rationalization," and a Marxist perspective of sports as a derivative of capitalism.

1. Elias, Norbert, and Eric Dunning. Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986 .63-71

2. Guttmann, Allen. *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1978. 15-55
3. Brohm, Jean-Marie. 1978. Sport - a Prison of Measured time. London: Ink Links, 175-182.

9/11: Sports and Social Class-I

Why do certain sports attract people from higher social classes while other sports attract people from lower classes? Why is it that the higher one's social class, the greater one's overall involvement in sports? Is sport a realistic channel for social or economic mobility? Does sport contribute to class consciousness or does it prevent its development? We will discuss these questions, assisted by different theories, including Neo-Marxism, Hegemony theory, and Pierre Bourdieu's ideas.

1. Sports in Society, Chapter 9 (pp. 264-301)
2. Bourdieu, Pierre. "Sport and Social Class." *Information (International Social Science Council)* 17, no. 6 (1978): 819-40.

9/18: Sport, Gender, and Sexuality

Sport is an important sphere of struggles over 'gender ideology', namely, a web of ideas and beliefs about masculinity, femininity, and the relationship between men and women. We will analyze the historical exclusion of women from sport in different countries and their gradual inclusion in the US since the early 1970's. We will give special attention to the relation between 'hegemonic sports' and masculinity in different countries.

1. Sports in Society, Chapter 7 (pp. 178-223)
2. "Barbie Girls versus Sea Monsters. p. 11-30 in Messner, Michael A., *Out of Play: Critical Essays on Gender and Sport*. State University of New York Press, 2010.

9/25: Sports, Gender, and Sexuality – II

1. Burstyn, Varda. *The Rites of Men: Manhood, Politics, and the Culture of Sport*. Toronto, Buffalo & London: University of Toronto Press, 1999. 27-44
2. Trujillo, Nick. "Machines, Missiles, and Men: Images of the Male Body on ABC's Monday Night Football." *Sociology of Sport Journal* 12.4 (1995).

10/2: Sport and Race

In this section we will critically analyze the popular beliefs that sport has some inherent property that makes it a possible instrument of integration and harmonious race relations, and that it provides an opportunity for re-distribution of resources between different ethnic and racial groups. We will discuss the contribution of sport to the construction of ethnic and racial identities, and will ask under which circumstances racial and ethnic identities are politicized in

the field of sport. In addition, we will investigate the sociological reasons for the over-representation of African-Americans in certain American sports.

Sports in Society, Chapter 8 (pp. 226-263)

Joshua Newman, "Old times there are not forgotten: Sport, identity, and the Confederate flag in the Dixie South", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 24 (3) 2007

10/9: Sport and Race II

Carrington, Ben. *Race, Sport and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora*. SAGE Publications, 2010. 1-23

Carrington, Ben. "The Critical Sociology of Race and Sport: The First Fifty Years." *Annual Review of Sociology* 39 (2013): 379-98.

."The Politics of Protest: The 1968 Olympic Games." Pp. 285-295 in *The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the American Experience in Sport*, edited by D. Wiggins and P. Miller. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Movie: *Fist of Freedom*

10/16. Sport and Religion

Sports in Society, Chapter 15 (p. 506-537)

Sorek, Tamir, 2007, "The Islamic Soccer League" Ch.7 (pp. 128-149) from: *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State: The Integrative Enclave* (Cambridge University Press).

Stevenson, C., and R. Dunn. "The Paradox of the Church Hockey League." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 33, no. 2 (1998): 131-41.

10/23: Sport and National Identities

How does sport contribute to the construction and undermining of national identities? Why do different nations have different 'national sports' and to what extent are these games related to the collective identity of the nation? What is the relation between sport, nationalism, and the gender order? Different case studies from America and Europe will be used to look for answers for these questions.

Reading: Bairner, Alan. *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001 (1-20; 91-113).

Sorek, Tamir, and Robert G White. "American Football and National Pride: Racial Differences." *Social Science Research* 58 (2016): 266-278.

10/30: Sport and National Identities: II

Markovits, Andrei S. and Steven L. Hellernan. 2001, Ch. 1 (pp 7-51) from: *Offside: Soccer and American exceptionalism in sport*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

11/6: Sport, Colonialism, and Decolonization

Sport and colonialism have been intimately connected. The most popular spectator sports in most of the ex-colonies were brought to these countries by European colonialist powers. Sport games were used as a political tool to establish colonial domination, to 'modernize', 'civilize', 'Westernize' and Christianize the natives. Frequently, the same games later were used as tools for mobilizing anti-colonial and nationalist opposition. In addition, colonial sports were important elements in the crystallizations of settler communities separate from the mother country (in the U.S., South Africa, New Zealand). In this section we will discuss these themes in various contexts.

1. James, C.L.R. *Beyond a Boundary*. London: Yellow Jersey Press, 2005 (27-40; 54-61)
2. Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. "Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket." pp. 89- 112 in *Modernity at Large*, edited by Arjun Appadurai. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Movie: Trobriand Cricket

11/13: Sport in Deeply Divided Societies – Israel/Palestine

Ch. 1 (pp. 1-13) and 8 (150-182) from: Tamir Sorek, *Arab Soccer in a Jewish State*, Cambridge University Press, 2007

Movie: : Sakhnin my life

11/20: Sport in Deeply Divided Societies: South Africa

Booth, Douglas: *The race game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*, Ch. 5 (pp. 55-84).

Desai, Ashwin. *The Race to Transform: Sports in Post Apartheid South Africa*. Human Sciences Research Council, 2010 (1-13; 56-79).

11/27: Sport in Deeply Divided Societies: Northern Ireland

Bairner, A. "Political Unionism and Sporting Nationalism: An Examination of the Relationship between Sport and National Identity within the Ulster Unionist Tradition." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 10, no. 4 (2003): 517-35.

Sugden, John. "Critical Left-Realism and Sport Interventions in Divided Societies."
International review for the sociology of sport 45, no. 3 (2010): 258-72.

12/4 — Students' presentations