

Summer 2024

HIST 109b

A Global History of Sport: Politics, Economy, Race and Culture

Session 1: T, W, Th (1:50-4:20; Mandel Humanities: G03)

(Syllabus subject to change, Updated Syllabus always on LATTE)

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Rabb 368

Course Description:

This course studies global culture, politics, racism, and economics through the lens of sport history to introduce students to the surprising ways in which sport intersects with everyday life. It sees sport as an arena for social, political, and ideological fights. The course will pay particular attention to how the media and commercialization of sports have contributed to these conflicts.

Physical training and sports have a long and varied history, ranging from the Olympian games and gladiatorial fights of the ancient world through jousting and archery in the Middle Ages. Modern sport evolved in the late 1800s as an organized, less hazardous form of physical activity. Many historians believe that this progression was part of the "civilizing process" championed by European powers, which began with colonialism and was based on racial stereotypes. Yet, although imperialist countries exploited sports to bolster their domination, colonized peoples and those living in postcolonial cultures fought back by engaging in and adopting the same games.

In recent years, competitive sports have become a huge cultural and economic force. Olympic Games and Soccer World Cups are not just worldwide extravaganzas and financial blockbusters; they also symbolize national pride and, at times, international strife. Local athletic events, on a smaller but no less significant scale, have a worldwide audience in an increasingly internationalized society, connecting and dividing people in novel ways.

During the Cold War, sports were viewed as a tool for expressing political ideologies and for superpowers to showcase their dominance. In the present day, the International Olympic Committee aims to utilize sports for socio-political purposes that resonate with a global audience. The relationship between sports and national identity can be shaped by various factors such as gender, race, and religion. This course examines the historical impact of sports on society and how it continues to shape us today. By studying the history of sports, students can gain a better understanding of issues such as LGBTQ representation in sports, gender equality, and sexual misconduct. In addition, the course will explore how sports can serve as a platform for individuals to develop their identity and character in modern society.

Prerequisites:

This course has no prerequisites.

Learning Goals:

- To track the worldwide growth of sports events over time
- To provide a context for understanding the impact of 19th century European colonialism and 20th century decolonizations on sports
- To establish a historical framework within which to locate regional, racial, and socioeconomic differences in sports
- To explore the significance of factors such as nationalism, the Cold War, and ideology in the development of sports.
- To evaluate the role of gender and sexuality in sports culture
- To analyze the impact of the growing coverage of sports on popular culture

Texts

The readings for the semester will be chapters, articles, and excerpts from the books listed below and other sources. All readings will be available on LATTE. The syllabus includes hyperlinks to news articles.

- *The Changing Politics of Sport* – ed. Lincoln Allison
- *The Tournament in England, 1100-1400* - Juliet R.V. Barker
- *Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome* – Richard C. Beacham
- *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics* – Jules Boykoff
- *Playing America's Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line* - Adrian Burgos
- *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence* - Peter Burke
- *Africa, Football and FIFA: Politics, Colonialism and Resistance* – Paul Darby
- *The Whole World Was Watching: Sport in the Cold War* – eds. Robert Edelman and Christopher Young
- *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Soccer* – David Goldblatt
- *Globalization and Sport* – eds. Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson
- *From Ritual to Record* – Allen Guttman
- *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity* – Jennifer Hargreaves
- *Sporting Gender* - Joanna Harper
- *Greek Athletics* – ed. Jason König
- *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* - Walter LaFeber
- *The Cultural Bond: Sport, Empire, Society* - ed. J. A. Mangan
- *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914* – ed. J. A. Mangan
- *Gaming the World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture* - Andrei S. Markovits and Lars Rensmann
- *Redemption Song: Muhammad Ali and the Spirit of the Sixties* - Mike Marqusee
- *Basketball Beyond Borders* – Chris Milholen
- *Globalization and Sport: Playing the World* – Toby Miller
- *Sport in the Cultures of the Ancient World: New Perspectives* – ed. Zinon Papakonstantinou
- *Cold War Games: Propaganda, the Olympics, and U.S. Foreign Policy* – Toby C. Rider

