

Sports and Culture
ANTH2390/UGEC2664
Anthropology Department
The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Preliminary Syllabus (v2December 2020)

Lecture: Thursday 14:30 – 16:15 (Zoom Meeting ID: 896 228 2226)

Tutorial: Thursday 16:30 – 17:15 (Zoom Meeting ID: 896 228 2226)

Instructor: Marco Montagner (anthropologyofmovement_at_gmail.com)

Course Description

Why millions of people all over the world play sports? Why different countries have different popular sports? What is it about sports that attract so many people and money? Has it always been this way? Sport captures the minds and bodies of billions of people around the world and has an immense significance in our everyday lives. This course engages different cross-cultural examples of sport and introduces students to the relationship between sport and its sociocultural setting.

Sports inform and create certain lifestyles and values: they are about cooperation, inclusion and fair play. But they are also about competition, inequality, and violence. Sports are highly structured, and yet at the same time totally unpredictable. Sports transmit moral principles and shapes attitudes to life, but might also undermine authority and contribute to social instability. Sport can both unite and divide teams, groups of people, and even entire nations.

Sports are not only shaped by society, but sports themselves shape society. This is because sports are dynamically intertwined with various sociocultural aspects (like morality, class, gender, ethnicity, nationalism, globalization, political economy and so on).

Students will explore different cross-cultural examples of sports from all over the world, introducing the role and importance of sports in the present and the past, in “modern” and “traditional” societies, seeing the relationship between sports and their sociocultural setting, and how sports are never played in a cultural vacuum.

This course draws on a variety of disciplines including sociology, gender studies, history, and cultural studies, but it will use the anthropological approach, focusing on the experience of those participants (whether practitioners, spectators or consumers). On three weeks we will be joined in our classes by some guests: last year I invited both athletes and academics studying sports, as this will help you interact with who is directly involved in the practice. Due to the current situation, at the moment guests are TBC.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to critically question sports, reflecting on how sports are much more than an activity merely for health and leisure, understanding the roles that sports play in contemporary societies, and will be prepared to engage by themselves into the exploration of the array of practices out there. Students will be able to:

- watch sports in an anthropological way, analyzing different kinds of sports critically
- understand the roles that sports play in “modern” and “traditional” societies
- appreciate the complexity and interrelatedness of sport, society and everyday life; even for people that are completely not interested in sports
- learn to critically reflect on their own engagement with sport, as practitioners or spectators

Course Assessment

a) Class Attendance and Participation (20%)

Every student is expected to regularly attend lectures and to participate in discussions. An high participation score comes with good attendance + active-thoughtful participation, showing interest as well as preparation on class materials. Class participation is a fundamental part of the class, and some of the discussions and guest visits cannot be replaced otherwise. I track participation scores at every class. Participation—not simple attendance—is key for courses like this; remember that when you care (or at least show that you care), the teacher will also care. Students are encouraged to prepare questions or to share interesting videos to engage with others during tutorials, but it is not compulsory. If you would like to give a short presentation about a specific topic, please let me know in advance.

b) Two Short Reflection Papers (20% + 20% = 40%)

1) Pick a recent news report or even a photo about a sport event, trend or phenomenon. It can be from whatever media (newspaper, news outlet, social media etc.). Describe what it is and then reflect and comment on it with reference to at least one of the course topics. Critically analyze by raising questions and points of discussion, do not just summarize. Due: Sunday February 21st, 7pm.

2) Choose a current/former professional athlete/personality and gather some information about the person (from news, biographies, documentaries etc.). Describe who she/he is, what sport she/he is or was practicing and provide a short and critical analysis with reference to one or several of the course topics. Don't be too general. You can pick one specific aspect of the athlete and relate it to the course material. Sunday March 28th, 7pm.

