SPST: 3175 / JMC: 3183
SPORT AND THE MEDIA
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12:30-1.45 pm in 105 EPB

Instructor: Thomas P. Oates

Drop-in Hours: Via Zoom on Wednesdays 11:00-1:00, Fridays 2:30-3:30 pm, and other arranged times.

Graduate Assistants’ Drop-In Hours: Taylor Henry 10-12 Wednesday; Greg Rozsa 1-3 Wednesdays

Course description and objectives:

The relationship between commodified sport and commercial media is one of the most important in the contemporary United States. The most popular sports generate billions of dollars in revenue, and are a significant site for political struggle. This course reviews the historical roots and current conditions of the convergence of corporate sport, corporate media, and U.S. culture. We will learn about the forces shaping sport media production and consider the meanings audiences make of them. The course also examines how television, film, journalism, video games, and advertising encode sport with messages that naturalize and sometimes challenge the social and political order. We will also consider how sport media companies are adjusting to the challenges brought by Covid-19.

The assignments in this class are designed to help you think through these issues in a critical, analytical way. They aim to sharpen skills in research, writing, and multimedia expression. For each assignment, you will gather evidence and present a clear, persuasive argument. You will have the option of producing a short, scripted video in lieu of each paper. Instructions are posted under files, in the folder marked “Assignments.”


Book is available at Prairie Lights, $35.00.

Format

This course will be taught online. Lectures will be asynchronous, recorded and available for you to consume at your own pace. The discussion section meetings will be synchronous online. This means they will meet at their assigned time, but over the web. Your discussion section meets online at the time for which you registered. Your attendance and participation are expected at the discussion section meetings.

Assignments

- **Discussions** – Participation in discussions is an important component of this course. At least ten times this semester, you must participate in discussions. The questions we will engage in each discussion are listed in the syllabus, though these are jumping off points. Students may participate in the synchronous meeting or via the ICON discussion board by the end of the day of the assigned discussion.

- **Quizzes** – There are several online quizzes that are due by 12:30 pm on the assigned day. Once you begin the quiz, you will have ten minutes to complete it. Quizzes are open-book. There are twelve assigned quizzes this semester – I will count your ten best scores.
• **Explaining Sports Media Content Project** – In this 1,000 to 1,500-word essay (or 2-4 minute video), you will identify a single sports-themed program (for example, *Sunday Night Baseball* or *Skip and Shannon: Undisputed*) and explain how it seeks to define itself in relation to the competition. You should identify what elements are familiar, and how the program seeks to distinguish itself. Attend carefully to elements such as casting, visual and aural cues, and brand identity.

• **Advertising Analysis** – In this 1,000 to 1,500-word essay (or 3-5 minute video), you will perform a critical analysis of an advertising campaign that references sport in some central way. Your analysis should present and support an argument identifying a common theme that runs through the ads. It should also discuss why the theme matters.

• **Critical Analysis** – In a 1,500-2,000-word (or 5-7 minute video) essay, conduct an original analysis that examines a single topic and demonstrates, through specific examples, how mediated sport has been used by some to promote a particular vision of social power. Your texts may include advertisements, programs, and should address some aspect of power that goes beyond sport. You may build on previous research (from the syllabus, for example), but you should offer an original, clearly stated argument.

**Course Rules and Responsibilities**

• **General Expectations** – You should treat this course with the level of professionalism you would bring to a job. Your do not need to dress up, but please observe the following guidelines for professional behavior:
  
  • Come to discussions prepared and alert. Do not skip or fail to prepare for synchronous meetings for trivial reasons. Complete the assigned readings before viewing the lectures. You should have completed the week’s readings and lectures before your synchronous class. Focus carefully on the material when in discussion.
  
  • Engage fully to our collective work of learning. Please do not indulge in behavior that detracts attention from the course.
  
  • Be courteous and professional in your correspondence for this course with one another, with the graduate instructors and with me. Use proper grammar and modes of address in your correspondence.

