Course Objectives and Focus

The primary purpose of POS 348 is to engage students in a substantive, detailed, and critical examination of the intersection of sport and American society through the lens of political science. While sport is not often thought of as politically relevant in the United States, such views are clearly mistaken. Sports and American politics and government are closely connected in myriad ways. Indeed, politics is often described using the language of sport. One cannot think seriously about such topics as gender roles/equality, race, ethnicity, and nationalism and national identity in the US without also thinking seriously about American sport. The state (at the local, state, and national level) is also intimately connected to American sport in the areas of education, economic regulation and development, safety, government sponsorship and support, and gambling, to name but a few. As a result of successfully completing this course, a student will be able to:

- Thoughtfully discuss the ways in which sport contributes to individual and national identity in the United States.
- Explain the economics of sports.
- Engage the way in which sport comments on and contributes to the gender, racial, and ethnic dynamics within American society.
- Demonstrate and make sense of the multiple ways in which sport and the state interact in the contemporary world.

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1 The only other language even close in terms of usage is that of the military and warfare.
Course Requirements

The subject matter of this course both allows for and demands critical engagement of materials and ideas, free and open dialogue, and high levels of comity and collegiality. This course also demands an intensive focus on one of the most important abilities that a student should develop during her or his experience with higher education: communication and analysis through the written word. A student’s performance in this course will be determined by assignments and activities grounded in critical thinking, debate and discussion, and writing.

Student Postings: This course is organized around the reading materials for each of our class sessions. I will also post some notes and commentary for each session, and additional materials will be posted from time to time. It is imperative that you complete all of the readings assigned for this course. In addition to forming the shared foundation for our discussions in this course, completing all the required readings in a timely fashion will be essential for your grade. For each of our 13 substantive class sessions, each student will have to submit two postings. The first will be an initial reaction to the readings assigned for that particular session. The second posting will be a response to the initial reaction of at least one other student in the class. The initial reaction is due by noon on the day of each session, and the response is due by 8:00pm on the same day. Send your postings to the posting submission area for that particular session number in Blackboard. The postings for each session will be worth 15 total points, with the initial reaction worth 10 and the response worth 5. Initial reaction and response postings will be worth 60% of a student’s final grade in this course. An initial reaction posting should be approximately 2-3 paragraphs in length, and a response should be approximately 1-2 paragraphs in length. Please note the use of the word “approximately” in both of the previous two sentences. Some additional information about the format and content of the postings is provided below:

1. Postings should clearly show that you have completed the assigned materials, but they should not be summaries of the materials. Your postings should present an argument or point of view regarding the assigned material. The position presented in your postings should always be clear, well argued, and supported by evidence and concise reasoning. As a student at a distance, it is important that you know about the University of Maine policy on academic integrity. Violations of student academic integrity include any actions which attempt to promote or enhance the academic standing of any student by dishonest means (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and academic misconduct). Students may be accused, charged, and penalized for any violations as appropriate. Please refer to the University of Maine Student Conduct Code for definitions and procedures. The University of Maine Student Conduct Code can be viewed at: http://umaine.edu/handbook/policies-regulations/student-conduct-code/

2. All postings must be your own words and thoughts. First and foremost, we are engaging in an intellectual dialogue here. Using the thoughts and words of others, with proper attribution, to support your own points is a valuable contribution to this dialogue. Claiming others’ thoughts and words as your own is not. In addition, plagiarism is strictly prohibited by University of Maine policy, and such academic dishonesty will be dealt with harshly in this course. More is said on plagiarism under “Student Responsibilities” below.
3. All postings should be carefully edited for content, style, punctuation, and grammar before being posted to the class. Purchase a style guide (if you do not already own one) and use it as you compose your postings. Make sure to use standard English, proper grammar, and an academically rigorous writing style, not the sloppy, informal electronic language that we all sometimes fall into when composing e-mail, exchanging text messages, or communicating via social media. This is a college course, and one of its central purposes is to further develop your skills as writers. Postings will be evaluated on both substance and writing quality.

4. Perhaps most important, all postings must show respect for the ideas and opinions of others in this course. This class is a community where all have the right to feel comfortable to freely express their ideas and contribute to the community dialogue. It is the responsibility of all of us to insure that this is the case. This does not mean that criticism of others’ ideas is unacceptable. On the contrary, critiquing the thoughts of others (and of ourselves) is absolutely essential for real learning to occur. However, critiques must always be offered in a professional, courteous, and respectful way. Personal attacks and ridicule should be avoided at all costs, and will not be allowed in this course.