- *Defending the American Way of Life: Sport, Culture, and the Cold War* – eds. Toby C. Rider and Kevin Witherspoon
- *Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner: Boxing in the Shadow of the Global Color Line* – Theresa Runstedler
- *A Contemporary History of Women's Sport, Part One: Sporting Women, 1850-1960* – Jean Williams
- *A People's History of Sports in the United States: 250 Years of Politics, Protest, People, and Play* – Dave Zirin

Films and Documentaries

Dangal (film, 2016) dir. Nitesh Tiwari

Jackie Robinson (documentary, 2016), dir. Ken Burns

Diego Maradona (documentary, 2019) dir. Asif Kapadia

The Damned United (film, 2009) dir. Tom Hooper

Assorted Videos (YouTube; clickable links)

[Inside a Neo Nazi Fight Club | Decade of Hate](#) (Vice News)

[Mike Tyson and Paul Holdengräber: Undisputed Truth](#) (New York Public Library, 11/12/2013)

Class Participation:

Though a series of introductory and explanatory lectures will be provided, the format of this course will encourage group participation. Therefore, you are expected to have done the required reading before coming to class and expected to participate in the discussion. The course material requires commitment and active learning on the part of the student. I will provide guidance during class and in discussion, but it is your responsibility to come to see me if you find the material daunting, or just plain incomprehensible.

Credit Hours:

Success in this four-credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.) Students should be able to prepare readings, reflections, and participate in class.

Oral Communication Requirement

Objectives:

The oral communication requirement recognizes that students need to be prepared for a variety of ways to communicate effectively in various fields of study including oral presentations, interviews, active debate, critique, and performances.

Learning Goals:

- 1) Communicate and listen effectively in the context of the major
- 2) Critically evaluate orally presented information and arguments
- 3) Consider specific techniques for using language as a communication tool within the major

Instructional Videos

The following oral communications instructional videos will be screened in class:

- *Speech Process and Structure*
- *Speaking and Nervousness*

These and other helpful videos can be found [here](#).

Grading Criteria

Students will be graded on **written work, oral presentations, and participation in class discussions**. To fulfil this course's oral communication requirements, besides presenting a draft of their final seminar paper (3-5 mins), students will be expected to discuss their reflections (5 mins each) on the required readings in class. Students are expected to attend every session. Absences without prior notification or permission will result in a grade deduction from the participation part of the final grade.

Final Project: 35%

The final project is an opportunity for students to explore a topic related to the course in greater detail. The topic of this ten-page (~2500 words) paper must be decided in consultation with the instructor.

Mid-Term: 15%

The midterm is intended to test the student's familiarity with class lectures and course readings. It will consist of a series of short-answer questions.

Take home essays: 20%

The two take home assignments will comprise of an essay question each, drawing on class readings. 500 words each.

Presentation: 10%

Each student will be given at least one opportunity to lead class discussion with a **10-minute presentation** on a topic relevant to the course, decided in consultation with the instructor. Students are welcome to use multimedia tools and can rely on the instructor's help in furthering the conversation.

Participation: 10%

The constructive participation of all students is critical to the completion of this course. This includes meaningful engagement with the readings as well as joining in class discussions.

Reflection on Readings: 10%

Over the course of the semester, students are required to turn in two critical commentaries—250 words each—reflecting on the readings and discuss their commentaries in class. (~5 mins each)

- * All written assignments must be double-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font and submitted as a Microsoft Word document on Latte under the corresponding assignment folder.
 - * Students must complete all required coursework to receive a passing grade.
 - * All unexcused delays will be penalized.
 - * Questions regarding grades must be dealt with in person during office hours (or by appointment). I will not entertain grade related queries over e-mail or phone.
1. Research Paper: In consultation with the instructor, participants will write one research paper in the second half of the semester. It must be analytical not descriptive. Paper outlines, along with a bibliography, will be approved by the instructor and focus on a related topic (race, class etc.) and can draw on students' own disciplinary directions, whether in the field of Political Science, History, Anthropology, or Literature.
 2. Technology: Your use of social media and other Internet aided pastimes distracts you, your classmates, and your professor. Because it is difficult to monitor the usage of electronic devices, laptops and tablets are not allowed in this class without an accommodation. If you believe that special circumstances merit an accommodation in your case, please see me.
 3. Student Accessibility Support: Brandeis seeks to welcome and include all students. If you are a student who needs accommodations as outlined in an accommodations letter, please talk with me and present your letter of accommodation as soon as you can. I want to support you. In order to provide test accommodations, I need the letter more than 48 hours in advance. I want to provide your accommodations but cannot do so retroactively. If you have questions about documenting a disability or requesting accommodations, please contact Student Accessibility Support (SAS) at 781.736.3470 or access@brandeis.edu.
 4. Course Materials: If you are having difficulty purchasing course materials, please make an appointment with your Student Financial Services or Academic Services advisor to discuss possible funding options and/or textbook alternatives.
 5. Academic Integrity: You are expected to be honest in all your academic work. Please consult Brandeis University [Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at [LTS - Library guides](#).
 6. Financial Aid Information: Undergraduate students from SAS with financial need should contact Student Financial Services to discuss options available to purchase equipment and other technology and supply needs. GSAS students should contact

