

COMM 381: Issues in Contemporary Sport

4 Units

Fall Mon/Weds 8:30-9:50

Location: ANN L105A

Instructor: Rook Campbell, PhD

Office Hours: Mon & Wed, 1:00 to 2:00

Contact Info: rook.campbell@usc.edu

I. Course Description

As an inquiry on conditions of modernity, this course takes the subject of sport as a lens by which to better understand issues of identity and social agency. Through an interdisciplinary approach of communication, anthropology, journalism, political philosophy, and cultural studies scholarship, our curriculum sets out to reconnect individual, communal, and institutional approaches to contemporary sport. Working to specify the meaning and consequences of sport as body culture, our studies begin with the character of sport, its geographies and technologies before then concentrating upon sport business and labor, athlete activism, and subculture sport. Ultimately, we are concerned with the specific ways sport practices reflect and come to underpin dynamics of inclusion, exclusion, and differential status for some and not others.

II. Overall Learning Objectives and Assessment

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Understand sport as both a mirror of the social, political fabric of contemporary life and as an important vehicle of power and change.
- Analyze sport in relation to contemporary, thorny issues of violence, racism, sexism, ageism, and exclusion of various sorts.
- Assess sport representations and messaging, while raising new questions of how sport provides indicators of who we are and aspire to be collectively.

III. Attendance & Class Policy

Students are required to attend class regularly, to contribute to class discussions, and to do weekly reading. Attendance in lecture is important: there is significant material covered in lecture that is not in the reading and you cannot pass the course if you do not attend most of the lectures. There are several writing assignments for

this class, and because the lectures, discussions, readings and course assignments are all vitally linked, it is critical that you keep up with the schedule.

Students who miss more than **three lectures** will have their grades reduced and risk failing the course.

Because our seminar format emphasizes student interaction, involves debate, and presents case study material, laptop usage is at the discretion of the professor. This policy is to ensure dynamic classroom participation. Please be prepared to take notes the old fashioned way. Exceptions for note taking accommodation are possible by request.

Seminar Social Media:

Twitter: @Cabinet48

Class Hashtag: #sporthodox

Additional Social Media

Annenberg Institute of Sport Media and Society: @Annenberg Sport and #AISMS

IV. Grading Breakdown

Assessment Components	Points	% of Grade
Seminar Participation & Exposé		20
Response Papers (3)		25
Midterm (17 October)		25
Final Paper Project (30 November)		30
TOTAL		100%

V. Assignment Submission Policy

There are three response papers and a final term paper due in this class. The details of each response paper will be given in a prompt approximately one week before the papers are due (due dates are noted in the syllabus). Papers must be presented in hard copy (not as an email attachment) and late papers will not be accepted. If you have an emergency that impacts your ability to turn your paper in on time, you need to contact the professor **before** the paper is due.

VI. Required Texts

Carrington, Ben. 2010. *Race, Sport and Politics*. Sage, London.

Bale, John. 2004. *Running Cultures: Racing in Time and Space*. Routledge, New York.

Wheaton, Belinda. 2013. *The Cultural Politics of Lifestyle Sports*. Routledge Press, New York.

VII. Important Dates

Midterm -- 17 October

VIII. Course Schedule COMM 387: Reading and Weekly Breakdown*

***Important note to students:** Be advised that this syllabus is subject to change – and probably will change – based on the progress of the class, news events, and/or guest speaker availability.

Week One: 22 & 24 August

Overview: Sport in Contemporary Society

Week Two: 29 & 31 August

Sport Idealism

Week Three: 7 September

Rules of the Game: Integrity, Cheating and Corruption

-- Response Paper No. 1, Due 7 September --

Week Four: 12 & 14 September

Symbols of the Nation: Identity and Memory

Week Five: 19 & 21 September

Bigger, Faster, Stronger

Week Six: 26 & 28 September

Sport Media and Money Interests

Week Seven: 3 & 5 October

Profits and Costs of Athlete Professionalization

-- Response Paper No. 2 | Due, 5 October --

-- Guests | NCAA Football & NFL Athletes Panel, 5 October --

Week Eight: 10 & 12 October

Contemporary Sport's Moral Compass & Inner Workings

-- Documentary Screening | 10 October --

----- MIDTERM | 17 OCTOBER -----

Week Nine: 17 & 19 October

Athlete Activists

----- MIDTERM | 17 OCTOBER -----

-- Documentary Screening | 19 October --

Week Ten: 24 & 26 October

Excluding, Essentializing, and Exploiting: Sport & Race

Week Eleven: 31 October & 2 November

Regulated Bodies: Gender and Sexuality

-- Response Paper No. 3 | Due, 31 October --

-- Documentary | 31 October --

Week Twelve: 7 & 9 November

Making Waves: Real and Imagined Spaces for Change

-- Final Project Abstract Due, 9 November --

Week Thirteen: 14 & 16 November

Sport for Peace, Healing, Reconciliation

-- Guest Speaker | Darfur United, 16 November --

Week Fourteen: 21 November*

Disciplined and/or Emancipated Lives!?

----- Thanksgiving Break | 23-27 November -----

Week Fifteen: 28 & 30 November

Assessing Modern Sport: Winners and Losers

-- Final Projects Due, 30 November --

IX. Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity* <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety* <http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the

university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.