**Anthropology of Sports**

**Rutgers University**

**Summer 2016**

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday**

**12:45-2:35 pm**

**Instructor: Michael E. Allen**

**Office: Ruth Adams Building, Department of Anthropology**

**Office Hours: By Appointment**

**Email: meallen@rutgers.edu**

**Course Description**

Since ancient times, sports have pervaded human life. This course explores the significance of sport in modern society. While sport is often touted as being above or outside politics it has historically been a vehicle for nation building and ideology.  Through ethnographic readings and discourse analysis we will address emergent anthropological theories of power, violence, and patterns of domination through the lens of sports. This course focuses specifically on the intersection of sport with such modern social and cultural phenomena as; gender, class, race, and ethnicity; violence, health, global capitalism, politics, and nationalism.

**Learning Goals and Objectives**

This course will provide you with a set of fundamental academic skills, which you can utilize in your respective disciplines and future studies. Following completion of this coarse you will be able to accomplish the following:

* Explore and discuss what constitutes a sport across time and space.
* Analyze how sports intersects with various social phenomenon such as gender and sexuality; race, class, and ethnicity; violence, and global capitalism.
* Assess the role of sports in nationalism and nation building.
* Demonstrate a general knowledge of the history of the theory of the anthropology of sports.
* Translate and deploy course knowledge into real world applications.
* Sharpen your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills by producing analyses and evaluations of academic and non-academic literature.

**Textbooks**

The following textbook is required for the course:

2006 Wacquant, Loic

Body and Soul: Notebook of an Apprentice Boxer

**Additional readings**

Additional course readings will be available on the course SAKAI site.

**REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Below is a brief summary of the requirements and components that will contribute to your final grade in this course. Additional instructions and guidelines for each item will be distributed in class.

**Attendance and Participation** **(10%)**

All students are expected to attend class sessions and participate in class discussion and assignments. The purpose of in-class meetings is not only for me to give you additional instruction beyond the course readings, but also to exchange ideas and build these ideas as we discuss the course concepts and readings. As this is a summer session it is even more paramount that you attend every class. Only two excused absences will be allowed the entire semester. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Everyone will be part of a discussion group that will meet in class once a week. Each discussion group will have a facilitator, rotated through the group each week, which will act as the spokesperson for your group. The purpose of these discussion groups is to discuss the readings among you as well as any questions or comments that brought up in your weekly reading responses (see below). Prior to class each member will email each other their weekly reading response papers. The goal is to allow you to examine the readings critically and constructively while facilitating a collaborative in-class learning environment.

**Weekly Reading Responses (20%)**

Everyone is responsible for writing short (2-3 pages) weekly reading responses. These responses need to be well written and well organized. I will be using your responses to tailor class lectures and discussion. In addition, you will be reading each other’s responses in your discussion groups prior to discussion group meetings as mentioned above. In writing these responses I want you to consider the following. What are three significant points you learned from the readings? How do the readings relate to this weeks topics and past readings? What questions do these readings provoke in your thinking?

**Media Discourse Analysis Paper (10%)**

Write a 4 to 5-page discourse analysis of news media reporting that relates to one or more of the class topics and discussions. Detailed instructions will be provided under resources on the class SAKAI site

**Mid-Term Exam (30%)**

There will be a take-home midterm exam consisting of three short (2-3 page) essays you select from five provided essay questions. This exam will assess your understanding of course material up to this point in the semester.

**Final Exam (30%)**

The final exam will be a cumulative take home-exam consisting of three 4 to 5-page essays you select from five provided essay questions. This exam will be weighted more towards the second half of the semester, but will include material covered in the first half of the semester.

**USEFUL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES**

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

Your work in this course will be evaluated through a variety of writing assignments. For these assignments, you are allowed to use outside sources and references as long as you cite them properly. Every academic project you hand in must be based on your original work. Once your assignments are uploaded to Sakai, they will be checked through Turnitin, which is online software that conducts a thorough search of your paper for any sign of unoriginal content. Any work that you hand in without proper citation (including Wikipedia) is considered plagiarism. The violation of academic integrity is a serious misdeed with major consequences that can result in the failure of the course and suspension from the university. Please make sure to read the Academic Integrity Policy of Rutgers – <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu> – and be very careful to avoid cheating and plagiarism. Please feel free to ask me if you are not sure as to what constitutes as academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or the violation of academic integrity in general.

**Special Needs and Accommodations**

If you have accommodation requests based on any special need (physical, medical, or learning difficulties), please come and see me as early on in the semester as possible. For further questions and assistance regarding learning difficulties and disabilities, please feel free to contact the Office of Disability Services – <https://ods.rutgers.edu>.

**Academic Support and Learning Centers**

For those of you seeking further help and academic support, Rutgers offers a variety of programs through the Learning Centers located on each campus – <https://rlc.rutgers.edu>. The staff at each center will address your concerns and recommend such programs as peer tutoring, academic coaching, writing coaching, and study groups tailored to your needs.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Unit 1: Introduction to the Anthropology of Sports**

7/11 What is a Sport?

7/12 Theories of Leisure, Sports, and Games

7/13 History of the Anthropology of Sports

7/14 Popular Notions of Sports

**Unit 2: Integrating Sports into Society and Culture**

7/18 Childhood, Socialization, and the Family

7/19 Ritual

7/20 Sports and Education

7/21 Memory and Nostalgia

**Unit 3: The Body**

7/25 Discipline, Exercise, and Body Aesthetics

7/26 Race and Ethnicity

7/27 Gender and Sexuality

7/28 Health, Disability, and Aging

**Unit 4: Politics, Ideology, and Nationalism**

8/1 Politics and Ideology

8/2 Nationalism, Nation Building, Identity

8/3 Regionalism and Local Communities

8/4 Fascism and Totalitarianism

**Unit 5: Violence**

8/9 Sports as Violence and Warfare

8/10 Athletes and Violence

8/11 Hooliganism and Organized Crime

8/12 Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

**Unit 6: Globalization and Capitalism**

8/15 The Economics of Sports, Sports and Class

8/16 The Media and Global Sports Discourse

8/17 Sports as Global Phenomena

8/18 The Olympics and World Cup

1. I am still compiling my readings and film selections. So the schedule is not as detailed as it will be in my actual finalized version for class. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)