

# Sociology 245: Sociology of Sport

Spring 2017 (3 credits), Tues, Thurs 9:10-10:25 AM (in Todd 116)

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Course web page: [learn.wsu.edu](http://learn.wsu.edu)

*Details in syllabus are subject to change. I will make multiple announcements in class about any changes.*

## Introduction

This course examines sport through a sociological lens. Outside the reporting of actual athletic events, most popular treatments of sport in the media involve examination of a specific athlete or team, or attempt to improve performance in a sport. In contrast, this course focuses on social factors that influence sport. Social factors include our personal relationships to others, the organizations that structure our experiences with sport, and aggregate group properties such as inequality and diversity, technology, social institutions, organizational structure, and culture that shape the opportunities available to us throughout our lives. See the questions below in the Course Objectives for more examples. The course explores how sociologists and other social scientists consider sport as an institution, a social product, and a focus of attention in society.

## Course Objectives

### **A. Develop and refine creative and critical thinking skills**

One important outcome of this course is that you will develop and refine your critical thinking skills. Millions of people worldwide are involved in sport, as either fans, spectators, or participants. Despite this exposure, most of what people know about sport is based on personal experience or information derived from the popular media. While these sources of information are useful, it is difficult to obtain an accurate view of sport relying only on these sources, especially when it comes to understanding social factors because these things tend to escape our immediate attention. If we desire an understanding of the role of sport in society, we must move beyond local perceptions of sport by approaching the topic from different viewpoints – a focus that moves beyond individual experience.

Our examination of sport will consider a number of questions from a sociological perspective, such as:

- Who participates in sport and in what ways? Who does not participate? What factors facilitate access to sport? What factors limit access to sport?
- What resources are required for participation? What resources are unavailable or limited? How are resources distributed? Who controls the resources? Whose labor produces the resources?
- What systems of authority control sport? How is sport influenced, at all levels, by these systems? How are individual actions and opinions influenced by these authority systems? Who defines legitimate and illegitimate rules, ideas, and action?

- What types of organizations (communities, formal organizations, and informal groups) influence sport? How do individuals identify with these organizations? How are individual actions and opinions influenced by these organizations?

This course demonstrates that many of the assumptions we make about sport are incomplete, misleading, or incorrect. By learning how to think beyond individual experiences with sport, the course improves your ability to think about, understand, and critically analyze sport.

### **B. Achieve a better understanding of one's self in society**

In this course, we integrate your personal experiences and existing sport knowledge with sociological theory and empirical research on sport. You achieve a better understanding of your place in society by considering the larger social and cultural settings in which all individuals are embedded.

This course is informed by the tools and perspectives of sociology – an approach that stresses the importance of social relations and recognizes the impact of diversity on social processes.

You will learn to reflect on sport from a sociological perspective *and* you will learn some sociology through our focus on sport. We consider the influence of sport throughout the life course, from childhood to adulthood, paying special attention to social and cultural differences that play a key role in determining the sports that are played and valued. Major emphasis is placed on sport in North America because this is a focus of our textbook. We occasionally consider sports played elsewhere.

### **C. Build communication skills**

As you participate in class discussion and submit written responses, your communications skills improve. In other courses, you probably do not know much about the topic before completing the course. This lack of knowledge and experience can make it difficult to contribute. In contrast, most of you have experience with sports, as fans, athletic participants, or both. A goal of this course is to teach you how to express your personal experiences and ideas clearly and concisely within a sociological framework.

### Materials

There is one required book for the course. I do not have extra copies of the textbook for student use. The publisher has provided a custom version of the text for this course at a reduced cost. The Bookie sells the custom version of textbook. You can also purchase the original textbook. It might be cheaper than the custom version if you can find a used copy. If you choose this route, you must follow the appropriate chapters, and use the proper edition (10<sup>th</sup> edition, orange cover). The textbook is:

**Eitzen, D. Stanley and George Sage. 2016. Sociology of North American Sport. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford University Press.**

I may announce additional readings in class. Often these will be part of in-class assignments. You will be required to view some videos in class. You need on-line access to take tests and view your grades. Lecture notes for a chapter are uploaded to the course web site once I finish the chapter in lecture.

