From the Olympic Games to Fantasy Football, sports pervade our global cultures and everyday lives. Sports pervasiveness, however, is riddled with sticky theoretical and political problems. Sports compose social and cultural equalizers with the potential to negotiate difference. Like the weather, sports provide common ground for those who may share few other similarities. But sports also construct and reinforce the very social and cultural differences they so effectively transcend.

Sports’ rich meanings cannot be divorced from their mediated representation. In fact, sports are most commonly experienced and consumed through some form of media (newspapers, televisions, radios, computers, phones, etc.). Rather than merely “showing” us sports and sporting events, media create many of the values, ideas, feelings, and problems commonly connected to sports. Sports cannot be properly understood, then, without taking into account their complex relationship to media—from early 20th century newsreels to Twitter.

Focusing on a U.S. context, this course investigates the varied meanings attached to sports; examines how sports media create and alter these cultural meanings; and probes sports media’s historical, institutional, political, economic, and aesthetic uses and implications.

**Required Texts:**

All readings will be available on our course ICON website

**The Classroom**

I have two major goals for this course. First, I want to build an environment where we are both challenged and compelled to develop our writing, critical thinking, and creative skills. Second, I want to create a comfortable and encouraging climate for our discussions. Neither of these goals can be met without everyone’s cooperation. I promise to do my best as an instructor this term and I expect the same commitment, motivation, and enthusiasm from all of you. I also expect frequent and thoughtful participation. I realize this aspect of the course may be both refreshing and daunting. So, as a basic rule for our class meetings I would like us all to treat our peers with kindness and respect. Each class member brings a unique perspective and
background to the course that will aid us in grasping the materials covered and developing our skills as writers, thinkers, and members of the University of Iowa community. It is absolutely imperative that we respect this diversity and foster the texture it brings to our course.

Assignments/Grading (Detailed instructions for each assignment will be distributed in class)

Short Essays (50%, 500 points)
There will be four short essay responses to a question relevant to our readings and discussions. All will require close, comparative readings of assigned texts and some will require independent research.
- Essay 1: 100 points / Due September 11
- Essay 2: 100 points / Due October 14
- Essay 3: 150 points / Due November 11
- Essay 4: 150 points / Due December 4
Each writing assignment will be due on a Friday by midnight. We will conduct writing workshops in your sections on their due date. You will be expected to bring a printed draft of your assignment to your section that day and to make adjustments based on the feedback you receive prior to turning in your final draft.

Midterm Exam (25%, 250 points)
The midterm exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Final Exam (25%, 250 points)
Like the midterm, the final will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. It will only be given on the day and time set by the UI Office of the Registrar.

Participation and Professionalism (10%, 100 points)
I expect frequent and thoughtful participation in this course and your sections. This includes listening to others and working in groups as well as contributing during our class-wide discussions. I also expect professionalism. This means coming to class on time, being prepared, and consistently adding value to and enriching our course meetings—not simply showing up to class.

Grading Scale
A (93-100%), A- (90-92%), B+ (87-89%), B (83-86%), B- (80-82%), C+ (77-79%), C (73-77%), C- (70-72%), D+ (67-69%), D (63-66%), D- (60-62%), F (>60%).

Grading Expectations
The “A” assignment follows all instructions perfectly and demonstrates a degree of engagement, insight, organization, sophistication, persuasiveness, and originality that significantly exceeds the task’s baseline requirements. It has been carefully revised and edited. Consequently, it is free—or at least very close to free—of any writing errors or typos.

The “B” assignment follows all instructions and is expertly organized, persuasive, and insightful. It has been revised and contains very few writing errors and typos. It, however, does not exceed baseline requirements to the same degree as the “A” paper and may lack the “A” paper’s exceptional originality and sophistication.
The “C” assignment follows instructions, meets the task’s basic expectations, but evidences little engagement with the assignment beyond this point. In other words, it gets the job done. It likely contains some writing errors and typos, though not to an overwhelming or distracting degree.

The “D” assignment does not carefully follow instructions and demonstrates a lack of engagement, creativity, and care evidenced by writing errors, factual errors, poor organization, inconsistencies, etc.

The “F” assignment does not follow instructions and/or is incomplete.

Interpreting Feedback on Assignments

Our goal in grading is to provide feedback that will help you to improve on subsequent assignments. The comments we provide are designed to help you to move in that direction. If you are having trouble understanding your feedback or are not sure how it might help you to improve please contact one of us so we can provide further explanation.