5. All postings must be submitted on time, or they will subject to a late penalty of 1 point per hour of lateness for both initial reaction postings and response postings. Extensions to the posting deadline must be requested in writing (e-mail is acceptable) at least 12 hours in advance, and will be granted only in extreme situations. The only exception on this matter will be if there is a failure with the University’s network or with Blackboard.

Analytical Essay: Each class session (with the exception of the first session) of this course has an assigned set of reading materials focused on a very specific subject. Over the course of the semester each student is required to write one essay in which she or he critically examines the arguments made by the author(s) of the material in a specific session. This essay should be approximately five-to-seven pages in length. Students have the freedom to choose which session they wish to write on. Outside research is not required for the analytical essays, but of course is allowed. Essays are due no later than noon on Friday, June 1, but of course can be submitted earlier than this date. Late essays will be penalized a full letter grade for each day that they are past due, and an essay is considered a day late at 12:01pm on June 2. Extensions to the above deadline for the analytical essay assignment must be requested in writing (e-mail is acceptable) at least 48 hours in advance, and will be granted only in extreme situations. The essay is worth 10% of a student’s final grade. Please word process the essays, double-spaced and with no smaller than an 11-point font.

Midterm Examination: There will be a midterm examination for this course. It will be completely open-book and open-note, and the material on the exam will be mixture of short and long essay questions. Students must work on the midterm examination independently. The midterm examination will be posted by 9:00am on Saturday, May 19, and will be due by 4:00pm on Tuesday, May 22. There will be a late penalty of 10 points per hour for late exams, with the same exceptions noted above. The midterm examination will be worth 10% of your final grade. Your responses to the midterm examination will be evaluated on both content and writing quality. Submit your midterm via the appropriate section on Blackboard.

Final Examination: There will be a final examination for this course. It will be completely open-book and open-note, and the material on the exam will be mixture of short and long essay questions. Students must work on the final examination independently. The final examination
will be posted by **4:00pm on Friday, June 1**, and will be due by **9:00am on Monday, June 4**. There will be a late penalty of **10 points per hour** for late exams, with the same exceptions noted above. The final examination will be worth 20% of a student’s final grade in this course. Your responses to the final examination will be evaluated on both content and writing quality. Submit your midterm via the appropriate section on Blackboard.

**Summary of Course Grade Components:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial Reaction and Response Postings</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Essay</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All assignments will receive a numerical score on a scale of 0 to 100. After calculating your numerical score based on the formula above, a letter grade will be assigned based on the following scale:

- 93-100 = A
- 90-92 = A-
- 87-89 = B+
- 83-86 = B
- 80-82 = B-
- 77-79 = C+
- 73-76 = C
- 70-72 = C-
- 67-69 = D+
- 63-66 = D
- 60-62 = D-
- below 60 = F

I do not curve nor do I offer extra credit.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

In the event of disruption of normal course activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable completion of the course. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to this syllabus that will supplement, modify, and/or supersede this version.

**Student Responsibilities**

As noted earlier in this syllabus, students are expected to complete all readings assigned for a particular class session before making their initial reaction posting for that day. As you will notice in the course schedule outlined below, there is a good deal of assigned material for this course. If for any reason you think that you may be unable to complete all of the assigned material on time, I suggest you drop the course now. Students who have not done the assigned reading will be hard pressed to contribute to our discussions in a constructive manner. Failure to do the reading will also negatively affect your performance on exams. I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of completing the assigned material for each class session.
The web-based format of this course provides us with some challenges, but also with some unique opportunities as well. We will all have more time to develop our thoughts more fully before presenting them, and consider others’ thoughts prior to responding. Also, those students who find it awkward or difficult to be full contributors in a regular classroom setting should not face such obstacles here. We should be able to establish a thoughtful and energetic online community. But the responsibility for doing so lies with each of us.

In addition, I expect each student to be aware of what is going on in American politics and society. In other words, I expect you to follow the news. At a minimum, this should entail watching a national news broadcast or listening to the national news on NPR once a day. Ideally students will read a good national newspaper such as The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, or The Wall Street Journal every day. Those publications that carry a cost can be accessed free of charge via Fogler Library.

