Media, Sports, and Entertainment: 
Sports Media in Media and Cultural Studies

R 12:00-2:50, AJB W340

Instructor: Travis Vogan
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Sport is an unquestionably central facet of American and global culture that is most often consumed and experienced through some form of media—from live telecasts to mobile devices to a combination of several media used in concert. Consequently, we can learn a great deal about culture—along with the varied and contested practices that mark it—by taking seriously sports media.

Unfortunately, there are relatively few extant models for studying sports media. This dearth of research, however, is as much an exciting opportunity as it is an obstacle. Relying on an interdisciplinary collection on scholarship that grows out of film and media studies, communication studies, cultural studies, and American studies, this seminar will consider three large questions:

- What are sports media and what kinds of cultural work do they perform?
- What do we study when we study sports media?
- What can we learn—about sport and culture more broadly—from examining various sports media phenomena and artifacts in different ways?

By probing these questions and considering a variety of methodological possibilities we will investigate sports media’s potential to illuminate and enrich some of the central concerns that preoccupy the Humanities and social sciences. In doing so, we will contribute to the development of this emerging interdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry.

Required Books


*Other readings are available on our course's ICON page*

**Assignments**

*Critical Responses* (20%, 100 points each, due 1/31 and 2/7)

For these assignments you will develop 2-page papers that formulate and answer two questions pertaining to our readings.

1) One question that examines an issue internal to a single reading assigned for the day.

2) One question that places two assigned readings assigned for the day into dialogue.

The questions should be one page each, doubled spaced, and with a cover page. Place your question at the top of the page and use the rest of the available space to provide a concise and persuasive response.

Please do not exceed the length requirement. The purpose of these assignments is to develop sophisticated questions that might form the basis for larger projects and to practice responding to such questions in a concise way.

**Facilitation** (15%, 150 points)

Once during the course of the semester, each student will lead our seminar discussion for approximately 75 minutes (the first half of our meeting). You are free to lead the discussion however you choose, but I will expect these facilitations to 1) illuminate the assigned readings, the key questions they ask, and the research they conduct to answer these questions, 2) place the readings in dialogue with other works we have studied, 3) work through the readings’ broader contribution to the study of sports media, and 4) make connections between these readings and other phenomena relevant to the study of sports media and culture.

I encourage you to be creative and I welcome activities, handouts with discussion questions, and/or bibliographies that list other relevant readings. I also encourage you to incorporate additional media (clips, images, etc.) that will help us to think through the reading(s). While it can be very productive to place
readings into dialogue with outside material, make sure your primary focus is on the assigned readings.

**Book Review (15%, 150 points)**

Compose a 750-word review of either John Bloom's *There You Have It: The Life, Legacy, and Legend of Howard Cosell* or Samantha King's *Pink Ribbons, INC.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*. The review should include an overview of the book; a discussion of its contribution to the field; and a critical assessment of how well it accomplishes its goals through its content, structure, and execution.

While criticism is a key component of book reviews, be sure to critique the book based on what it sets out to do rather than what you hoped it would have done.

The review is due on the date when we are scheduled to discuss the book you select.

**Final Project (40%, 400 points)**

Develop a research project that explores some aspect of sports media and uses it as a vehicle to consider broader concerns relevant to the study of popular media culture. It should be guided by a clear research question and situated within the relevant scholarship. It should also tend to the broader question of what is “at stake”—within the field and culture more generally—in developing and executing this project.

A 1-2 page proposal and preliminary bibliography will be due on March 14. I encourage you to meet with me at some point before starting your proposal.

The final project will take the form of a 12-page paper (not including notes and bibliography). It will be preceded by a 200-word abstract and accompanied by a Powerpoint or Keynote presentation. The paper should contain cues within the text that signal your corresponding presentation slides (slide 1, slide 2, etc.). The goal, then, is to produce a paper that is ready to be submitted to and presented at a conference.

Each student will give a 15-minute presentation during our last two class meetings (May 2 and May 9). Each presentation will be followed by a 5-minute question and answer session. Students will distribute their paper title and abstract to the class (via ICON) prior to their scheduled presentation.

**Participation and Professionalism (10%, 100 points)**

I expect frequent, thoughtful, and generous participation from each member of the seminar. This includes listening to and encouraging others as well as making your own verbal contributions. I also expect students to come to class prepared for our meetings.
Policies and Expectations

The Seminar

Graduate seminars—especially those that consider interdisciplinary topics—can be tricky. A group of people with a diverse range of experiences and interests join together to discuss and make sense of a similarly diverse collection of works. This can be as frustrating as it is productive. To make sure we have a fruitful experience, it is imperative that we treat each other with respect and build an environment that approaches course content with a combination of creativity and intellectual rigor. This should be a space where we are encouraged to take chances and test new ideas—some of which will not work out. This space can only be created if all involved contribute a combination of curiosity, enthusiasm, and compassion.

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).

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, or the course in general. 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.

Formatting
I expect all written assignments to be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins all around, stapled (if asked to submit them as a hard copy), and in 12-point Times New Roman font. There will be times when I ask for hard copies and times when you will turn assignments in via Dropbox. I will subtract 1/3 of a letter grade for each formatting requirement you do not follow.

