

Instructor: Dr. Linus Huang

Office Hours: Mondays 3:30-5:30 PM, 434 Barrows Hall

E-mail: lbhuang@berkeley.edu

Readers: Ognjen “Ogi” Radic & Orestes “Pat” Hastings

Final Exam: See below.

Course Overview

This course is constructed around the following premises: (1) that sports is something many (but not all!) of us talk about almost endlessly; but (2) that all this talk is almost always confined within very narrow parameters. When we “talk sports”, the topics we discuss, how we talk about them, and what the possible viewpoints are (both “good” and “bad”), are all given beforehand by deeply entrenched social institutions.

The objective of this course is to identify how these institutions are constructed. It is based on the assumption that sport is not a neutral, functional, purely meritocratic activity but instead is an activity that *embodies social relations*. An immediate consequence of this assumption is that to identify the institutions that underlie how we talk about (and do) sports is to identify social inequality within and among organizers, participants, and spectators of sports. Sports are not primordial, but are the products of social relations. As the late sociologist Pierre Bourdieu put it, the purpose of a sociology of sport is to not take the existence of sports for granted—or, to study the conditions under which the *supply* and the *demand* for sports become possible in the first place.

The more deeply entrenched institutions of sports are, the paradoxically harder they become to objectively “see”—because we are not aware that the existing sports social order is anything other than functionally necessary. The exciting thing about studying sports sociologically at this particular moment in history is that a number of long-held institutional assumptions underlying many popular sports are coming under significant challenge. Of immediate relevance to us as residents of UC Berkeley is the upheaval unfolding in the world of college athletics. We’ll spend a great deal of time with this. We will also look at issues of race, gender, and sexuality; institutional approaches to understanding deviance in sports; the role of sports media, particularly television; the significance of league structure to sports as a cultural product; the question of whether sports are “public goods”—and hence legitimate vs. illegitimate uses of public resources; and more!

Required Readings

There are no textbooks or readers for this course. All readings are in PDF format on the bcourses site. Look in the “READINGS” folder on the Files page.

Course Format

This is a lecture course and I will indeed do a fair amount of lecturing. However, class participation is expected and will make everyone’s experience far, far, more enlightening, not to mention enjoyable.

There are a lot of readings and they will provide a solid foundation for the material you will be responsible for on the exams. However, I will also present a lot of additional material in class. **You will be responsible for this additional material on the exams, as well.** Therefore, class attendance and participation are crucial to success in the course.

Grading

Your course grade will be determined by two (2) midterm exams (30% each) and a final exam (40%). **All exams will be take-home exams.** (See the schedule below for exam dates and times.)

All three exams will be of a short answer variety, where “short answer” roughly means from one to four paragraphs per question. As I will reiterate in class, you should strive for clarity but also succinctness in these short answers. You should feel free to write in a conversational tone and dispense with formal writing conventions such as formal opening and concluding paragraphs.

The grading scale is as follows. All scores are significant to the second digit after the decimal. ‘ [’ means including, and ‘) ’ means excluding, so ‘ [83-87)’ for example means everything from 83.00 up to but not including 87.00.

		A	[94+	A-	[90-94)
B+	[87-90)	B	[83-87)	B-	[80-83)
C+	[77-80)	C	[73-77)	C-	[70-73)
D+	[67-70)	D	[63-67)	D-	[60-63)
		F	[0-60)		

I will use the bCourses site to keep a record of your scores, so as midterm scores are released, make sure that what is on bCourses matches what is on your actual returned paper/exam. If there is a problem, report it immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester to report an issue with either of the midterms.

Note: There are no other discretionary considerations that factor in to the calculation of your course grade. As the course progresses, you can calculate your performance for yourself, given the weightings indicated above, and determine exactly what you need to do on subsequent graded assignments to get X grade.

International Students + Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must have their statuses verified by the DSP office by **Wednesday, September 10th**. Electronic copies of these letters are automatically sent to me; I do not require a paper hardcopy of them.

The course will require a modest degree of English writing proficiency during the three examinations. If you are an ESL student for whom this may prove difficult, accommodations can be made provided you get in touch with me at the beginning of the semester.

Resources

Writing for Sociology. Although this course will not be as writing-intensive as others, writing will still be important on the exams. Graduate students and faculty in the sociology department at Berkeley have put together a writing guide specifically geared toward sociology students. It is intended for longer-form writing assignments, but could still be useful for the short-answer (e.g., 1-4 paragraphs) questions that will be on the exams.

The URL for this guide is: <http://sociology.berkeley.edu/undergraduate-writing-resources>.

Student Learning Center. The campus Student Learning Center (SLC) offers various services for both ESL and native-speaking students. See their website at:

<http://slc.berkeley.edu/ucftr/index.htm>

and in particular their writing resources at:

<http://slc.berkeley.edu/writing/index.htm>.

International Students. The Berkeley International Office offers a variety of services, including ESL resources. See their website at:

<http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/>

And note their English Language Resources section, drawn from various online resources throughout the U.S.

http://internationaloffice.berkeley.edu/english_resources

Academic Honesty and Other Issues

Don't cheat. Part of the University's suggested language for a student honor code is "always to act in such a way that no one would ever imagine that you would even consider cheating". **Copying off another student's test**, and **plagiarism** (copying text or ideas from other sources and passing them off as your own and/or omitting proper attributing) have been the two most common—but not only—forms of cheating I have encountered. **Such transgressions will be penalized with an immediate zero on the assignment in question**, which will for all practical purposes result in failure of the course, *plus* notification to the Office of Student Affairs at my discretion.

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, watching Netflix, or some other such thing in class, you are likely distracting others and I will ask you to leave.

Reading/Exam Schedule

As indicated above, all readings are available in PDF format on the bCourses site. They are to be completed **prior** to the class meeting by which they are listed.