• **Office Hours** – Office hours will be held via Zoom. You should feel free to schedule a meeting to receive clarification about course concepts or assignments, discuss possible projects relating to the course, or just to talk about ideas in an unstructured way. Don’t be a stranger.

• **Absences and Attendance** – Students are responsible for attending class and for contributing to the learning environment of a course. Students are also responsible for knowing their course absence policies, which will vary by instructor. All absence policies, however, must uphold the UI policy related to student illness, mandatory religious obligations, including Holy Day obligations, military service obligations, unavoidable circumstances or University authorized activities. Students may use the CLAS absence form to aid communication with the instructor who will decide if the absence is excused or unexcused. The form is on ICON in the top banner under "Student Tools." More information is at [https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences](https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/attendance-absences).

• **Accommodations for Disabilities** – UI is committed to an educational experience that is accessible to all students. A student may request academic accommodations for a
disability (such as mental health, attention, learning, vision, and physical or health-related condition) by registering with Student Disability Services (SDS). The student is then responsible for discussing specific accommodations with the instructor. More information is at https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/.

- **Administrative Home of the Course** – The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) is the administrative home of this course and governs its add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and related policies. Other colleges may have different policies. CLAS policies may be found here: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook.

- **Class Behavioral Expectations** – Students are expected to comply with University policies regarding appropriate classroom behavior as outlined in the Code of Student Life. This includes the policies and procedures that all students have agreed to regarding the Steps Forward for Fall 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Particularly, all students are required to wear a face covering when in a UI building, including a classroom. In addition, the density of seats in classrooms has been reduced; in some instances, this will allow 6 feet or more between students while other cases, it may be less. Regardless, wearing a face covering and maintaining as much distance as possible are vital to slowing the spread of COVID-19. In the event that a student disrupts the classroom environment through their failure to comply with the reasonable directive of an instructor or the University, the instructor has the authority to ask that the student immediately leave the space for the remainder of the class period. Additionally, the instructor is asked to report the incident to the Office of Student Accountability for the possibility of additional follow-up. Students who need a temporary alternative learning arrangement related to COVID-19 expectations should contact Student Disability Services arrangements; +1 319 335-1462 (https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/fall-2020/covid-19-temporary-learning-arrangements).

- **Class Recordings: Privacy and Sharing** – Some sessions of a course could be recorded or live-streamed. Such a recording or streaming will only be available to students registered for the course. These recordings are the intellectual property of the faculty, and they may not be shared or reproduced without the explicit written consent of the faculty member. Students may not share these sessions with those not in the class; likewise, students may not upload recordings to any other online environment. Doing so is a breach of the Code of Student Conduct and, in some cases, a violation of the Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- **Communication and the Required Use of UI Email** – Students are responsible for official correspondences sent to the UI email address (uiowa.edu) and must use this address for all communication within UI (Operations Manual, III.15.2).

- **Complaints** – Students with a complaint about an academic issue should first visit with the instructor or course supervisor and then with the Chair of the department or program offering the course; students may next bring the issue to the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; see this page for more information: https://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/student-rights-responsibilities.

- **Final Examination Policies** – The final exam schedule is announced around the fifth week of classes; students are responsible for knowing the date, time, and location of a final exam. Students should not make travel plans until knowing this information. No exams of any kind are allowed the week before finals with very few exceptions made (for labs, ESL and some world language courses, and off-cycle courses): https://registrar.uiowa.edu/final-examination-scheduling-policies.

- **Nondiscrimination in the Classroom** – The University of Iowa is committed to making the classroom a respectful and inclusive space for people of all gender, sexual, racial, religious, and other identities. Toward this goal, students are invited in MyUI to
optionally share the names and pronouns they would like their instructors and advisors to use to address them. The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination and harassment against individuals on the basis of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, and other identity categories set forth in the University’s Human Rights policy. For more information, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/eqod; +1 319 335-0705 or (https://diversity.uiowa.edu/).

- **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 must uphold the UI mission and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment must be reported immediately. For assistance, please see https://osmrc.uiowa.edu/.

