

Sociology of Sport - SOC 3000
Spring semester, 2009
Instructor: Dr. Craig M. Eckert
Office: 3137 Blair Hall

Office hours: MWF 9 to 10 a.m. and M 2-3 p.m. If these times don't work, see me after class and we'll find a time that is mutually convenient.

Home Phone: Do not call me at home. In the event of an EMERGENCY, you should leave a message on my voice mail on my **office phone** 217-581-6218.
Office e-mail: cmeckert@eiu.edu

Sports in Society: Issues & Controversies (eighth edition) by Jay Coakley (2004).
The Bottom Line: Observations and Arguments on the Sports Business by Andrew Zimbalist (2006).

I would merely note that the two authors listed above are two of the leading figures in the field of the sociology of sport. Moreover, Jay Coakley's work is recognized as an exemplar in the field. I also want to mention that I will probably put two or three articles on reserve during the course of the semester, or at least distribute some short handouts (from sports magazines, editorials, newspapers, etc.) for class discussion, reading, etc.

Goals for the course:

- To motivate you to think **critically** about sports;
- To motivate you to think sociologically about sports;
- To provide you a brief history of sports;
- To allow you to see contemporary sports as an institution that is fraught with all the biases and discrimination that is inherent in other American institutions.

When you look at the four "bullets" above, what I am really trying to do is impart the "sociological imagination" to the field of sport in American society.

GRADING SCHEME:

I can't emphasize too strongly how important attendance is to class performance. To ensure that you are showing up, class attendance is worth **3%** of your final grade.

- Class participation is also important, whether it be answering questions, bringing up relevant points, asking questions, etc. I am quite aware that some of us are shy and don't think we have much to say about anything. However, one of the reasons you are at a university is to learn "stuff" and to be able to impress others by your communication. Thus, in this class, participation is worth **5%** of your final grade. Obviously, if you go the entire semester without saying anything, you will NOT earn any points in this category towards your final grade. Please note that merely attending is NOT the same thing as participating. Thus, they are weighted as **TWO DISTINCT CRITERIA WITH RESPECT TO YOUR FINAL GRADE.**

- Written assignments: There are three (3) REQUIRED written assignments in this class:

Assignment 1 is an 800-1000 word essay about your INVOLVEMENT, or lack thereof, in sports. For example, you might write about a coach (or parent) who was vitally important in motivating you to participate in sports. Or, alternatively, you might write about how you were (or are) discriminated against in sports (e.g., being female, being a **non**-scholarship athlete, etc.). Or you might write about, as one student did, your use of performance-enhancing drugs to give you “an edge” with respect to other athletes. This is NOT a “blow off” assignment. Students should pay attention to spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. before submitting the assignment. This assignment is worth **5%** of your final grade. It should have a cover page with your name, the course title, and my name on it. No late papers will be accepted for any reason. This assignment is due by **Monday, January 26th**.

Assignment 2: Each student will be required to write a two-page **synopsis** of a sports-related **research** article published in the LAST 4 YEARS (e.g., 2002-2006). Each student will be required to detail the PURPOSE of the research, the MAIN HYPOTHESIS, HOW the research was done (e.g., survey, focused interview, etc.), the PRIMARY FINDINGS and HOW/WHY the article is relevant to the course. Students must submit the article for my approval by **Wednesday Feb. 4th**. The actual synopsis is due on the **Friday, April 3rd**. Coakley’s Chapter 1 has an extensive listing of sports-related journals. Use it and you will not have to keep re-submitting an article for my approval. This assignment is worth **5%** of your final grade.

Assignment 3: Each student must watch an episode of ESPN’s “Outside the Lines” or HBO’s “Real Sports” and provide a 2 page synopsis of the segment you watched and your opinion with respect to the issue that was covered. I will accept this assignment at any point in the semester up until **Friday April 10th**. This writing assignment is worth **5%** of your total grade.

Thus, these 3 writing assignment are worth **15%** of your final average.

- “Pop” Quizzes on assigned readings, class lecture, etc. It is important, therefore, that you come to class and that you do the assigned readings on time. The quizzes will comprise **30%** of your final grade.
- Three exams. The final will count for **47%** of your final grade. Both quizzes and the final exam will contain M-C and T-F questions. The final will also include those kinds of questions, plus a matching column, short answers, brief “essays,” etc. Note: **The final exam will be administered in accordance with the University’s Final Exam schedule.**

Topics and Assigned Reading:

I purposely am **NOT** providing you with a week-to-week reading list, NOT because I am lazy and didn’t want to do it. Rather, I want to see “where the class is,” in terms of its interest in sports. In addition, I intend to show some movies, give handouts from sportswriters and commentators, and use “current events” in the sports world to foster participation. I will give you reading assignments at the end of each class meeting and often I will announce that a quiz is likely regarding that reading assignment.