Introduction

Aug	29	Fri	What is a sociology of sport? <i>Reading: none</i>
<hr/>			
Sep	1	Mon	##### LABOR DAY: NO CLASS #####
	3	Wed	Introduction, cont'd <i>Reading: none</i>
	5	Fri	Institutional analysis of sports <i>Reading: Robert E. Washington & David Karen, "Introduction: Sport as a Model of Meritocracy"</i>
<hr/>			
	8	Mon	(cont'd, no new readings)

Sep	10	Wed	Social institutions on the field of play <i>Reading:</i> Malcolm Gladwell, “How David Beats Goliath”; Michael Lewis, “If I Only Had the Nerve”
	12	Fri	(cont’d, no new readings)
	15	Mon	Social institutions within professional sports organizations <i>Reading:</i> Michael Lewis, <i>Moneyball</i> ch 2, 4, 12
	17	Wed	(cont’d, no new readings)
	19	Fri	Is cheerleading a sport? <i>Reading:</i> Laura Grindstaff & Emily West, “Cheerleading and the Gendered Politics of Sport”
	22	Mon	(cont’d, no new readings)
	24	Wed	Why don’t women play American football? <i>Reading:</i> Andrei Markovits & Lars Rensmann, <i>Gaming the World</i> ch 4, pp. 157-187; Douglas Foley, “The Great American Football Ritual”
	26	Fri	(cont’d, no new readings)
Midterm #1 Take-Home Exam online Fri. Sep. 26, 3:00 PM			
	29	Mon	Why did college sports become so popular in the U.S.? <i>Optional reading:</i> Andrei Markovits & Lars Rensmann, <i>Gaming the World</i> ch 6
Oct	1	Wed	Should college athletes be paid? <i>Reading:</i> Welch Suggs, “Football, Television, and the Supreme Court”; Taylor Branch, “The Shame of College Sports”
Midterm #1 Take-Home Exam due Wed. Oct. 1, 1:00 PM			
	3	Fri	(cont’d, no new readings)
	6	Mon	(cont’d, no new readings)
	8	Wed	(cont’d, no new readings)
	10	Fri	College sports and Title IX <i>Optional reading:</i> Women’s Sports Foundation, “Who’s Playing College Sports?”
	13	Mon	(cont’d, no new readings)
	15	Wed	Race, sports, and the genetics question <i>Reading:</i> Malcolm Gladwell, “The Sports Taboo”
	17	Fri	Racialized meanings in sports <i>Reading:</i> Adam Felder & Seth Amitin, “How Baseball Announcers Subtly Favor American Players Over Foreign Ones” <i>The Atlantic</i> 27 Aug 2012

Oct	20	Mon	Why do we think about sports every hour of the day, and not just the duration of the sports contest? — The role of sports leagues <i>Reading:</i> Eric Leifer, <i>Making the Majors</i> intro + ch 1
	22	Wed	(cont'd, no new readings)
	24	Fri	The role of sports leagues, cont'd: Why has the NFL overtaken MLB as America's #1 sport? <i>Reading:</i> Eric Leifer, <i>Making the Majors</i> ch 5

	27	Mon	(cont'd, no new readings)
	29	Wed	(cont'd, no new readings)
	31	Fri	The political economy of sports <i>Reading:</i> Andrew Zimbalist, "May the Best Team Win"; Rick Eckstein & Kevin Delaney, "New Sports Stadiums, Community Self-Esteem, and Community Collective Conscience"

Midterm #2 Take-Home online Fri. Oct. 31, 3:00 PM

Nov	3	Mon	(cont'd, no new readings)
	5	Wed	(cont'd, no new readings)

Midterm #2 Take-Home due Wed. Nov. 5, 1:00 PM

	7	Fri	Sports and deviance, Part I <i>Reading:</i> Peter G. Mewett, "Discourses of Deception: Cheating in Professional Running"
--	---	-----	---

	10	Mon	Sports and deviance, Part II <i>Reading:</i> Bryan Sluggett, "Creating the 'Pure' Athlete" (M.A. thesis) pp. 1-20, 29-69
	12	Wed	(cont'd, no new readings)
	14	Fri	The cultural diffusion of sport <i>Reading:</i> Jason Kaufman & Orlando Patterson, "Cross-National Cultural Diffusion: The Global Spread of Cricket"

	17	Mon	(cont'd, no new readings)
	19	Wed	Sports and nationalism <i>Reading:</i> Raffaele Poli, "The Denationalization of Sport"; Andrew Bertoli, "The World Cup and Interstate Conflict: Evidence from a Natural Experiment" <i>Optional Reading:</i> Andrei Markovits & Lars Rensmann, <i>Gaming the World</i> ch 5 (pp. 207-251 if you're particularly interested in the sordid case of Europe; pp. 251-264 about the peculiarities of the American case)
	21	Fri	(cont'd, no new readings)

	24	Mon	(cont'd, no new readings)
--	----	-----	---------------------------

Nov	26	Wed	##### INSTRUCTOR CANCELLED #####
	28	Fri	##### THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS #####
<hr/>			
Dec	1	Mon	Putting things together: sports and fandom <i>Reading:</i> Richard Giulianotti, “Supporters, Followers, Fans, and <i>Flâneurs</i> ”
	3	Wed	(cont’d, no new readings)
	5	Fri	Wrap-Up and Course Evaluations
<hr/>			
	8	Mon	READING,
	10	Wed	RECITATION, and
	12	Fri	REVIEW
<hr/>			
	14	Mon	Take-Home Final Exam online Mon. Dec. 15 12:00 PM
	18	Thu	Take-Home Final Exam <u>due</u> Thu. Dec. 18 6:00 PM