- Students should submit the reflection papers by email, in PDF or Word format, anytime within the maximum due dates. A fraction of grade will be deducted per every day of delay (e.g., A becomes A-). Each paper should be 3 to 5 pages long, double-spaced, and with 3cm margins per side to allow for comments. You can add photos, maps or graphs if you like, as an appendix: I will not count them in the page limit. Please write your name and Student ID only on the last page of the paper. Send also your VeriGuide receipt, together or in a separate file.

c) Final Ethnographic Paper (40%)

Choose a sport, game, practice, phenomenon that you are interested in, attend a related event and write an ethnographic paper about it. It can be offline or online. You can be a direct participant (player, referee..) or a member of the audience (fan, organizer, volunteer..). You can write about a sport that you know well, or one that is new to you, which means you can either be an informed insider, or a newly arrived outsider; both roles have their own advantages. The paper should include your field observations, a few interviews, and a critical discussion of some of the course topics with reference to some of the assigned readings. Instead of merely describing your field observations or summarizing the readings, you should try to use the ideas learned in this course to analyze the event. If you use other people's ideas or words in the paper, remember to cite the sources and list them under "References" at the end. I am always available to discuss your topics, both for methodology and ideas. Depending on the Covid-19's restrictions, we will discuss in class the offline/online possibilities for your final ethnographic paper.

- The final paper should be 8 to 10 pages long, double-spaced and with 3cm margins per side to allow for comments. You can add photos, maps or graphs if you like, as an appendix: I will not count them in the page limit. Due Sunday May 16th, 7pm. A fraction of grade will be deducted per every day of delay (e.g., B+ becomes B). Please submit your paper by email in PDF or Word format along with your VeriGuide receipt (together or as separate files).

Academic honesty

CUHK has a policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, details of the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations may be found online (at: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>). CUHK requires all papers to be checked by VeriGuide, a plagiarism detection engine. With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. The statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment (at this address: https://academic.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jsp). Assignments without the receipt will not be graded. Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide, and uploading different files or versions through VeriGuide than those submitted to the teacher is also considered dishonest.

Course Breakdown

*“Required readings” are the materials you are expected to read before that week’s lecture, for tutorials’ discussions
“Additional materials”: are not required, I upload these for who want to explore more in depth that week’s topic, or in case you missed that class and would like to keep track.*

I tried to keep required readings around twenty pages each week. If you feel some weeks are too “loaded” please notify me in advance. When readings begin with “OR” you can choose between that reading and the previous one.

Week 1 (January 14th): Course Introduction

Required readings:

- No required readings the first week, but please have a look at the additional materials discussed in class

Additional materials:

- Hejmanek, Katie R. 2016. “Anthropology 101: A Cultural Anthropologist Walks into a Gym”
- Xygalatas, Dimitris. 2019. “How Rituals of Pain Help Heal”
- Ocobock, Cara. 2019. “Sweating Through a Gym’s Gender Barriers”
- McDonald, Tom. 2016. “Dancing “My Humps” in Rural China”

Week 2 (January 21st): The Importance of Sports

Required readings:

- a. Blanchard, Kendall. 2000. “The Anthropology of Sport”
- b. Fox, J.R. 1961. “Pueblo Baseball: A New Use for Old Witchcraft”

Additional materials:

- Geertz, Clifford. 1973. “Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”
- Besnier, Niko, and Susan Brownell. 2012. “Sport, Modernity, and the Body”
- Graeber, David. 2014. “What’s the Point If We Can’t Have Fun?”
- Prettyman, Sandra S. 2010. “Studying Sports: What can we learn, and why do we care?”

Week 3 (January 28th): The Creation of Modern Sports

Required readings:

- a. Guttman, Allen. 2000. “The Development of Modern Sports” (9 pages)
- b. Coakley, Jay J. 2009. “Sport in Society: An Inspiration or an Opiate?” (15 pages)

Additional materials:

- Collins, Tony. 2013. “Sport in Capitalist Society: A Short History”
- Horne, John, Alan Tomlinson, et al. 2013. “Chapter 1: Industrial Society, Social Change and Sports Culture”
- Donnelly, Peter. 2008. “Sport and Social Theory”
- Gorn, E. J. 1985. “‘Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry”

Week 4 (February 4th): The Rituals of Sports and Sports as Ritual

Required Readings:

- a. Real, Michael R. 2003. “Super Bowl: Mythic Spectacle” (12 pages)
- b. Gmelch, George. 2003. “Baseball Magic” (9 pages)

Additional materials:

- Bromberger, Christian. 1995. “Football as World-View and as Ritual” (17 pages)
- Dundes, Alan. 1999. “Into the End Zone for a Touchdown: A Psychoanalytical Consideration of American Football” (9 pages)
- Cheska, Taylor A. 1981 “Sports Spectacular: The Social Ritual of Power” (14 pages)
- Sciamia, Lidia D. 1996. “The Venice Regatta: from Ritual to Sport”
- DeBiasi, Rocco and Pierre Lanfranchi. 1997. “The Importance of Difference: Football Identities in Italy”

February 11-17th no class: happy Lunar New Year!