Late Assignments and Absences
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 the day it is due.

Let me know if you are going to miss class and be sure to make arrangements to get the information we discuss in class. Your grade will be affected after one missed class meeting.

Academic Integrity
All graded work in this course must be your own. Cite all quotations, paraphrases, etc. 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
Special Needs
If you have any special needs that might affect your performance in this course, please let me know as soon as possible so we can create a plan to accommodate them.

Course Schedule

January 24: Course Introduction: Studying Sports Media

January 31: The Emergence of a Field
- Readings
  - Parente, “The Interdependence of Sports and Television” (ICON)
  - Williams, “The Structure of Televised Football” (ICON)
  - Bryant et al., “Drama in Sports Commentary” (ICON)
  - Horowitz, “Sports Telecasts: Rights and Regulations” (ICON)
- Assignment
  - Critical Response 1
- Facilitator ____________________________

February 7: The Super Bowl
- Readings
  - Real, “Super Bowl: Mythic Spectacle” (ICON)
  - Butterworth, “Fox Sports, Super Bowl XLII, and the Affirmation of American Civil Religion” (ICON)
  - Messner and Montez de Oca, “The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events” (ICON)
- Screening
  - Super Bowl XLVII, February 3, 5:30 p.m. (Central), CBS
- Assignment
  - Critical Response 2
- Facilitator: ____________________________

February 14: Early Sports Film
- Reading
  - Streible, *Fight Pictures: A History of Boxing and Early Cinema* (pp. xiii-126)
  - Grieveson, “Fighting Films: Race, Morality, and the Governing of Cinema, 1912-1915” (ICON)
- Facilitator: ____________________________

February 21: Early Sports Film, Part 2
- Reading
  - Streible, *Fight Pictures: A History of Boxing and Early Cinema* (pp. 126-290)
• Facilitator:________________________________

February 28: Sports Writing
• Reading
  o Evensen, *When Dempsey Fought Tunney*
• Facilitator_________________________________

March 7: No Class

March 14: March Madness
• Reading
  o Messner, “No Hype for Women’s Hoops” *(ICON)*
  o Messner et al. “Separating the Men from the Girls: The Gendered Language of Television Sports” *(ICON)*
• Assignment
  o Proposal
• Facilitator_________________________________

March 28: King Football, Part 1
• Reading
  o Oriard, *King Football* (pp. xi-222)
  o Perry, “Bull Pup and Tiger Cub” *(ICON)*
  o Rice, “The Stuff Men Are Made Of” *(ICON)*
• Facilitator:________________________________

April 4: King Football, Part 2
• Reading
  o Oriard, *King Football* (pp. 223-370)
  o Evensen, Review of *King Football* *(ICON)*
  o Norwood, Review of *King Football* *(ICON)*
• Facilitator:________________________________

April 11: Sports Television, Celebrity, and Identity
• Readings
  o Bloom, *There You Have It: The Life, Legacy, and Legend of Howard Cosell*
• Facilitator:________________________________

April 18: Corporate Culture, Public Relations, and Philanthropy in Sports Media
• Reading
  o King, *Pink Ribbons, INC.: Breast Cancer and the Politics of Philanthropy*
• Facilitator:________________________________
April 25: Sports Media Spaces

- **Readings**
  - McCarthy, *Ambient Television: Visual Culture and Public Space* (pp. 1-62) (ICON)
  - Eastman and Land, “The Best of Both Worlds: Sports Fans Find Good Seats at the Bar” (ICON)

- **Facilitator:** ________________

May 2: Convergence Culture and Research Presentations

- **Readings**
  - Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (pp.1-92, 240-260)

- **Facilitator:** Travis

May 9: Research Presentations

**Final Projects Due Monday, May 13 by 12:00 p.m.**

References for Articles:


The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policies and Procedures

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 Student Academic 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. Scroll down to k.11.)

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

Academic Honesty: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences expects all students to do their own work, as stated in the CLAS Code of Academic Honesty. Instructors fail any assignment that shows evidence of plagiarism or other forms of cheating, also reporting the student's name to the College. A student reported to the College for cheating is placed on disciplinary probation; a student reported twice is suspended or expelled.

CLAS Final Examination Policies: Final exams may be offered only during finals week. No exams of any kind are allowed during the last week of classes. Students should not ask their instructor to reschedule a final exam since the College does not permit rescheduling of a final exam once the semester has begun. Questions should be addressed to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint: Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS Student Academic 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 Public Safety web site.
The Iowa Dozen

The mission of our School is to educate journalism and mass communication professionals, scholars and faculty. Through professional and creative research activities, they enhance a continually growing and evolving understanding of the social and cultural roles, responsibilities, and contexts for communicators in a democratic society, as well as in diverse global contexts.

To accomplish that mission:

We learn to ...

- Write correctly, clearly and well.
- Conduct research and gather information responsibly.
- Edit and evaluate carefully.
- Use media technologies thoughtfully.
- Apply statistical concepts accurately.

We value ...

- Free speech and First Amendment principles for all individuals and groups.
- A diverse global community.
- Creativity and independence.
- Truth, accuracy and fairness.

We explore ...

- Theories and concepts.
- The history, structure and economy of media institutions
- The role of media in shaping cultures.