Monique Howell in GSAS.

7. Communication: Announcements, changes, assignment guidelines, and accommodations for “snow days” will be communicated through LATTE. It is essential that you are enrolled for the course and have complete access to LATTE.
8. Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Stalking, and Sexual and Racial Harassment
If you experience one of these, Sarah J. Berg at the Brandeis Office of Prevention Services can provide confidential assistance to you and let you know about other resources. Here is the link to a resource guide <http://www.brandeis.edu/sexual-misconduct-title-ix/resources/index.html>. Title IX Coordinator Elizabeth Herriott Tierney (etierney@brandeis.edu/ (781)-736-4456) accepts reports. The Prevention, Advocacy & Resource Center (Usdan Student Center, Room G-108) can be reached at (781)-736-3372.
9. Classroom Health and Safety Measures: All students in this class are required to observe the university’s policies on physical distancing and mask-wearing to support the health and safety of all classroom participants. Face coverings must be worn by all students and instructors in classes with in-person meetings. Students and faculty must also maintain the appropriate 6 feet of physical distance from one another when entering, exiting, or being in the classroom and continue to sit in seats assigned by the professor to assist the university in its contact-tracing efforts. All faculty and students must also clean their work areas before and after each class session, using the sanitizing wipes provided by the university. (All classrooms will also be professionally cleaned by Brandeis custodial staff multiple times per day)
10. Breaks: Class meetings will include a 10-20 minute break, at the instructor’s discretion.

Week One

June 3: Introduction

Instructor introduction, course introduction, and student introduction
“Play, Games, Contests, Sports” and “From Ritual to Record”
(Guttman, *From Ritual to Record*, 1-56)

June 4: “Sport and Ideology in the Post-Communist Age” (Hoberman, *The Changing Politics of Sport*, 15-37; “Sport, Nationalism and Cultural Identity” (Grant Jarvie, *The Changing Politics of Sport*, 58-84); Gerald D. Berreman; *Speech Process and Structure* (Oral Communications – Instructional Video)

June 6: Ancient Sport

“Games, Prizes, Athletes, and Ideology. Some Aspects of the

History of Sport in the Greco-Roman World” (H.W. Pleckct, *Greek Athletics*, 145-174); “Sport, War and Democracy in Classical Athens” (D. Pritchard, *Sport in the Cultures of the Ancient World*, 64-97)
“Nero: No Business but Show Business” (Beacham, *Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome*, 197-244)

Assignment 1: Take home essay (approx. 500 words)

Week Two

June 10: Medieval Sport

“Early Beginnings” and “Tournaments and War” (Barker, *The Tournament in England*, 1100-1400, 4-44); “Tournaments and Politics” and “Tournaments and the Church” (Barker, *The Tournament in England*, 45-83)

Reflection 1 Assigned (250 words)

June 11: Early Modern Sport

“The Invention of Leisure in Early Modern Europe” (Peter Burke, *Past and Present*, No. 146, Feb. 1995, 136-150); “‘For Refreshment and Preserving Health’: The Definition and Function of Recreation in Early Modern England” (Elaine McKay, *Historical Research*, Vol. 81, Issue 211, February 2008, 52-74); “Until the Twentieth Century” (Zirin, *A People’s History of Sports in the United States*, 1-32)
“Until the Twentieth Century” contd. (Zirin, *A People’s History of Sports in the United States*, 1-32) “Arena and Pall Mall: Sport in the Early Modern Period” (Wolfgang Behringer, *German History* Vol. 27, Issue 3, July 2009, 331-357); “Puritanism and Sport in Seventeenth Century England” (Dennis Brailsford, *Stadion*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1975, 316-330)

