SPST: 3175 / JMC: 3183
SPORT AND THE MEDIA
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12.30-1.45 pm in 105 EPB

Dr. Thomas Oates
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Office hours: Tuesdays 10-11:30 am in 728 JB, Wednesdays 1:30-3 in w331 AJB, and by appointment.

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Course description and objectives
This course reviews a variety of scholarly approaches to the convergence of corporate sport and corporate media. We will consider how elite sport is encoded in television, film, journalism, video games, and advertising. We will learn about the forces shaping sport media production and consider the meanings audiences make of them. We will work to sharpen skills in research and in written and verbal expression. To assist this process, students will complete a research project, complete a midterm and final examination, and participate in regular class discussions.


Assignments

- **Professionalism** – 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 ready to class prepared and alert. Do not skip class meetings for trivial reasons. Read the assigned readings before class. Focus carefully on the material when in class.
  - Engage fully to our collective work of learning. Please do not engage in behavior that detracts attention from the course. Phones should be silenced and put away for the entirety of class. Laptops and other screens should be used only to advance learning on the topic at hand.
  - Be courteous and professional in your correspondence for this course, using proper grammar and modes of address.

In the unlikely event that you miss a class, please remember the following:

- Unexcused absences from class will negatively impact your participation grade. It’s impossible to participate when you are absent, you may be out of the loop in future discussions because of something you missed. If you have an excused absence, please consult with me about a make up assignment.
- Exam questions will frequently be drawn from course lectures and discussions, so it’s your responsibility to obtain notes, assignment sheets, and whatever else you might have missed – do not ask me for them if you missed class. It might be a good idea to find a partner and agree to fill each other in when you miss class.
Never ask if you missed anything important. Assume that you did and take the necessary steps to catch up.

- **Attendance** – Meetings are opportunities to review and further develop concepts and themes from the readings and to introduce new concepts, themes, and examples. Lectures will be accompanied by some slides, which I will post on ICON. These slides merely outline the lectures, however, so attendance and careful attention is crucial. Attendance at section meetings is also a class requirement. In accordance with university policy, you will be allowed to make up examinations missed due to illness, mandatory religious obligations, certain University activities, or other unavoidable circumstances, provided you have the required documentation. If you are sick with the flu, please do not come to class until you are well again. You need not bring a doctor’s note in such circumstances. Instead, please use the “Absence from Class” form available here: https://registrar.uiowa.edu/absence-class.

- **Discussions** – Participation in discussions is an important component of this course. Ten times this semester, you must participate in discussions online and in person. One week before each in-class dialogue, the discussion board section of the ICON site will open. There, you can find the questions we will engage on the next day designated for discussion. Students can earn ten possible points for each discussion by fulfilling three requirements: (1) Posting to the discussion board before the class meets for discussion will earn you three points. (2) Participating in discussions will earn you five points. (3) Excellent contributions (those that contribute substantially to productively moving discussion forward) will earn two additional points.

- **Digital Project** – In the first half of the course, you will identify some area of sport neglected by mainstream sport media and create a Wikipedia page that highlights and provides details on it for interested readers. Students will identify their topic at the February 23 workshop. Details on the assignment will be distributed on January 23.

- **Exam** – There will be an examination at midterm to assess your grasp of important concepts from the course. The exam will be based in a review sheet, which I will post at least a week before the exam.

- **Final Project** – In a 1,500-2,000-word (6-8 page) essay, conduct an original analysis that builds on an existing research in sport media research (ideally, the same theme you examined in your annotated bibliography). You should identify key questions on this theme, and develop a study that helps to answer them in some way. You will need to submit a proposal for this assignment. Further details will be distributed on March 8.

**Course rules and responsibilities**

- Some of the policies relating to this course are governed by its administrative home, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 120 Schaeffer Hall.

- **Registration Deadlines** – Last day to drop without a W: Jan. 29. Last day to drop with a W: April 2.

- **Class meetings** – Meetings are opportunities to review and further develop concepts and themes from the readings and to introduce new concepts, themes, and examples. Lectures will be accompanied by some slides, which I will post on ICON. These slides merely outline the lectures, however, so attendance and careful attention is crucial.

- **Deadlines** – Deadlines are to be treated with the utmost seriousness. Papers are due at the start of class on the date marked in the syllabus. Any late paper will be penalized one letter grade, and will be penalized an additional letter grade for each class period that passes without a submission. For example, a paper assessed as a B+, but turned in two class meetings late would receive a D+. 
**Studying** — In addition to the time you spend in class, you should spend 5-6 hours per week working on this course. You should use this time to complete and carefully review the assigned reading, review your notes on readings and lectures, complete written assignments, and prepare for exams. Some weeks will be more work-intensive than others, so plan ahead and budget your time accordingly. Start your written assignment early. The Writing Center and the Speaking Center are valuable resources for this course. Writing Center: [https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/](https://writingcenter.uiowa.edu/). Speaking Center: [https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu/](https://speakingcenter.uiowa.edu/).

