

Soc 117 Sport as a Social Institution

Spring 2019 | UC Berkeley

Instructor: Dr. Linus Huang, Continuing Lecturer

Office hours: (drop-in) Wednesdays 3:15-5:15 PM, 487 Barrows

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Final exam: Wednesday, May 15th 2019 3:00-6:00 PM

What will this course be about?

What counts as a “sport” and what doesn’t? Why is basketball unambiguously a sport, but not cheerleading? Why do women in the U.S. play soccer, but not football? Why is cricket a sport for the masses in India, but a sport restricted to the social elite in the U.S.? Why is college sports a multi-billion-dollar industry in the U.S., but barely even an activity for participants, let alone spectators, anywhere else in the world? The objective of this course is, as the late sociologist Pierre Bourdieu proposed, to explain how the supply of sports (what sports we have, who plays them, how competition is organized) and the demand for sports (how we “consume” sports as fans) comes to be in a particular places at particular times. The course is built upon case studies—including those that address the questions asked above—but students will learn how to question and analyze the social ordering of any part of the sports world.

Readings

All course readings are available in PDF format on the bCourses site.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined by:

- ❖ One **sports fandom survey**, online, on bCourses (5% of your course grade). This survey will ask how you participate in and/or follow sports (if at all). Data collected from this survey will supplement our discussion of sports fandom later during the term.

While the fandom survey will count (5%) toward your course grade, there are no wrong answers to the questions. Once you complete it, you will get credit for it. However, the survey must be completed by Friday, February 8th. Failure to complete the survey by then will result in a -0- score on this assignment. There are no exceptions.

- ❖ Two **take-home midterm exams**, each 35% of the course grade. They will be “short essay” style in nature (further details to be given later).
- ❖ An **in-class final exam**, administered during the University’s officially scheduled timeslot for the course, on Wednesday, May 15th, 2018, from 3:00-6:00 PM. The final exam will be cumulative and multiple choice. The final exam is worth 25% of the course grade.

The course grading scale is as follows:

A+	97+	A	93-96	A-	90-92
B+	87-89	B	83-86	B-	80-82
C+	77-79	C	73-76	C-	70-72
D+	67-69	D	63-66	D-	60-62
		F	0-59		

When it comes time to compute overall course grades, I will round to the nearest whole number using standard rounding conventions. It doesn't really matter what the letter grade on the individual assignments are.

There are no other discretionary considerations that will factor into your grade. Furthermore, I do not offer extra credit beyond that which I may build in to the midterm and final exams.

There are no surprises in how I calculate course grades. The GRADES section on bCourses incorporates the weightings above and will accurately keep you apprised of your course progress. During the semester, with a little arithmetic, you can figure out how you need to do on subsequent exams to earn a particular grade.

Academic Honesty & Classroom Conduct

The UC Berkeley Honor Code states that "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others" (<https://teaching.berkeley.edu/berkeley-honor-code>). I expect you will follow these principles. You may not copy specific text or ideas from others, whether from fellow students, from authors of our readings or other material you find, without specific attribution. To do otherwise is to plagiarize. You may not cheat on any of the exams by bringing in illicit outside material, copying from fellow students, or engaging in other dishonest practices. Violation of these rules will result in an immediate **-0-** on the *entire* assignment in question, plus a report to the Office of Academic Affairs at my discretion.

You may of course discuss the lectures and readings with your fellow students. Forming studying groups on your own is encouraged, especially since there are no discussion sections to accompany this course. If these groups are used to struggle through ideas or debate topics (both are also good uses of class time, by the way!), then the effort expended can be very rewarding. However, if groups are used simply to memorize a classmate's notes by rote, to subsequently recite on exams, **this is effectively another form of plagiarism** as far as I am concerned. I use this specific example because it has popped up in my courses before.

Study group meetings should be suspended during periods where a take-home exam is active. They can begin again after the exam due date has been reached.

Use of laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. in class. I use my laptop for virtually everything and do not expect students not to utilize the various digital technologies we have at our disposal today. However, if you are texting, Twittering, Facebooking, watching YouTube or Netflix, or some other such thing in class, you are likely distracting others and I will ask you to leave.

Reading/Exam Schedule

All readings for this course are available on bCourses in the READINGS folder of the FILES section.

Readings associated with a date are to be completed prior to the class meeting on that day. It may become necessary to adjust the reading schedule as the semester unfolds. If this happens, I will make the change(s) on bCourses—check the SYLLABUS section online to see the most up-to-date schedule. I will not change this PDF file.

