

Sociology 248  
The Sociology of Sport  
Spring 2013

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Overview: The primary purpose of this course is to investigate the institution of organized sport from a sociological perspective. The course follows a common approach to the Sociology of Sports by viewing sport as a microcosm of society. That is, sports are social constructions and thus arenas for the study of sociological processes. This leads us to focus upon "the structure, processes and problems of sport as an institutionalized social system." In particular we will look at how common sociological concepts such as stratification, discrimination, norms, mobility, violence and social structure are evidenced in professional and amateur athletics.

Given the focus of the course, there are a number of topics that we will not cover this semester or only address briefly. These include sport as a leisure activity, rules for playing the various games that constitute "Sport," and the strategies for succeeding in various sports. This is not a "How To" course. While we will look at why winning and losing may be important for stratifying the sports society, we won't investigate how to win.

There are a number of popular myths surrounding sports, for example, that sport provides an avenue of mobility for disadvantaged youth. Some of these are only partially true or not true at all. A good way to determine the validity of such (mis)conceptions is to research the statements: The beliefs behind such myths can be traced to commonly held ideas about society and social processes, beliefs which require careful investigation. Therefore, portions of some lectures will be devoted to an in depth presentation of a research study relevant to the topic at hand.

Texts: Two books are required; one a standard textbook, the other a collection of readings. These are:

Coakley, Jay Sports in Society: Issues & Controversies,  
(10th Edition), 2009, Boston: McGraw Hill. (TEXT)

Eitzen, D. Stanley (Editor), Sport in Contemporary Society: An Anthology, (9th Edition), 2011, Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers. (SCS)

Bureaucracy willing, these books should be available at the Rutgers Campus Bookstore. The Coakley text has associated online resources at [www.mhhe.com/coakley10e](http://www.mhhe.com/coakley10e). Feel free to browse them if you wish, as the web site now says these resources are available at no charge.

Requirements: There are four requirements for the course. Two hourly exams will be given during the semester on the dates shown below. As well, there will be a third exam during the finals period. The final is currently scheduled for Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 8 am. Exams will, most likely, be multiple choice and short answer. The exams will be graded on a curve determined by the overall class distribution. Please complete the grade posting form on the last page and turn it in to me within the next week.

Finally, there is a standing assignment that you read the sports pages of some newspaper (e.g., the New York Times, the Newark Star Ledger, or the Home News) on a regular basis. For those of you who would rather "surf the net" to keep current with sports news, I'd recommend one of the following

(you need not subscribe to any of these services):

<http://espn.go.com/>  
<http://cbssports.com/>  
<http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/>  
<http://msn.foxsports.com/>

Office Hours: My office hours this semester will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 2:00 in Davison 037 on the Douglass campus. Appointments may also be made for other times. I can always be reached via e-mail at [drasmith@rutgers.edu](mailto:drasmith@rutgers.edu)

Classroom Etiquette: The Department of Sociology encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Such behavior includes cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading newspapers, leaving and returning, leaving early without permission, discourteous remarks. To this end, please turn off all mp3 players, cell phones and so forth before the start of class. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted. Remember that a little respect shown to your fellow students goes a long way.

Makeup Exams: My policy is to not allow makeup exams except under extreme circumstances. No makeup exams will be allowed unless a) you notify me prior to the exam that you are going to miss it and; b) proper documentation (for example a doctor's note) is provided.

Attendance: Attendance will be taken at each class, though no formal 'points' will be awarded for good attendance. However when final course grades are computed, if you 'just missed' the next highest grade, good attendance may be a factor in raising your grade. You are responsible for all material missed if you are absent, so make arrangements with another student to get notes from missed classes. I will be happy to answer any questions about that material. If you expect to miss a class, please use the University absence reporting website at <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An e-mail will automatically be sent to me.

Course Outline: Below is a tentative schedule of the topics to be covered this semester. Note that the assigned readings fall in "bunches," so plan your workload accordingly. We reserve the right to alter this syllabus if deemed necessary.