Course Policies and Expectations

Office Hours

My office hours are for you. Please come by whenever and as much as you like with any questions or concerns you have about readings, assignments, the course as a whole, or your academic and professional career. If for some reason you are unable to make it during my office hours, I am happy to set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

Attendance

Attendance is required. You have two “free” absences all term regardless of the circumstances. For each absence after two we will subtract one-third of a letter grade from your final grade. This means that if you miss three class meetings, the highest grade you can earn in this course is an A-. No exceptions. We count three late arrivals as once absence.

Formatting

We expect all written assignments to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around, and in 12-point Times New Roman font. All writing assignments will be turned in via Dropbox on ICON. Be sure to follow all instructions carefully. We will subtract 1/3 of a letter grade for each formatting requirement you do not follow.

Late Assignments

Whether or not you are present in class, all assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. You will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade for each day an assignment is late. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding any circumstances that may affect your ability to complete an assignment by its due date/time.

Academic Integrity

All graded work in this course must be your own. Cite all quotations, paraphrases, etc. If you have any questions as to whether or not your work might constitute plagiarism, do not hesitate to ask me. Any violation of the University of Iowa Code of Academic Honesty will result in a
failing grade for this course and could result in further disciplinary action. Be sure to familiarize
yourself with the Code of Academic Honesty:
http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code

Writing Center
If you are having any difficulties with or would simply like another opinion on your writing we
encourage you to make use of the UI Writing Center: http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc/

Special Needs
If you have any special needs that might affect your performance in this course, please let us
know as soon as possible so we can create a plan to accommodate them.

Course Schedule

Week 1:
M 8/24  
Course Introduction and Policies

W 8/26  
Sport and Myth
- Reading
  o Ross, “Football Red, Baseball Green”

Week 2:
M 8/31  
Sport as Myth II
- Reading
  o Crepeau, “Sports, Heroes, and Myth”

W 9/3  
Sport, Media, and Myth
- Reading
  o Real, “Super Bowl: Mythic Spectacle”

Week 3:
M 9/7  
No Class: Labor Day

W 9/9  
Packaging Spectacle
- Reading
  o Williams, “The Structure of Televised Football”

Week 4:
M 9/14  
Packaging Spectacle II
- Reading
  o Buttersworth, “Fox Sports, Super Bowl XVII, and the Affirmation of
American Civil Religion”

W 9/16  
Narrative
- Reading
  o Cossar, “Televised Golf and the Creation of Narrative”
Week 5:
M 9/21 Representing Women in Sports TV
• Reading
  o Messner et al. “Separating the Men from the Girls: The Gendered Language of Televised Sports”
W 9/23 Representing Women on TV II
• Reading
  o Bernstein, “Is It Time for a Victory Lap?: Changes in the Media Coverage of Women and Sport”

Week 6:
M 9/28 Midterm Review
W 9/30 Midterm Exam

Week 7:
M 10/5 The Sporting Celebrity and the Racialized Body
• Reading
  o Grieveson, “Fighting Films: Race, Morality, and the Governing of Cinema, 1912-1915”
W 10/7 The Sporting Celebrity and the Racialized Body
• Reading
  o Schultz, “Reading the Catsuit: Serena Williams and the Production of Blackness at the 2002 U.S. Open”

Week 8:
M 10/12 The Sporting Celebrity and the Racially Neutralized Body
• Reading
  o McDonald, “Michael Jordan’s Family Values: Marketing, Meaning, and Post-Reagan America”
W 10/14 Sports Writing and Mythmaking
• Reading
  o Craggs, “Why Grantland Rice Sucked”
  o Rice, “The Four Horsemen”
  o Sperber, “Grantland Rice vs. Reality”

Week 9:
M 10/19 Early TV to Roone Arledge
• Reading
  o Arledge, “Internal ABC Memo”
  o Dunlap, “Batter Up!”
  o Dunlap, “Television Forward Passes Football to the Home”
W 10/21 ABC Sports and Monday Night Football
• Reading
  - Johnson, “Monday Night Football: Brand Identity”

**Week 10**

**M 10/26**

* NFL Films and Syndicated Sports TV *

• Reading
  - Vogan, “NFL Films and the Art of Selling Football”