Introduction		
Jan 23-28	Introduction: an institutionalist perspective on sports & society	<i>No readings.</i>
Jan 30	Is athletic excellence about more than genetics?	<i>Read:</i> D. Epstein, <i>The Sports Gene</i> ch 1, 9
Feb 1-4	Social institutions on the field of play	<i>Read:</i> M. Gladwell, “How David Beats Goliath” <i>The New Yorker</i> May 11 2009
Theme: Social stratification and sport		
Feb 6	Racial stratification in football	<i>Read:</i> J. Reid & J. McManus, “The NFL’s Racial Divide” <i>The Undeclared</i> Apr 26 2017
Feb 8	Gender stratification and sport: what counts as “sport”?	<i>Read:</i> L. Grindstaff & E. West, “Cheerleading and the Gendered Politics of Sport”
Feb 8	Sports Fandom Survey due on bCourses Friday, February 8th 2019	
Feb 11-13	Gender stratification and sport: who gets to play a sport?	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Markovits & L. Rensmann, “A Silent ‘Feminization’ of Global Sports Cultures?” ch 4 from <i>Gaming the World</i>D. Foley, “The Great American Football Ritual”
Feb 15-20	How organized youth sports are about class anxiety	<i>Read:</i> H. Levey Friedman, <i>Playing to Win: Raising Children in a Competitive Culture</i> ch 1, 3
Feb 22-25	Sports & political protest	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">K. Cohen, “The Forgotten Origins of Politics in Sports” <i>Slate</i> Jan 2 2018H. Bryant, “How Did Our Sports Get So Divisive?” <i>The New York Times</i> May 12 2018
Feb 25	Take-Home Midterm #1 distributed on bCourses Monday, February 25th 2019	
Theme: The tension between sports as commercialized vs. non-commercialized activity		
Feb 27-Mar 4	Sports spectator identity	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">R. Giulianotti, “Supporters, Followers, Fans, and <i>Flâneurs</i>”B. McGrath, “Dream Teams” <i>The New Yorker</i> Apr 13 2015
Mar 5	Take-Home Midterm #1 due on bCourses Tuesday, March 5th 2019 12:00 PM	

Mar 6	Is sport about winning at all cost?	<i>Read:</i> R. Beamish & I. Ritchie, “From Chivalrous ‘Brothers-In-Arms’ to the Eligible Athlete”
Mar 8	Why are college sports so popular in the U.S.?	<i>Read:</i> A. Lifschitz, M. Sauder & M.L. Stevens, “Football as a Status System in U.S. Higher Education” but only pp. 206-07 (“Historical Narrative”)
Mar 11-15	The amateurism model of college sports	<i>Read:</i> T. Branch, “The Shame of College Sports” <i>The Atlantic</i> Oct 2011
Mar 18-20	The economics of big-time college sports	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • J.A. Miller, S. Eder & R. Sandomir, “College Football’s Most Dominant Player? It’s ESPN” <i>The New York Times</i> Aug 24 2013 • S. Eder, R. Sandomir & J.A. Miller, “At Louisville, Athletic Boom Is Rooted in ESPN Partnership” <i>The New York Times</i> Aug 25 2013
Mar 22	Cal Athletics’ crisis	<i>Read:</i> Collegiate Sports Associates, “California Athletics: Intercollegiate Athletics Review” Mar 2018
Mar 25-29	<i>SPRING BREAK</i>	
Apr 1	Title IX and Cal Athletics	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chancellor C. Christ, “Cal Athletics: The Road Ahead” Mar 29 2018 • Chancellor C. Christ, “An Update on Athletics Facilities” Jul 16 2018
Apr 3	When do sports <i>not</i> become commercialized?	<i>Read:</i> J. Kaufman & O. Patterson, “Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket”
Theme: What role does <i>territory</i> play in the ordering of sport?		
Apr 5-10	Where does the institution of the <i>home team</i> come from?	<i>Read:</i> E. Leifer, <i>Making the Majors</i> intro, ch 5
Apr 5	Take-Home Midterm #2 distributed on bCourses Friday, April 5th 2019	
Apr 12-15	The political economy of professional team sports	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D. Coates, “A Closer Look at Stadium Subsidies” • R. Eckstein & K. Delaney, “New Sports Stadiums, Community Self-Esteem, and Community Collective Conscience”
Apr 13	Take-Home Midterm #1 due on bCourses Saturday, April 13th 2019 12:00 PM	
Apr 17-19	Sports & Nation I: <i>Nation</i> still matters in sport ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Video:</i> BBC Panorama, “Stadiums of Hate” Jun 1 2012 • <i>Read:</i> A. Bertoli, “The World Cup and Interstate Conflict: Evidence from a Natural Experiment” (Jun 17 2014) pp 1-30
Apr 22	Sports & Nation II: ... but perhaps not as much as it used to	<i>Read:</i> R. Poli, “The Denationalization of Sport”

Potpourri		
Apr 24	Whose knowledge of baseball has authority?	<i>Read:</i> M. Lewis, <i>Moneyball</i> ch 2, 4
Apr 26-29	How we arrived at today's anti-PED world	<i>Read:</i> B. Sluggett, "Creating the 'Pure' Athlete" ch 2
May 1-3	Sports and violence	<i>Read:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R. Collins, "On-Field Player Violence" • M. Messner, "Male Athletes, Injuries, and Violence"
May 6-10	Reading, Recitation and Review (RRR) week	
May 15	Final Exam IN-CLASS Wednesday, May 15th 2019 3:00-6:00 PM	