## Grading

Your final letter grade in this course is determined by your overall average score on four tests. You have the opportunity to increase your average with extra-credit participation assignments given throughout the semester at random times. You can replace your lowest exam score with your score on an optional, final exam but you must tell me in advance (during the last week of class) that you plan to take the final.

### *Tests (exams)*

This class has four exams at regular intervals. Each test is scaled to 100 points (100%). I announce the format of each test in class before the test date. Most of the time, a test consists of only multiple-choice and true-false questions. Tests questions are from textbook chapters, lecture material, and in-class videos. Questions on the test may come from textbook material not covered in lecture. For an on-line test, you have 60 minutes to complete the test. If you read the chapters, attend lectures, pay attention and participate in class, you should pass the tests. The first test is on-line and timed with multiple choice and true-false questions. On-line tests are open book and open notes, but you must complete the entire exam on your own, with no outside contact with or assistance from another individual. I hope to administer the remaining tests on-line however this depends on the results from the first on-line test. I will explain this situation in more detail in lecture. If forced to turn to in-class tests, the tests will be closed book and closed notes.

You must take the test on the scheduled date at **learn.wsu.edu**. The on-line site allows you access to the exam for two hours starting at 9:00 AM on the test day and ending at 11:00 AM. Make-up exams must be arranged at least 24 hours prior to scheduled test date and will only be allowed for WSU-recognized absences. If you miss a scheduled test without a legitimate excuse, you receive a zero for that exam. If you miss a make-up exam, you receive a zero for that exam.

Additionally, there may be a short essay question on a test. If a test includes a short essay question, you will have additional time to complete it. The essay will be worth approximately 15% of the test grade. For tests with an essay question, you must complete the essay but only a random subset of students may have their essays graded on each test. If you skip the essay, you will automatically receive a zero for that portion of the exam. All students will have the same number of graded test essays at the semester's end.

### *Optional Extra Credit*

Class participation activities are the “extra-credit” bonus opportunity for this class. The optional extra credit bonus is applied to your test average at the end of the semester. The extra credit is based on several in-class writing assignments. These activities evaluate your level of interest and engagement with the class material. Each writing assignment is worth 1 point if it meets the basic grading criteria for the assignment. There will be no opportunity to make up any extra credit assignment. If you miss class, you cannot make up the assignment. If you do not attend class, then you are, by definition, less engaged with the class material on that day as compared to students attending class. I do not accept any excuses or allow make-up opportunities for any in-class assignment because you will have multiple opportunities to earn full extra credit, even if you miss a few assignments. There will be at least eight writing activities. You do not have to complete all the assignments to receive all possible extra credit points:

6 or more assignments submitted:	4 points added to overall test average
4-5 assignments submitted:	2 points added to overall test average
0-3 assignments submitted:	0 points added

The activities are short writing assignments relating to textbook material, lecture topics, in-class video or media presentation, or a current event. These assignments should be easy to complete if you are in class. If you are not engaged in the material and are disturbing others (e.g., you are sleeping, playing with electronic devices, etc.) or you leave early, then you will receive a zero for that day. If you distract others in class talking or loudly leaving the classroom before lecture is over, 1 point will be reduced from your assignment grade. If you distract the class more than once, you will lose points for each distraction episode and I will begin disciplinary action with the administration.

### *Final Exam*

The optional final exam is on **Monday, May 1, 10:10 AM – 12:10**. The final exam is an in-class exam, held in the regular lecture room. The final exam has multiple-choice and true-false questions covering material from three chapters from earlier in the semester and one new chapter. The new chapter will not be covered in lecture, nor will any lecture notes be provided. Additionally, the final includes an essay question based on a video shown in class during the last week of the semester. More details about the material and format of the final exam will be discussed the last week of class. The final exam is scaled to 100 points (100%) and your score on it replaces your lowest test score.

