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.

**Grading**

1. Two exercises 24 %
2. Participation in class 12 %
3. Reading commentary 24 %
4. Two movie reviews 12 %
5. Three quizzes 28 %
Assignments
This course has no final exam. Grading is based on your continuous work throughout the semester.

On-line reading commentary (24%)
The reading for could be found in these three sources:

2. Items from e-reserves.
3. Items on e-learning.

Students are expected to post a short but thoughtful commentary (250-300 words) on ten reading items. The commentary should ideally include one paragraph summarizing the main argument/s and one paragraph conveying your own perspective on the text. This could be any of the following (or a combination of them): criticism of the article/chapter, pointing out how a specific article refers to other items or lectures in the course, an idea that came to mind while reading the item, a reaction to a classmate’s argument about the item, or a reference to subjects of discussions proposed in class. You might find some of the text difficult. If you do not understand them it is ok – as long as you identify exactly what you could not understand and ask the instructor or your classmates for assistance.

Comments on a reading items should be submitted before it is discussed in class. This assignment is an integral part of the learning process, and therefore late submissions will not be counted.

If you submit commentary on more than ten items, the quality of your best ten postings will be considered for your grade. If you have more than ten high quality submissions and your participation grade is not perfect, your extra submissions will be used to improve your participation grade.

Class participation and web discussion (12%): Attendance in this class is mandatory but is not enough. This course is not a spectator sport, and it requires continuous active engagement. You are expected to take an active part in class discussions and to be able to discuss every reading item in class, even if you have not posted the related reading commentary. If you are too timid to talk in class, please come to discuss with me - before the end of the second week - your alternative options to gain participation credit.

Two exercises (24%): Students will submit two exercises in the sociological research of sport, according to specific guidelines. Submissions will be made in pairs. You cannot work with the same classmate for both exercises. In other words, for each exercise you will have to work with a different classmate.

Two movie reviews (2 x 6%): Throughout the semester we will watch four documentary movies. You are required to submit a review of two of them, no later than 7 days after the screening. An ideal review would include a short descriptive paragraph followed by your own
input - your thoughts about the movie as a student in the course ‘Sport, Society, and Politics’. The length should be approximately 300 words.

**Three quizzes (28%):** Throughout the semester you will be required to take three multiple choice quizzes. Each quiz will take approximately 10 minutes. If you reached this point in the syllabus, please email me an image of a basketball.

**Plagiarism**
Using others’ ideas and words without clearly acknowledging the source of that information is considered plagiarism and is a serious violation of the honor code of the University of Florida (please see [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scrr/honorcodes/honorcode{mp for details). Submitting plagiarized work will automatically result in a failing grade in this course and will be reported to the relevant authorities in the university. In order to prevent plagiarism, papers submitted in this class, including your reading reports and movie reviews, will be checked by the Turn-it-in software.

**Schedule**

**8/22: Introduction**

**8/24: 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 two 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”.

Sports in Society, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-23) + pp. 60-61 from the 9th edition (available on Canvas).

**8/29 - 8/31: Sports and Social Class-I**
In this section we will ask the following questions: 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.
Reading: Sports in Society, Chapter 9 (pp. 264-301)

**9/5 - 9/7: Sports and Social Class-II**
Reading:

**9/12 - 9/14: Sports, Gender, and Sexuality**
In this section we will discuss the significance of sport as 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.

Reading:
Sports in Society, Chapter 7 (pp. 178-223)

**9/19 - 9/21: Sports, Gender, and Sexuality - II**
Reading:

**9/26 - 9/28: 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, and will discuss the intersection of race and gender in sport.

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

**9/28: Quiz 1**

**10/3 - 10/5: Sport and Race II**
Miller, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Movie: Fist of Freedom

10/10 - 10/12: Sport and Politics
How do governments and global political processes influence sport? How does the sport sphere shaped by political interests and political decisions?

Sport in Society: Chapter 13 (p. 428-463)

10/17 -10/19: Sport and Religion
1. Sports in Society, Chapter 15 (p. 506-537)
2. 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).

10/24 - 10/26: 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.


10/31 - 11/2: Sport and National Identities: II


11/2: Quiz 2

11/7 — 11/9: 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 will discuss these themes as they are expressed in various contexts.


Movie: Trobriand Cricket

11/14 – 11/16: Sport in Deeply Divided Societies - Israel

Ch. 1 (pp. 1-13) and 8 (150-182) from: Tamir Sorek, Arab Soccer in a Jewish State, Cambridge University Press, 2007
Movie on 11/16: Sakhnin my life

11/21 Sport in Deeply Divided Societies: South Africa
Booth, Douglas: The race game: Sport and Politics in South Africa, Ch. 5 (pp. 55-84).

11/28 – 11/30 Sport in Deeply Divided Societies: Northern Ireland


12/5 — Conclusion (Quiz 3)