CONTEXTUALIZING LATE CAPITALIST SPORT

Examining the Structure, Influence, and Experience of Sport in the New Millennium

KNES 689B: Special Problems in Kinesiology - Fall 2001

Instructor: David L. Andrews
Time: Wednesday 4.00-6.30pm
Office: 2318 HHP Building
Office Hours: Wednesday 1.00-3.00pm and by appointment

Venue: 0305 HHP Building
Office Phone: 405-2450
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Course Description

This course examines sport as a diverse cultural form through which physical activity is organized, regulated, and consumed within contemporary society. It focuses on the complex relationship between sport culture and the economic institutions and forces that have come to pervade every aspect of human existence. More specifically, the courses locates sport within the context of the late capitalist order of which it is both a constituent and constituted element. It focuses on the contemporary cultural economy of sport--constituted by sport practices, products, spectacles, bodies, and spaces--and seeks to contextualize it within the broader social forces associated with the post-industrial economy, post-fordist production, post-statist politics, post-modern culture, and, the post-national geographies. The course engages numerous theories, drawn from a range of academic disciplines (including but not restricted to sociology, cultural studies, and history), that will be used to critically interpret various aspects of late capitalist sport. The aim is for students to develop a more critical, holistic, and contextually grounded, understanding of the structure, influence, and experience of late capitalist sport.

Course Objectives

1. To encourage students to develop a more critical, theoretical, and contextually grounded understanding of contemporary sport. In other words, to nurture a sporting sociological imagination.

2. To encourage students to develop a cultural dialectical approach to the sport-society relation: A "Sport Without Guarantees" understanding rooted in the intellectual premises and practices of Cultural Studies.

3. To acquaint students with an understanding of the condition of late capitalism, and familiarize them with its various constituents, including: the post-industrial economy; post-fordist production; post-statist politics; post-modern culture; and, post-national geographies.

4. To allow students to make explicit the connections between contemporary sport and the broader economic, technological, political, cultural, and geographic forces (the five "posts") which shape contemporary society.

5. To provide students with a diverse theoretical vocabulary with which to interpret various aspects of contemporary sport.

6. To nurture the researching, writing, and interpretive skills required in order for students to make informed, insightful, and imaginative contributions to their field of study.
## Course Outline

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<th>Week</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>September 05</td>
<td>Lecture I: Contextualizing Sport</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
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<td>Lecture II: Economic Base and Sporting Superstructure?</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
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<td><strong>Mid-Term Examination</strong></td>
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<td>Lecture VIII: Sport and Post-Statist Politics</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
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<td>Research Article Presentation and Submission</td>
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### Grading Scheme

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### Grading Plan

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Course Assignments

I. Research Article (40% of Final Grade)

The major assignment for this course will be an 8,000 word (including footnotes and bibliography) research article.

The article should focus on either a contemporary sport practice, product, spectacle, body, or space, and within your discussion you will be expected to carry out a dialectically oriented contextual analysis of your chosen sport entity; a comprehensive analysis of its relation to the complex and interdependent forces of late capitalism.

You should approach this article as if you were writing it for a specific journal (preferably the Sociology of Sport Journal, Journal of Sport and Social Issues, International Review for the Sociology of Sport, or Culture, Sport, Society), and should follow the specific style and format guidelines of your chosen journal. You will be expected to state your chosen journal on the title page of your article.

The focus of your research article must be approved by the instructor. To facilitate this you will be expected to submit a 300 word research abstract on Wednesday October 10. This abstract should summarise the focus of your article, briefly outline the interpretive position that will frame your analysis, and provide insights into what you perceive (from preliminary research) to be the primary sources of information that you will use.

The research articles will be submitted on Wednesday December 5 and, as previously stated, it will be expected that they follow the specific style and format guidelines of your chosen journal.

II. Research Presentation (15% of Final Grade)

On Wednesday December 5 you will also be expected to present your research article to the rest of the class, and any other interested parties who will be invited to attend the presentations.