Because the final is optional, I need to know how many exams to print. You must inform me by the end of class on Thursday, April 27 (or ideally let me know in class on Tuesday, April 25) if you plan to take the final exam. If you do not let me know you are taking the final exam and you take it without notice, you will receive an automatic 10% penalty reduction to your overall percentage on the final exam.

### *Grading Scale*

Your course grade for the semester is determined based on the average percentage score on your four highest exam scores, plus any extra credit assignment points added to that average. I use Excel to round your score to the final average percentage.

A:	94% and above	C+:	77-79%	F:	Below 50%
A-:	90-93%	C:	74-76%		
B+:	87-89%	C-:	70-73%		
B:	84-86%	D+:	64-69%		
B-:	80-83%	D:	50-63%		

**Accommodation of a request to make an exception to the grading scale for your particular situation would be very unfair to everyone else in the class. It would also violate university policy. Any request for special grading favors will be ignored (no email reply will be sent).**

## Schedule

All chapters listed in the schedule refer to the custom edition of the textbook. The full version of the textbook includes the same chapters as the custom edition, presented in a different order. If you are not using the custom text, then you must determine the chapters we are covering.

### *Weeks 1-4: Sports: Society, Culture, History, & Values*

Reading: Chapters 1, 2, 3 (Custom Edition)

Sociological Analysis of Sport in North American Society  
Social/Cultural Transformations and the Rise of Sport in North America  
Sport and North American Culture and Values

Test 1: Tuesday, January 31

### *Weeks 5-8: Sports: Social Problems, Social Inequality*

**Tuesday, February 7, 2017:** Deadline to drop course without record

Reading: Chapters 4, 5, 6 (Custom Edition)

Youth and Sport  
Interscholastic Sport  
Intercollegiate Sport

Test 2: Thursday, February 23

### *Weeks 9-12: Sports: Youth, High School, & College Sport*

Reading: Chapters 7, 8 (Custom Edition)

Social Problems and North American Sport: Violence, Substance Abuse, Eating Disorders, and Gambling  
Sport, Social Stratification, and Social Mobility

Spring break: March 13 - March 17

Test 3: Tuesday, March 28

### *Weeks 13-15: Sports: The Corporate Angle*

Reading: Chapters 9, 10, 11 (Custom Edition)

Sport and the Economy  
Sport and the Mass Media  
Sport and Politics

Test 4: Thursday, April 20

*Last week of class, April 25, 27*

Reading: Chapter 12 (Custom Edition)

Contemporary Trends and the Future of Sport in North America

*Final exam preparation, video, new chapter material (Final is Optional; details about format provided in class)*

*Final exam Monday, May 1, 10:10 AM – 12:10 (in regular lecture classroom)*

### Important Items

**Attendance:** Attendance will be recorded only as part of the in-class activities. Attendance will be taken on the first two days of class. If you do not sign an attendance sheet during the first week of class, then you will be automatically dropped from the course. If you enroll in the class after the semester has started, then you will receive a zero for any missed extra credit participation activities.

**Email:** I might make course announcements and updates via email. You are responsible for any information presented in email. Students are encouraged by WSU to make use of their wsu.edu email address for security purposes. Please make sure your email address is correct on all university systems. To protect your privacy and security, I will not provide any information about your grades or your course progress over email.

**Academic Integrity:** There is no excuse for using someone else's work or ideas and turning them in as your own. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. You must complete all work on your own, especially the tests. On-line tests are open-book and open-notes but you must complete the tests on your own. Any in-class tests will be closed-notes, with no outside assistance from anyone. Some in-class activities might involve collaborative work. Cooperative assignments will be announced clearly in class. Any student caught cheating on any assignment or exam will receive an F grade on the exam or assignment. Then, I must report the cheating to the Office Student Standards and Accountability. Information about student conduct standards and accountability is at [conduct.wsu.edu](http://conduct.wsu.edu). You are responsible for following the WSU conduct standards.

**Recording prohibited:** You may not record lectures or course material with any visual or auditory device (see disability statement below for exceptions). I will post chapter outlines for the textbook on the course web site prior to each exam.

**Access Center:** Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

**Safety information:** Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management web site (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community.