Week 5 (February 18th): Sport, Ethics and Moral Education

Required Readings:

- a. Lipsyte, Robert. 2009. “Outraged over the Steroids Outrage” (3 pages)
- b. Eitzen, D. Stanley. 2009. “Ethical Dilemmas in American Sport: The Dark Side of Competition” (10 pages)
- c. Kottak, Conrad. 1995. “Swimming in Cross-Cultural Currents” (9 pages)
- d. Hoffman, S. James. 2010. “Whatever Happened to Play?” (5 pages)

Additional materials:

- Waddington, Ivan. 2000. “Doping in Sport: Towards a Sociological Understanding”
- Harding, Luke. 2005. “Forgotten Victims of East German Doping Take Their Battle to Court”
- Epstein, David. 2014. “Sports Should Be Child’s Play”
- Ripley, Amanda. 2013. “The Case Against High-School Sports”
- Zivin et al. 2001. “An effective approach to violence prevention: Traditional martial arts in middle school”

First Reflective paper due by Sunday February 21st, 7pm.

Please submit a soft copy at anthropologyofmovement_at_gmail.com with your VeriGuide receipt as detailed above.

Week 6 (February 25th): Sports, Gender and Sexuality

Required readings:

- a. Bryson, Lois. 1987. "Sport and the Maintenance of Masculine Hegemony" (11 pages)
- b. Hartmann, Douglas. 2003. "The Sanctity of Sunday Football: Why Men Love Sports" (8 pages)

Additional materials:

- Howe, P. David. 2003. "Kicking Stereotypes into Touch: An Ethnographic Account of Women's Rugby" (16 pages)
- Messner, Michael A. 2003. "When Bodies Are Weapons: Masculinity and Violence in Sport." (15 pages)
- Heissenberger, Stefan. 2016. "Travelling European Gay Footballers: Tournaments as an Integration Ritual"
- Sterod, Brandon. 2010. "Come Out and Play Confronting Homophobia in Sports"
- Cahn, Susan K. 2010. "From the 'Muscle Moll' to the 'Butch' Ballplayer: Mannishness, Lesbianism, and Homophobia in US Women's Sport" (23 pages)
- Prettyman, Sandra S. 2010. "Jocks Rule-Girls Drool: Middle cool Definitions of a Jock" (17 pages)

Week 7 (March 4th): Sports and the Body (I) Power, Body Politics and Bodily Regimes

(Guest: Dr. Elena Nichini, Medical Anthropologist and Yoga Teacher, on Yoga Camps and YTT

Certifications in Chennai, India; TBC)

Required readings:

- a. Barland, Bjorn. 2005. "The Gym: Place of Bodily Regimes – Training, Diet, and Doping" (7 pages)
- b. Schnabele, Verena. 2013. "The Useful Body: The Yogic Answer to Appearance Management in the Post-Fordist Workplace" (17 pages)

Additional materials:

- Hargreaves, John. 1987. "The Body, Sport and Power Relations" (16 pages)
- Hingun, Yasmin. 2019. "Movement culture: used by UFC McGregor, fitness trend can help no matter how unfit you are"
- Todd, Jan. 2003. "The Strength Builders: A History of Barbells, Dumbbells, and Indian Clubs" (15 pages)
- Strauss, Sarah. 2002. "'Adapt, Adjust, Accommodate': The Production of Yoga in a Transnational World, History and Anthropology" (19 pages)
- Alter, Joseph S. 2009. "Yoga in Asia—Mimetic History: Problems in the Location of Secret Knowledge"

Week 8 (March 11th): Sports and the Body (II) Violence, Risk, Pain

(Guest: Keisuke Takizawa, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu Black Belt and founder of Kowloon BJJ; TBC)

(Guest: Terence T. Sibanda, former athlete and currently Rugby Head Coach at DB Pirates and at Kowloon

Women's Rugby; TBC)

Required Readings:

- a. **OR** Collins, Randall. 2010. "On-Field Player Violence" (23 pages)
- b. **OR** George, Molly. 2005. "Making Sense of Muscle: The Body Experiences of Collegiate Women Athletes" (24 pages)
- c. Su, Xinqi. 2019. Hong Kong's youngsters more glued to their screens than 2 years ago and their physical fitness is alarmingly low, study finds" (News article)

Additional materials:

- Foster, Drew. 2015. "Fighters that don't Fight: The Case of Aikido and Somatic Metaphorism"
- Downey, Greg. 2010. "Throwing Like a Brazilian: On Ineptness and a Skill-Shaped Body" (23 pages)
- Palmer, Catherine. 2002. "'Shit Happens': The Selling of Risk in Extreme Sport" (13 pages)
- Wacquant, Loïc. 2001. "Whores, Slaves and Stallions: Languages of Exploitation and Accommodation among Boxers"
- Kath. Woodward. 2009. "Embodied Sporting Practices; Regulating and Regulatory Bodies" (uploaded sections)
- Messner, Michael A. 2003. "When Bodies Are Weapons: Masculinity and Violence in Sport" (15 pages)

Week 9 (March 18th): Sports, Social Class, Race and Ethnicity

Required Readings:

- a. Foley, Douglas E. 1990. "The Great American Football Ritual: Reproducing Race, Class, and Gender Inequality" (23 pages)
- b. **OR** Leite-Lopes, J.S. 2000. "Class, Ethnicity, and Color in the Making of Brazilian Football" (27 pages)

Additional materials:

- Hartmann, Douglas. 2000. "Rethinking the Relationships Between Sport and Race in American Culture: Golden Ghettos and Contested Terrain"
- Hallinan, Chris, and Barry Judd. 2007. "'Blackfellas' Basketball: Aboriginal Identity and Anglo-Austrian Race Relations in Regional Basketball"
- Kottak, Conrad. 1995. "Swimming in Cross-Cultural Currents"
- Hoberman, John. 2000. "The Price of 'Black Dominance'"
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1978. "Sport and Social Class"
- MacClancy, Jeremy. 1996. "Sport, Identity and Ethnicity"

Week 10 (March 25th): Case Study on Kabaddi

(Guest special lecture by Prof. Tang Wyman, Anthropologist at CUHK; TBC)

Required Readings:

- a. Alter, Joseph S. 2000. "Kabaddi, a National Sport of India: The Internationalism of Nationalism and the Foreignness of Indianness" (25 pages)

Additional info:

Prof. Tang will give a lecture on Kabaddi focusing on three important points: a) How to turn a game into a sport. b) The nationalist side of the choice on Kabaddi. c) The cultural politics of sport in a globalized era.

From March 29th to April 7th: Reading Week + Qingming + Easter

CUHK's Reading Week: no class/tutorial. Please take advantage of this to catch up with your readings and explore some of the additional materials that later you may want to use for your paper! If you have any specific interest that is not covered by these materials, let me know and I will check for you.

Second Reflective paper due by Sunday March 28th, 7pm.

Please submit a soft copy at anthropologyofmovement_at_gmail.com with your VeriGuide receipt as detailed above.

Week 11 (April 8th): Sports, National Identity, Nationalism and Politics

Required Readings:

- a. Markovits, Andrei, and Steven Hellerman. 2010. "Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism" (12 pages)
- b. **OR** Dorđević, Ivan, and Bojan Žikić. 2016. "Normalizing Political Relations through Football: The Case of Croatia and Serbia (1990–2013)" (14 pages)
- c. Besnier, Niko, and Susan Brownell. 2016. "Your Olympic Team May Be an Illusion"
- d. Phippen Weston. 2016. "The Olympics Have Always Been Political"

Additional materials:

- Xu, Guoqi. 2008. Chapter 5: "The Sport of Ping-Pong Diplomacy"
- Rossol, Nadine. 2010. "The death of the spectacle in the mid-1930s" (uploaded Chapter 6)
- Majumdar, Boria, and Sean Brown. 2008. "Why Baseball, Why Cricket? Differing Nationalisms, Differing Challenges"
- Sonntag, Albrecht. 2015. "Up to the Expectations? Perceptions of Ethnic Diversity in the French and German National Team"
- Hodges, Andrew, and Paul Stubbs. 2016. "The Paradoxes of Politicization: Fan Initiatives in Zagreb, Croatia"
- Markovits, Andrei S. 1990. "The Other 'American Exceptionalism': Why Is There No Soccer in the United States?"
- Barmé, Geremie R. 2009. "China's Flat Earth: History and 8 August 2008"