The format for the presentations will follow that of academic conferences. The research presentations will be in blocks of three, each being 12 minutes in duration (a limit that will be strictly adhered to), followed by 15 minutes of questioning by the audience.

You will be expected to treat these presentations as if they were being made at an academic conference, and should prepare audio-visual materials, and audience hand-outs, as you deem appropriate.

III. Mid-Term Examination (20% of Final Grade)

On Wednesday October 17 there will be a mid-term examination focusing on material covered in Lecture I through Lecture V, and related readings.
The examination will comprise of three essay questions to be answered during the class period. Be warned, you will not be provided with a selection of questions, there will be only three from which to choose.

It is fully expected that you will cite relevant authors and years of publication, and key quotations (page numbers not necessary) when answering these questions.

**IV. Weekly Assignments (25% of Final Grade)**

The weekly format for the course will be as follows. The week prior to the lecture you will be able to access (on the course web page) a summary of the lecture for the upcoming week, at the end of which will be a list of required readings and related assignments (some of which will be presented orally others will be written for submission to the instructor).

It is fully expected that you will come to lectures having read the appropriate lecture summary, the required readings, and completed the related assignments. Only then will it be possible to generate the type of informed and insightful dialogue that we should expect from a graduate seminar (the format of delivery I would prefer). For this level of graduate course to be effective, it is important to nurture a climate of interaction between students and instructor (as opposed to the more passive learning experience associated with a more traditional lecture format).

Evidently a graduate seminar creates different challenges for student and instructor alike. For students there is a need to prepare assiduously for each lecture, since failure to do so is both revealing to the instructor and inhibits the development of the learning experience as a whole. As a general rule, you should be thinking of spending a minimum of 8 hours per week in preparation for each lecture. For instructors there is of course the need to be prepared a priori for each lecture (which in terms of lecture summaries and readings takes considerably more than 8 hours!), as well as the importance of guiding the seminar such that the relevant topics are covered in a comprehensive manner.
Course Readings

I. Lecture Summaries

These can be accessed at the "Post-Sport" web site at:

http://www.hhp.umd.edu/KNES/courses/knes689b/

The passwords required to access the various sections of this web site will be divulged on the first day of class, and should not be circulated to anyone other than class members.

II. Required Course Texts


The precise course text readings for each week are indicated at the end of the appropriate lecture summary, which can be accessed at the "Post-Sport" web site.

III. Course Reading Packet

Week 2 September 05 Lecture I: Contextualizing Sport


Johnson, R. S. (1998, June 22). The Jordan effect: The world's greatest basketball player is also one of its great brands. What is his impact on the economy? Fortune, NL.

**Week 3  September 12  Lecture II: Economic Base and Sporting Superstructure?**


**Week 4  September 19  Lecture III: The Sporting Dialectic**


**Week 5  September 26  Lecture IV: Sport Without Guarantees**


Week 6 October 03 Lecture V: The Condition of Late Capitalist Sport


Week 7 October 10 Lecture VI: Sport and the Post-Industrial Economy


Week 9 October 24 Lecture VII: Sport and Post-Fordist Technology


Schonfeld, E. (1998, September 28). The customized, digitized, have-it your-way economy: Mass customization will change the way products are made--forever. USA Today, p. 114 (LN).

Week 10 October 31 Lecture VIII: Sport and Post-Statist Politics


Week 11 November 07 Lecture IX: Sport and Post-Modern Culture


Nayyar, S., & Lach, J, (1998, October). We're Being Watched: Think You're Safe, anonymous, sitting on the sofa and watching your favorite sitcom? Think again. The networks know where we live, what we buy, and where we vacation. At least they hope they do. American Demographics, pp. 52-58.


Week 12 November 14 Lecture X: Sport and Post-National Geographies


Week 13 November 21 Lecture XI: Contextualizing Sport Practices/Products


Week 14 November 28 Lecture XII: Contextualizing Sport Spectacles/Bodies/Spaces


Hare, G. (1999). "Get your kit on for the lads": Adidas versus Nike, the other World Cup. Sociology of Sport Online, 2 (2), <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/depts/sps/sosol/v2i2a1.htm>.