- **Mental Health Resources for Students**
  http://counseling.studentlife.uiowa.edu
  http://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/services/psychiatry
  https://hr.uiowa.edu/livewell/managing-stress-and-behavioral-health
  https://www.jccrisiscenter.org/24-hour-crisis-line/
  24-Hour Crisis Line via The Johnson County Crisis Center
  Hours: Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
  Phone: (855) 325-4296; (319) 351-2726

**Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence**
If you have been the victim of a sexual assault or domestic violence on or off campus, or you know someone who has been assaulted and you want to find out more about available resources please contact the Rape Victim Advocate Program (RVAP), or Monsoon United Asian Women of Iowa, the UI Campus Police, or the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP).

*Resources:*
RVAP: (319) 335-6000 http://www.rvap.org/home/
Monsoon: (866) 881-4641 https://monsooniowa.org/programs-services/on-campus-victim-services/
DVIP: (800) 373-1043 http://dvipiowa.org/resources/
Campus Police: (319) 335-5022 https://police.uiowa.edu/police/reporting-sexual-assault

- **Resources for Students**
  **Writing Center**: 110 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0188, http://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/
  **Speaking Center**: 12 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0205, http://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/students/speaking-center
  **Mathematics Tutorial Laboratory**: 314 MacLean Hall, 335-0810, http://www.math.uiowa.edu/math-tutorial-lab
  **Campus Inclusion Team** https://inclusionteam.uiowa.edu/
  **Student Disability Services**: (319) 335-1462 https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/
  **Office of Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator**: (319) 335-6200 https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/
  **CLAS Academic Programs and Student Development**: (319) 335-2633 https://clas.uiowa.edu/students
  **Academic Resource Center**: (319) 335-1497 https://uc.uiowa.edu/student-success/arc
  **Conversation Center**: https://clas.uiowa.edu/rhetoric/conversation-center
  **TRIO Student Support Services**: (319)335-1288 https://diversity.uiowa.edu/trio-sss
Requirements
The schedule of assignments and the credit assigned to each:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion participation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Semi-weekly (10 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Quizzes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Semi-weekly (10 @ 5 pts. each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop #1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>September 16/17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining Sports Media Content Project</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>September 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop #2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>October 21/22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport Advertising Analysis</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>October 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop #3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>December 2/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Power and Resistance Analysis</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Exam Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course total</td>
<td>350</td>
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</tbody>
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Grading scale
Course grades will be distributed according to the following scale

A                           324 and above
A-                          323-314
B+                          313-303
B                           302-293
B-                          292-279
C+                          278-268
C                           267-254
C-                          253-244
D+                          243-233
D                           232-219
D-                          218-209
F                           208 and below
Calendar

August 24  
Course Introduction and Syllabus Review

Module 1: Producing Sport Media

August 26  
Serazio, pp. 1-40
Discussion Section  
Introductions

August 31  
Serazio, pp. 41-57
Quiz #1

September 2  
Discussion Section  
Discussion #1

Imagine a world in which newspapers and television mostly ignored sports. What would professional sport look like in such a world?

September 7  
Quiz #2

September 9  
Serazio, pp. 57-101
Discussion Section  
Discussion #2

Pick a sports-themed program – what’s the brand identity of the program? How does casting and other cues help shape the identity of this program?

Is the trend of athletes and teams foregoing sports journalists and communicating directly to the fans a bad thing? If so, how is it bad and for whom?

September 14  
Serazio, pp. 103-130
Adam Mazmanian, “Can Baseball Survive Covid-19?”

September 16  
George Dohrmann, “Hooked for Life” lecture 8 – NFL Kids
Discussion Section  
Workshop #1

September 21  
Carol Stabile, “Nike, Social Responsibility, and the Hidden Abode of Production” Lecture 9 – Stabile
Quiz #3

September 23  
Serazio, pp. 130-157
Discussion Section  
Discussion #3
What roles in mediated sport are most visible? What roles are invisible? What explains the visibility and invisibility of each?