**Academic Honesty Statement:** Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University. This policy can be found in the University of Maine Student Handbook, [http://umaine.edu/handbook/academics/academic-integrity/](http://umaine.edu/handbook/academics/academic-integrity/)

**Assistance**

My contact information is listed on the first page of this syllabus. If you are having difficulty with the course material or need help with any other facet of the class, please do not hesitate to come and discuss the matter with me. E-mail is generally the best way to get in touch with me. If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services (formerly Disability Support Services) via telephone at 581-2319, TTY 581-2325, e-mail at um.sas@maine.edu, or in person at 121 East Annex as early as possible in the term.

**Sexual Discrimination Reporting**

The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

**If you want to talk in confidence** to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact these resources:
For confidential resources on campus: Counseling Center: 207-581-1392 or Cutler Health Center: at 207-581-4000. For confidential resources off campus: Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000 or Spruce Run: 1-800-863-9909.

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help:

For support services on campus: Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911. Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services at http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/

Required Readings

Three books are required for this class. They are:


There are also many required readings (all readings are required) that are not included in any of the books listed above. I was going to have a course reader prepared, but the cost was prohibitive and I am reluctant to ask students to pay such a high price for a reader (especially given the cost of the required books). Instead, these readings are listed as (reserve) in the following course schedule and are available at Fogler Library via hard copy reserve (one copy only) and e-reserve (password: pos348brewer). A few readings are also available in Blackboard. Such readings are indicated on the schedule below.

Course Schedule

The following will be our agenda for the semester. Remember, you are expected to complete the readings listed below prior to the class meeting for which they are assigned. This schedule is subject to change by the instructor, depending on the progress we make in covering course material.
PART I: SPORT AND SOCIETY

Session 1: Monday, May 14
Course Introduction

We will begin by introducing ourselves and further organizing ourselves for our course. Please post a personal introduction to Session 1 by 5:00pm on this day. Please include a little information about yourself such as where you are from, where you currently reside, what your academic plans are, and why you are taking this course. Take the time to read your colleagues’ introductions before our session on Tuesday. This is also an opportunity to raise any questions about the syllabus or the course in general. Please include your full e-mail address in the body at the end of your introductory posting.

Session 2: Tuesday, May 15
The Place of Sport in American Society, Part I


Session 3: Wednesday, May 16
The Place of Sport in American Society, Part II


Session 4: Thursday, May 17
Sport and American National Identity

- Steven W. Pope (1993), "Negotiating the Folk Highway of the Nation" (reserve)

Session 5: Friday, May 18
Sport and Race in the U.S., Part I


**MIDTERM EXAMINATION POSTED BY 9AM, SATURDAY, MAY 19**

Session 6: Monday, May 21
Sport and Race in the U.S., Part II

Session 7: Tuesday, May 22
Sport and Gender in the U.S., Part I

- Welch Suggs (2005), *A Place on the Team: The Triumph and Tragedy of Title IX*, Introduction, Chap. 1, Chap. 7 (reserve)

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE BY 4PM, TUESDAY, MAY 22**

Session 8: Wednesday, May 23
Sport and Gender in the U.S. Part II

- Welch Suggs (2005), *A Place on the Team: The Triumph and Tragedy of Title IX*, Chap. 11-12 (reserve)
- selection from Eric Anderson (2005), *In the Game: Gay Athletes and the Cult of Masculinity* (reserve)

PART II: SPORT AND THE STATE

Session 9: Thursday, May 24
Sport and Economics, Part I


Session 10: Friday, May 25
Sport and Economics, Part II


Monday, May 28—NO CLASS—MEMORIAL DAY

Session 11: Tuesday, May 29
Gambling

- Eugene Martin Christiansen (1998), "Gambling and the American Economy" (reserve)
- Jackson Lear (1995), "Playing with Money" (reserve)
Session 12: Wednesday, May 30
Safety and Anti-Doping

- selection from Daniel M. Rosen (2008), *Dope: A History of Performance Enhancement from the Nineteenth Century to Today* (reserve)

Session 13: Thursday, May 31
College Athletics in the U.S.


Session 14: Friday, June 1
The Olympics

- John Hoberman (2008), "Think Again: The Olympics" (reserve)

*FINAL EXAMINATION POSTED BY 4PM
LAST DAY TO SUBMIT ANALYTICAL ESSAY*

Monday, June 4

*FINAL EXAMINATION DUE BY 9:00AM
ENJOY THE REMAINDER OF YOUR SUMMER*