Assignment 1 due

June 13: Shavuot — no class meetings

Week Three: Sport and Empire

June 17: Empire of Sport” (Ronojoy Sen, *Nation at Play*, 31-57); “Cricket and Colonialism: Colonial Hegemony or Indigenous Subversion” (Richard Cashman, *Pleasure, Profit and Proselytism*, 258-272); “Football, Empire and Industry” (David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, 112-170); “Football Diffusion and Colonial Doctrine in Africa” and “Football, Indigenous Resistance and African Independence” (Paul Darby, *Africa, Football and FIFA*, 8-42); discuss *Diego Maradona* (documentary) and *Lagaan* (film)

Reflection 1 Due

June 18: Sport and the Cold War

“Explaining Cold War Sport” (Christopher Young, *The Whole World Was Watching*, 1-26); “The United States, the Soviet Union, and the Olympic Games” (Toby C. Rider, *Cold War Games*, 29-48); “Cold War Games” (Jules Boykoff, *Power Games*, 81-115)

Midterm

June 20: “To Win One for the Gipper: Football and the Fashioning of a Cold Warrior” (Kate Aguilar, *Defending the American Way of Life*, 113-128); “‘No Quarrel with them Vietcong’: Muhammad Ali’s Cold War” (Elliot J. Gorn, *The Whole World Was Watching*, 42-56)

Reflection 2 Assigned (250 words)

Week Four

June 24: Sport and Race

Presentations (contd.); “Viva Johnson! Fighting over Race in the Americas” (Runstedler, *Jack Johnson, Rebel Sojourner*, 196-230); “Ali in the Prison of the Present” and “A Change is Gonna Come” (Marqusee, *Redemption Song*, 1-6, 46-101)

Presentations

June 25: Sport and Gender

Presentations (continued, if required) “Introduction: Feminist Sport History in the Past, Present and Future” (Holly Thorpe and Rebecca Olive, *Journal of Sport History*, Vol. 39, No. 3, 2012, 373-377); “Women and Sport or Women’s Sport?” (Jean Williams, *A Contemporary History of Women’s Sport*, 1-28); “Sporting Lesbians” (Jennifer Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport*, 129-173); “Early Transgender Athletes,” “Caster Semenya,” and “Dutee Chand” (Joanna Harper, *Sporting Gender*, 57-68/105-114/141-152; Martina Navratilova and the “cheating trans women” controversy (survey of coverage in *The New Yorker*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, and *The New York Times*); Caster Semenya - “I Am A Woman” (*NPR*, 31st May 2019); *Dangal* (Nitesh Tiwari, Film, 2016)

Reflection 2 Due

Assignment 2: Take home essay (approx. 500 words)

June 27: Sport and Globalization

“Going Global – Sports, Politics, and Identities” (Andrei S. Markovits and Lars Rensmann, *Gaming the World*, 1-42); “The ‘G-Word’ Meets the ‘S-Word’” (Toby Miller et al., *Globalization and Sport*, 6-30)
“[How MMA and UFC conquered the world](#)” (*The Guardian*, 4th March 2016); “[Inside the UFC’s Plans to expand its Global Stronghold](#)” (*ESPN*); “[German neo-Nazis are trying to go mainstream with MMA](#)” (*Vice News*, April 2018); “[Fascist fight clubs](#)” (*The Guardian*, 11th September 2018); “[UFC's 'Fight Island'](#)” (*Vice News*, August 2020)

Final Project assigned

Week Five

July 1: “The NBA Takes its Games Global” (Chris Milholen, *Basketball Beyond Borders*, 55-64) “Basketball and Globalization” (Sam Riches, *The New Yorker*, 7th October 2013); “The Globalization of Michael Jordan” (Walter LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, XXX)

Assignment 2 Due

July 2: Sport History: The “Visual Turn”

“Beyond Iconography,” and “The Cultural History of Images” (Peter Burke, *Eyewitnessing: The Uses of Images as Historical Evidence*, 207-232)
The Damn United (Tom Hooper, 2009); *Jackie Robinson* (Ken Burns, Documentary, 2016)

July 4: Independence Day holiday observed — no class meetings.