As teams seek global fan bases, is anti-racism and anti-xenophobia increasingly important, not only as moral commitments, but also as marketing strategies? If so, what would this mean for anti-racism and anti-xenophobia advocates?

Explaining Sport Content Project Due

Module 2: Contesting Meanings of Race and Gender

September 28
Leola Johnson & David Roediger, “Hertz Don’t It?: White ‘Colorblindness’ and the Mark(et)ings of O.J Simpson”

Quiz #4

September 30
Serazio, pp. 161-167

Discussion Section

How did OJ Simpson’s performance of race and gender contribute to his success as a celebrity pitchman?

Identify a contemporary sports celebrity. How is their performance of race and gender similar and different from Simpsons?

October 5
Cheryl Cooky, Michael Messner & Michela Musto, “It’s Dude Time!: A Quarter Century of Excluding Women’s Sports in Televised News and Highlight Shows”

Juliet Macur, “Coronavirus Compounds Financial Concerns in Women’s Sports”

October 7
Kevin Draper, “ESPN Employees Say Racism Endures Behind the Camera”

Discussion Section

Sports coverage is not just “stuff that happens,” it is also consciously produced. To what degree do these decisions impact how we think about sports, what we follow, and how we view the athletes?

Should more parity of coverage and opportunity for women athletes be a priority for sports media companies? Why or why not?

October 12
Serazio, pp. 167-184

Quiz #5

October 14
Players of the Pac-12, “#WeAreUnited”

Rohan Nadkarni, “Why a Large Group of Pac-12 Players are Prepared to Sit Out the Football Season”

Discussion Section

Are the ideals of masculinity communicated by the NFL bad for individual men? What is the effect on men’s status as a group?
How are some players rebelling against the established norms of masculinity in sport?

October 19
Serazio, pp. 184-204

Julie Dicaro, “The Safest Bet in Sports: Men Complaining About a Female Announcer’s Voice”

Quiz #6

October 21

“#MoreThanMean: Women in Sports Face Harassment”

Courtney M. Cox, “Complaint as Diversity Work in Sports Media”

Discussion Section
Workshop #2

October 26
Serazio, pp. 204-221

Quiz #7

October 28
Thomas P. Oates, “New Media and the Repackaging of NFL Fandom”

Discussion Section
Discussion #7

Some claim that mediated sports are a rare space where black men are especially empowered. Do you agree with this claim? Why or why not?

Does the promotion of vicarious management ultimately endanger player health and safety by reducing them to commodities?

Sport Advertising Analysis Due

Module 3: Sport, Media and American Identity

November 2
Serazio, pp. 224-235

November 4
Howard Bryant, “Sports and Patriotism”

Quiz #8

Discussion Section
Discussion #8

“Keep politics out of sports.” Assess the claim.

What motivates ESPN’s stated attempts to remain politically neutral? What kinds of routine expression around sports seem non-political, but really aren’t?

November 9
Serazio 235-251 (sport and the ideology of hard work)

Quiz #9

November 11

Discussion Section
Discussion #9

Why and how have sports been used as a way to teach lessons about proper behavior in the workplace?
How have sport been used by politicians to promote their credentials or message?

November 16
Serazio 251-263 (military marketing)
Quiz #10

November 18
Adam Rugg, “America’s Game: The NFL’s Salute to Service Campaign, the Diffused Military Presence, and Corporate Social Responsibility”
Discussion Section Discussion #10
What are the social benefits of national identity? What are its dangers?
Argue for or against a new NFL policy to end the playing of the national anthems before league games.

November 30
Serazio 263-281 (woke athletes)
Quiz #11

December 2
Samantha Sheppard, “The Revolt of the Cinematic Black Athlete”
Watch “Hour Glass”
Discussion Section Workshop #3

December 7
Watch High Flying Bird
Quiz #12

December 9
Reimaging Sport and Media
Discussion Section Discussion #11
Consider sports as a social force. What is most urgently in need of change? Why do you think so?
How might that change be accomplished?

December 14
Power and Resistance Analysis Due