Jan. 22 -- Introduction (NO READING)

Jan. 24 -- A History of the Sociology of Sport Subfield  
READ: Chapter One: The Sociology of Sport, pgs 2-27 (TEXT)

- Jan. 29 -- What is Sport?  
 READ: Chapter Two: Producing Knowledge About Sports in Society, pgs 28-54 (TEXT)  
 D. Zirin "Sports: An Offer We Can't Refuse," pgs 3-7 in SCS  
 D.S. Eitzen "American Sport in the New Millenium," pgs 8-12 in SCS  
 D.S. Eitzen "The Great Recession and Sport," pgs 13-20 in SCS
- Jan. 31 -- Sport and Culture: A Bit of Anthropology  
 READ: Chapter Three: Studying the Past, pgs 56-89 (TEXT)
- Feb. 5 -- Sport and Socialization  
 READ: Chapter Four: Sports and Socialization, pgs 90-121 (TEXT)  
 J. Coakley, "Play Group Versus Organized Competitive Team: A Comparison," pgs 25-33 in SCS  
 T. Williams and C. Feldman, "Anyone Up for Stickball? In a Playstation World, Maybe Not" pgs 34-37 in SCS  
 M. Messner, "Boyhood, Organized Sports, and the Construction Of Masculinities," pgs 38-54 in SCS
- Feb. 7 -- A Double Header!!!  
 Sports Organizations: Where do Managers Come From?  
 Social Support in Sport - The Home Field Advantage (NO READING)
- Feb. 12 -- Slippage  
 READ Chapter Five: Sports and Children, pgs 122-151 (TEXT)
- Feb. 14 -- Sport and Education: Intercollegiate Sport  
 READ: D.S. Eitzen and M.B. Zinn, "The De-Athleticization of Women: The Naming and Gender Marking of Collegiate Sport Teams," pgs 87-96 in SCS  
 A.S. Zagier, "Admissions Exemptions Benefit Athletes," pgs 191-193 in SCS  
 C.T. Clotfelter, "Is Sports in Your Mission Statement?" Pgs 194-196 in SCS  
 D.S. Eitzen, "The Big-Time College Sports Plantation and the Slaves Who Drive It," pgs 197-207 in SCS
- Feb. 19 -- Sport and Education: Interscholastic Sports  
 READ: Chapter Fourteen: Sports in High School and College, pgs 470-512 (TEXT)  
 B. Hohler, "Missed Opportunities: Boston's Student-Athletes Face a Sports Program in Distress," pgs 116-121 in SCS
- Feb. 21 -- \*\*\* FIRST HOURLY EXAM \*\*\*
- Feb. 26 -- The Criminology of Sport: Deviance and Criminal Behavior  
 READ: Chapter Six: Deviance in Sports, pgs 152-192 (TEXT)  
 J. Ryan, "Female Gymnasts and Ice Skaters: The Dark Side," pgs 101-107 in SCS  
 B. Bissinger, "Bench the Parents," pgs 108-111 in SCS  
 M. Hyman, "Harm to Children in Youth Sports," pgs 112-115 in SCS

- Feb. 28 -- Violence, Sport and the Law  
READ: D.S. Eitzen, "Ethical Dilemmas in American Sport: The Dark Side of Competition," pgs 125-134 in SCS  
R.E. Lapchick, "Crime and Athletes: New Racial Sterotypes," pgs 135-145 in SCS  
F. Zimmiuch "Creating the Frankenstein Athlete: The Drug Culture in Sports," pgs 149-154 in SCS  
P. Barry, "Finding the Golden Genes," pgs 155-161 in SCS  
R. Lipsyte, "Outraged over the Steroid Outrage," pgs 162-164 in SCS
- Mar. 5 -- Sport and Aggression  
READ: Chapter Seven: Violence in Sports, pgs 194-228 (TEXT)
- Mar. 7 -- Fan Riots (NO READING)
- Mar. 12 -- Sport, \$\$\$\$\$, and Labor Movements  
READ: The Knight Commission, "College Sports 101: A Primer on Money, Athletics, and Higher Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," pgs 169-190 in SCS  
S. Jenkins, "Does Football Cost Too Much?" pgs 211-213 in SCS  
D. Zirin, "When Domes Attack," pgs 214-227 in SCS
- Mar. 14 -- Sport, \$\$\$\$\$, and Labor Movements (continued)  
READ: Chapter Eleven: Sports and the Economy, pgs 352-390 (TEXT)
- Mar. 26 -- "Spanning the Globe"- "We've Got Highlights": Sports and the Media  
READ: Chapter Twelve: Sports and the Media, pgs 392-435 (TEXT)  
M.A. Messner, M. Dunbar and D. Hunt, "The Televised Sports Manhood Formula," pgs 59-72 in SCS  
G.H Sage, "New Media and Global Sports," pgs 340-347 in SCS
- Mar. 28 -- Slippage
- Apr. 2 -- The Church of Monday Night Football: Sport and Religion  
READ: Chapter Fifteen: Sports and Religions, pgs 514-547 (TEXT)
- Apr. 4 -- \*\*\* SECOND HOURLY EXAM \*\*\*
- Apr. 9 -- Ratings, Rankings, and Mobility: Sport and Stratification  
READ: Chapter Ten: Social Class pgs 314-351 (TEXT)
- Apr. 11 -- Discrimination and Racism  
READ: Chapter Nine: Race and Ethnicity, pgs 274-313 (TEXT)