**W 10/28**

* Brian’s Song *

• Screening
  - *Brian’s Song*

**Week 11:**

**M 11/2**

* Brian’s Song II *

• Reading
  - Gomery, “*Brian’s Song*: Television, Hollywood, and the Evolution of the Movie Made for TV”

**W 11/4**

* Introduction to ESPN *

• Reading
  - Johnson, “Sports Junkies of the U.S. Rejoice”
  - Smith, “Cable TV for Sports Junkies”

**Week 12:**

**M 11/9**

* ESPN II *

• Readings:
  - Adams and Tuggle, “ESPN’s *SportsCenter* and Coverage of Women’s Athletics: It’s a Boy’s Club”
  - Billings, “In Search of Women Athletes”

**W 11/11**

* Brand ESPN *

• Reading
  - Sandomir, “Citing NFL, ESPN Cancels *Playmakers*”
  - Sandomir, “ESPN Reaches New Low: Deceit, Catheters, and Football”

• Screening
  - *Playmakers*

**Week 13:**

**M 11/16**

* Brand ESPN 2 *

• Reading
  - Ballard, “Writing Up a Storm”
  - Mahler, “Can Bill Simmons Win the Big One?”

**W 11/18**

* From Frontline to the Bottom Line *

• Reading
  - Fainaru and Fainaru-Wada, “Mind Control”
• Lipsyte, “Was ESPN Sloppy, Naïve, or Compromised?”

Week 14:
M 11/30 Alternatives to ESPN
  • Reading
    o Leitch, “God Save the Fan”

W 12/2 Fantasy Sports
  • Reading
    o Davis and Duncan, “Sports Knowledge is Power: Reinforcing Masculine Privilege through Fantasy Sports Participation”

Week 15:
M 12/7 Fantasy Sports and Gender
  • Screening
    o The League

W 12/7 Final Exam Review

***Final Exam Room/Day/Time TBD. The exam will only be given at the official time set by the UI Office of the Registrar***
References for Articles on ICON:


Administrative Home
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop
deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions
may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall, or see the CLAS Academic Policies Handbook at
http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

Electronic Communication
University policy specifies that students are responsible for all official correspondences sent to their University of Iowa e-mail
address (@uiowa.edu). Faculty and students should use this account for correspondences (Operations Manual, III.15.2
k.11).

Accommodations for Disabilities
A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet with the
course instructor privately in the instructor's office to make particular arrangements. See
http://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/ for more information.

Academic Honesty
All CLAS students or students taking classes offered by CLAS have, in essence, agreed to the College's Code of Academic
Honesty: "I pledge to do my own academic work and to excel to the best of my abilities, upholding the IOWA Challenge. I
promise not to lie about my academic work, to cheat, or to steal the words or ideas of others; nor will I help fellow students to
violate the Code of Academic Honesty." Any student committing academic misconduct is reported to the College and placed on
disciplinary probation or may be suspended or expelled (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

CLAS Final Examination Policies
The final examination schedule for each class is announced by the Registrar generally by the fifth week of classes. Final exams
are offered only during the official final examination period. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of
classes. All students should plan on being at the UI through the final examination period. Once the Registrar has announced
the date, time, and location of each final exam, the complete schedule will be published on the Registrar's web site and will be
shared with instructors and students. It is the student’s responsibility to know the date, time, and place of a final exam.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint
Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit with the instructor (and the course supervisor), and then with the
departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident (CLAS Academic Policies Handbook).

Understanding Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All
members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that
enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual
Harassment for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

Reacting Safely to Severe Weather
In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class
will continue if possible when the event is over. For more information on Hawk Alert and the siren warning system, visit the
Department of Public Safety website.

Student Classroom Behavior
The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior, distracting others; such behaviors
are a violation of the Code of Student Life. When disruptive activity occurs, a University instructor has the authority to
determine classroom seating patterns and to request that a student exit the classroom, laboratory, or other area used for
instruction immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students).

*These CLAS policy and procedural statements have been summarized from the web pages of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and The University of Iowa Operations Manual.

Resources for Students:

**Writing Center:** 110 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0188, [http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/](http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/)

**Speaking Center:** 12 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0205, [http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/students/speaking-center](http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/students/speaking-center)

**Mathematics Tutorial Laboratory:** 314 MacLean Hall, 335-0810, [http://www.math.uiowa.edu/math-tutorial-lab](http://www.math.uiowa.edu/math-tutorial-lab)