**Academic Fraud** – We are bound by the Code of Academic Honesty, in which each of us agreed 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." Attempting to disguise another’s work as your own is therefore strictly forbidden. Words that are not your own must be clearly identified by the use of quotation marks. Paraphrased material must be properly cited. We examine papers carefully for signs of plagiarism and will prosecute offenders to the fullest extent of university policies. Csciously or unconsciously plagiarizing is lazy, foolish, self-defeating, and extremely ill-advised. The University provides penalties for plagiarism ranging from disciplinary probation to dismissal from the University. We will review the proper techniques to research and write papers and tests correctly to avoid even accidental plagiarism. If you are in doubt as to whether you may be plagiarizing, ask me for help. Ignorance or indifference to these guidelines is not a defense. For more information, see [http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code](http://clas.uiowa.edu/students/handbook/academic-fraud-honor-code).

**Computer responsibilities** — You are responsible for knowing how to use a computer. This includes maintaining back-up files of your work. Losing an assignment due to failure to back up a file will result in a “zero” for the assignment. You must have a uiowa.edu account and be able to receive e-mail there. Check this account regularly and forward to your primary account if necessary. All email communication for the course (both sent and received mail) must move through your uiowa.edu account. Course announcements will also be posted on ICON, so be sure to check in regularly.

**Office hours** – You should feel free to stop by during office hours to receive clarification about course concepts or assignments, discuss ideas for projects relating to the course, or just to talk about the course topic in an unstructured way. Come alone or if you prefer, with a group of classmates. Don’t be a stranger.

**Reacting Safely to Severe Weather** – If the warning system indicates severe weather, we should immediately seek shelter in the innermost part of the building, if possible at the lowest level. Stay clear of windows and free-standing expanses. The class will reconvene after the severe weather has ended.

**Special accommodations** – I want to hear from anyone who has a disability that may require some modification of seating, testing or other class requirements. Please contact me during my office hours, by e-mail or after class. Special academic arrangements for students with disabilities are handled in cooperation with Student Disability Services ([https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/](https://sds.studentlife.uiowa.edu/)). Students who feel they need special accommodations for any aspect of the course are encouraged to contact SDS and to speak with the instructor and/or TAs early in the semester, so that accommodation can be made as soon as possible.

**Conflict resolution** – Should conflict arise, please seek to resolve them with me directly. Students seeking to resolve a conflict should first contact myself, then, should the issue remain unresolved, Lauren Rabinovitz (DEO, Department of American Studies. [lauren-rabinovitz@uiowa.edu](mailto:lauren-rabinovitz@uiowa.edu)).
• **Sexual harassment policy** – Sexual harassment will not be tolerated. We all have a duty to report incidents of sexual harassment immediately. See the UI Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment at for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy. Immediately report any concerns to Professor Oates or to the DEO of American Studies, Lauren Rabinovitz.

**Requirements**
The schedule of assignments and exams, as well as the credit assigned to each:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion participation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Semi-weekly (10 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Project Workshop</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>February 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Project</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>March 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam #1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>March 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Proposal Workshop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>April 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Proposal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>April 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project Workshop #1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Workshop #2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Exam Week</td>
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**Course total** 350

**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

January 16  Introductions and Syllabus Review

Unit I: Institutions of Sport Media


January 23  Travis Vogan, “Monday Night Football and the Racial Roots of the Network TV Event”

Digital Project Assignment Distributed

January 25  Taylor Branch, “The Shame of College Sports”

Discussion #1

January 30  Toby Miller, “Delivering the Male -- and More: Fandom and Media Sport”

Discussion #2

February 1  Cheryl Cooky, Michael Messner & Michela Muston, “It’s Dude Time!: A Quarter Century of Excluding Women’s Sports in Televised News and Highlight Shows”


Discussion #3

February 8  Laura Wagner, “NFL Network Insider: Network’s Culture a ‘Toxic Cesspool’”

Discussion #4

February 13  Carol Stabile, “Nike, Social Responsibility, and the Hidden Abode of Production”

February 15  Digital Project Workshop

Unit II: Reading Sport

February 20  David Remnick, King of the World, Part 1

February 22  David Remnick, King of the World, Part 2 & 3

Discussion #5

February 27  David Remnick, King of the World, Part 4

Discussion #6

March 1  Review for Exam #1
Digital Project Due

March 6  Exam #1
March 8  Final Project Assignment Distributed

March 13  Spring Break
March 15  Spring Break
March 20  Susan Birrell and Mary McDonald, “Reading Sport: A Methodology for Interrogating Power”
March 22  Leola Johnson & David Roediger, “Hertz Don’t It?: White ‘Colorblindness’ and the Mark(et)ings of O.J Simpson”
March 27  Discussion #7
March 29  Nancy Sperber, “Reading Between the Lines: A Discursive Analysis of the Billie Jean King v. Bobby Riggs
April 3  Katherine Lavelle, “Plays Like a Guy: A Rhetorical Analysis of Brittney Griner in Sports Media”
Discussion #8
April 5  Final Project Proposal Workshop
April 10  A Visit from Paul Kix, ESPN: The Magazine
Final Project Proposal Due
April 12  Jaime Schultz, “The Truth About Historical Sport Films”
Discussion #9

Unit III: Sport Media Audiences and Fan Cultures

April 17  George Dohrmann, “Hooked for Life”
April 19  Nickolas Davis and Margaret Carlisle Duncan, “Sports Knowledge is Power”
Discussion #10
April 24  Howard Bryant, “Sports and Patriotism”
April 26  George Lipsitz, “Space, Sports, and Spectatorship in St. Louis”
Discussion #11

May 1  Final Project Workshop #1
May 3  Final Project Workshop #2

Exam Week  Final Project Due