- Apr. 16 -- Discrimination and Racism (continued)  
 READ: B. Plaschke, "Redskins: Is No Honor, It's an Insult,"  
 Pgs 84-86 in SCS  
 K. Simpson, "Sporting Dreams Die on the 'Rez'," pgs  
 239-245 in SCS  
 D. Zirin, "Say It Ain't So, Big Leagues: The Downside  
 for Latin American Players," pgs 246-249 in SCS  
 R. Lapchick, "The 2010 Racial and Gender Report Card:  
 National Football League," pgs 250-255 in SCS  
 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, "Racism,  
 Ethnic Discrimination and Exclusion of Migrants and  
 Minorities in Sport," pgs 256-259 in SCS
- Apr. 18 -- Ageism and Sexism in Sport  
 READ: Chapter Eight: Gender and Sports, pgs 230-272 (TEXT)  
 M.A. Messner and C. Cooky, "Gender in Televised Sports,"  
 pgs 73-76 in SCS  
 R.V. Acosta and L.J. Carpenter, "Are We There Yet? Thirty-  
 Seven Years Later, Title IX Hasn't Fixed it All,"  
 pgs 265-269 in SCS  
 Women's Sports Foundation, "Her Life Depends On It: Sport,  
 Physical Activity, and the Health and Well Being of  
 American Women and Girls," pgs 270-273 in SCS  
 M.A. Messner, "The Meaning of Success: The Athletic  
 Experience and the Development of Male Identity," pgs 276-  
 292 in SCS  
 P. Griffin, "Changing the Games: Homophobia, Sexism, and  
 Lesbians in Sport," pgs 295-311 in SCS  
 A. Cotton, "Gay Athlete's Dilemma," pgs 312-316 in SCS  
 P. Griffin and H.J. Carroll, "On the Team: Equal Opportunity  
 For Transgender Student Athletes," pgs 317-326 in SCS
- Apr. 23 -- Sport Subcultures and Social Worlds (NO READING)
- Apr. 25 -- Sport and Politics  
 READ Chapter Thirteen: Sports and Politics, pgs 436-468 (TEXT)  
 J. Branch, "American Flags as Big as Fields," pgs  
 81-83 in SCS  
 G. Dembicki, "Corporate Titans Competing for Olympic  
 Gold," pgs 228-234 in SCS  
 A.M. Klein, "Growing the Game: The Globalization of  
 Major League Baseball," pgs 331-337 in SCS  
 D. Macaray, "Nike's Crimes," pgs 338-339 in SCS
- Apr. 30 -- Slippage
- May 2 -- Course Summary  
 READ Chapter Sixteen: Sports in the Future, pgs 548-572 (TEXT)

## POSTING GRADES

In order for you to fully understand your grade (and relative position) on each exam, it is important to see the grade distribution for the entire class. For various legal and administrative reasons though, it is better if you choose an identification number for posting grades rather than me selecting one for you.

So, what I need from you is a six-digit number to use for the purpose of maintaining anonymity when grades are posted. This number can be a portion of your Social Security number. It could be part of your telephone number. It could be your high school locker combination. Your birthday would probably also work. The number itself doesn't matter as long as it meets two criteria. First, it should be six digits. Second, it should be something that you'll remember.

Try not to select a number that others would use. This means that numbers with patterns like 999999, 123456, and 654321 aren't such a good idea.

Please turn in this page within the next week. I WILL NOT POST OR RELEASE YOUR GRADE IN ANY WAY UNTIL I RECEIVE THIS FORM FROM YOU.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Number for posting: \_\_\_\_\_