Week 12 (April 15th): Sports and Globalization (passing through Colonialism)

Required Readings:

- a. Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. "Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket" (24 pages)
- b. Miller, James A. et al. 2013. "College Football's Most Dominant Player? It's ESPN"
- c. Klein, Alan M. 2006. "Growing the Game: The Globalization of Major League Baseball" (7 pages)

Additional materials:

- Morris, Andrew D. 2004. "Baseball, History, the Local and the Global in Taiwan" (28 pages)
- Morris, Andrew D. 2002. "'I Believe You Can Fly': Basketball Culture in Post-socialist China" (24 pages)
- Besnier, Niko. 2012. "The Athlete's Body and the Global Condition: Tongan Rugby Players in Japan"
- McKay, Alex. 2001. "'Kicking the Buddha's Head': India, Tibet and Footballing Colonialism"
- Dimeo, Paul. 2002. "Colonial Bodies, Colonial Sport: 'Martial' Punjabis, 'Effeminate' Bengalis and the Development of Indian Football"
- Brick, Carlton. 2004. "Misers, Merchandise and Manchester United: The peculiar paradox of the political economy of consumption"

Week 13 (April 22nd): Imagining the Future of Sports / Sports and the City

(Guest: Dima from Movement Bank and Ido Portal's mentorship; TBC)

(Guest: Eric Roberts from Hong Kong Parkour Association; TBC)

Required readings:

- a. Miah, Andy. 2010. "The DREAM Gene for the Post-human Athlete: Reducing Exercise-Induced Pain Sensations Using Gene Transfer" (13 pages)
- b. **OR** Witkowski, E. 2012. "On the Digital Playing Field: How We 'Do Sport' With Networked Computer Games" (21 pages)
- c. Fogel, Brian. 2017. "Icarus" (documentary selected excerpts)

Additional materials:

- Taylor, T. L. 2012. "Raising the Stakes: E-Sports and the Professionalization of Computer Gaming"
- Szablewicz, M. 2016. "A Realm of Mere Representation? 'Live' E-Sports Spectacles and the Crafting of China's Digital Gaming Image"
- Aleksandrov, E. A. (2009). "Parkour: The Art of Movement"
- Fredericksen, E. 2002. "Architecture that Shreds" (on skateboarding parks)

Final paper due by Sunday May 16th, 7pm

Please submit a soft copy at anthropologyofmovement_at_gmail.com with VeriGuide receipt, as detailed above.

SPORTS AND CULTURE

ANTH2390
UGEC2664



How do athletes influence our idea of a good body or of a desirable physique?



Why males can play basketball, but females should play netball and wearing skirts? Should female sports be the same? How do we learn our gender roles through sports, and how can sports challenge these gender roles' status quo?



Why millions of people all over the world play sports? Why in different countries popular sports are different? What is it about sports that attract so many people and money? Has it always been this way? Does all this attention to sports make any sense?



Why do we need to consume to play sports? And how does market influence our choices and trends through sports?



Why are we proud of athletes that win for our nation, or break world records?



Are there other ways of "doing sports?" What can be considered sport, and why some practices are considered cool and others silly?



Why are sport stars so exalted?

Why taking supplements is fine, whereas taking EPO is considered doping?



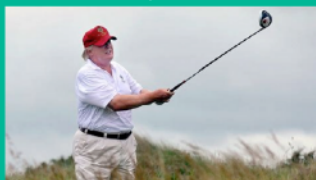
Why is US so bad at rugby, but New Zealand #1? Should people be proud of engaging in sports of the former colonizers?

ANTHROPOLOGY SPRING 2021

Lecture: Thur. 14:30 – 16:15
Tutorial: Thur. 16:30 – 17:15
Zoom Meeting ID: 896 228 2226

Instructor: Marco Montagner
Contact me at:
anthropologyofmovement_at_gmail.com

How does social class affect sport, and how does sport affect class?



The course will engage with these and many other questions. Be ready to challenge your idea of sport whether you practice it, watch it, or simply do not care about sports at all. The only requirement for this course is to join ready to raise many questions!

Are sports the answer for a healthy life? Is this the only way?



Governments sponsor sports, but what happens when sports are used against government?



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