



AN / SO 320 SPORT & SOCIETY IN FRANCE
IES Abroad Paris

DESCRIPTION: This course will examine various aspects of the relationship between sport and society in France, with a consideration for the global context and the social impacts of what has become a veritable business venture. We will examine the influence of societies on the practice of sport, as well as consider the commercial aspects and stakes of sport. Indeed, the scope of sports today is vaster than it has ever been from fandom to business, to social structure and identity. The repercussions of competitive sports are economic, political, social and even psychological. The purpose of this class will be to study the evolution of sports since the 1980s, going from more local forms of entertainment and leisure to global businesses and phenomena with substantial geopolitical implications. The course will examine how local identities and ancestral rivalries are reflected in the world of sports. Students will be encouraged to examine their own athletic heritage. The class aims for students to gain perspective on the way their interest in specific teams or players may shape their world or be shaped by external, at times not initially visible forces. The class will rely on the professor's experience in the field of sporting event organization, as well as on the expertise of guest lecturers pertaining to specific themes. The class will progress in a historical format, examining cultural, economic and political factors along the way.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT OF HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: None

ADDITIONAL COST: None

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- Lectures
- Class debates, discussion and activities
- Course-related trips
- In class analysis of audio-visual materials
- On-line Moodle quiz activities
- Background reading

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:

- Class participation - 10%
- Press review - 15%
- Case study - 25%
- Final research project - 30%
- Final exam - 20%

Class participation

In addition to attending class, students must have read the assigned texts before each session. They should supplement their knowledge, at their own pace, with their own visits and/or additional reading. They carefully reread their notes in preparation for the next session. Oral participation is strongly recommended.

Press review

At the beginning of each session, one or two students (depending on the size of the group) will present a review of the events that occurred in the world of sport during the previous week. The assignment will consist of a 5-10 minute oral presentation in front of the class.

Case study

During each session, one or two students (depending on the size of the group) will be in charge of the case study of the week. The case study is an oral presentation with visual support. It should provide all the facts, history, issues, knowledge and also personal vision of the student(s) regarding the proposed topic. It will be followed by a discussion with the class and the lecturer about the more general implications and take-home points of the case study. The duration of the oral presentation should be 20 to 30 minutes.

Final Research project

Regularly carry out research in the available (French, English or any other language) press, literature, videos and podcasts. The topic will be chosen by students and validated beforehand by the lecturer. It will consist of a description and analysis of an event, issue or personality related to the content of the course. An outline/summary will be expected by class 8, so the lecturer can give feedback to students and guide them in their work. Paper should be 2500-3000 word long. Students will present the result of their work in front of the class during session 13.

Final exam

Open-ended quiz questions and short essay on all the content studied in class. Answers must be around half-a-page, essay two pages.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

- Recognize and be able to undertake realistic and accurate comparisons between the role of sport in French society and other societies.
- Critically analyze the historical development of sports in general and especially French sports, from a sociological perspective.
- Apply a range of social theories to the analysis sports as social phenomena, as well as to the business and economic implications of sports in France and around the world.
- Assess the interrelated social, cultural, political and economic dimensions of contemporary sports.
- Discuss and investigate controversial and conflictive sports issues in France.
- Summarize the social and economic status and role in the society of sports stars and teams.

CONTENT:

Week	Theme	Assignments & Activities
Week 1	Introduction: a history of sports and how they became a mass phenomenon - Presentation of the syllabus and of the requirements/assessment - From the Ancient Greek Olympics to Paris 2024, how athletic competitions grew to be worldwide events - Overview of the terminology and concepts to be studied.	Reading: S.W. Pope, "The origin and diffusion of modern sport", in Phillips, Murray G., Douglas Booth, and Carly Adams. Routledge Handbook of Sport history. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.
Week 2	Defining sports as a cultural and political issue - Sports teams as identity symbols in France and Europe - Why such passion and rivalries? - US vs Europe: franchises and homegrown teams	Case study: The Paris/Marseille rivalry vs. the Red Sox/Yankees rivalry Podcast: Staff, CoSW. "‘Behind the Blue’: The Psychology behind Sports Rivalries, Why We Love to Loathe the Other Team." University of Kentucky College of Social Work, December 13, 2024. https://socialwork.uky.edu/behind-the-blue-the-psychology-behind-sports-rivalries-why-we-love-to-loathe-the-other-team/ (49 minutes)
Week 3	Sports and geopolitical affairs - Olympic Games, an important episode of the cold war - Why are states and oligarchs investing in soccer? - Stadiums as places of political protest	Case study: The investment of Qatar and the UAE in soccer in Paris and Manchester Reading: Hache, Emmanuel. "The Geopolitical Economy of Russia's 'seduce and Shock' War with Sport." IRIS, January 27, 2025. https://www.iris-france.org/en/165946-the-geopolitical-economy-of-russias-seduce-and-shock-war-with-sport/.
Week 4	The dark side of sports: violence, discrimination, corruption, bets - Why is there violence around soccer and other sports? Does France have a violent fan culture? - Equality and inclusion: what policies have been led in recent years in France? - Is sports a corrupt business? The cases of FIFA and tennis bets	Case study: Soccer ultra and hooligan cultures in Europe Reading: Fight against sporting- related match-fixing - IRIS. https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EPOSM_FrenchNational-Action-plan_final.pdf. (49 pages)

Week 5	The massification of playing sports and the boom of the fitness industry - The fitness revolution since the 1980s - The social and psychological effects of the cult of the body - Gyms, supplements and influencers, a lucrative business	Case study: Why have CrossFit and Hyrox become so popular and how has France adopted them? Reading: Andreasson, Jesper, and Thomas Johansson. "The Fitness Revolution. Historical Transformations in the Global Gym and Fitness Culture." <i>Sport Science Review</i> 23, no. 3–4 (January 1, 2014). https://doi.org/10.2478/ssr-2014-0006. (23 pages)
Week 6	The commercial turn of professional sports - From amateur leagues to pro sports - The financial and business aspects of sports - Sports leagues as commercial entities - Has it changed the social aspect of sport and relationship of fans to their teams?	Case study: The creation and development of the English Premier League Reading: Clausen, Josephine. Dissertation. <i>The Interrelationship between Professionalization and Commercialization in International Sport Federations</i>. Dissertation, UNIL, 2018. Read chapter 5 « Summary of publications" (27 pages)
Week 7	Stadiums, the new epicenters of entertainment - From sports venue to entertainment centers - Fans or consumers? - The rise of "fan experience"	Case study: Are European stadiums becoming like American ones? The cases of the future Paris-Saint-Germain stadium, the Emirates in London and the AT&T Stadium in Arlington Readings: "The Stadium Experience Keeping sports fans engaged—and loyal", Deloitte, 2018, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/us-tmt-stadium-experience-keeping-sports-fans-engaged-loyal.pdf (15 pages) Chris Arkenberg, Pete Giorgio, and Chad Deweese, "Redesigning stadiums for a better fan experience. Putting sports fans at the center of smart stadium transformation", Deloitte Insights, 2019, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/5097_redesigning-stadiums-for-better-fan-experience/DI_Redesigning-stadiums-for-a-better-fan-experience.pdf (16 pages)
	Television, the new dominant actor of competitive sport The explosion of TV rights	Case study: French soccer TV rights and their evolution since the 1980s Reading: Miquel Carreras and Jaume Garcia, "TV rights, financial

Week 8	- The innovations in sports broadcasting - Has TV broadcast changed the relationship between teams and fans?	inequality, and competitive balance in European football: Evidence from the English Premier League and the Spanish LaLiga". International Journal of Sport Finance, 2018, vol. 13, no 3, p. 201-224.
Week 9	The globalization of sports and teams - The Olympics, Soccer World Cup and the Super Bowl as global events - How American sports are trying to conquer Europe and vice-versa - The cultural exchanges between France and Europe on the one hand, and the US on the other when it comes to fan cultures	Case study: The implementation of NBA and NFL events in Europe vs European teams as Paris-Saint-Germain trying to conquer the US Reading: Asante, Godfred & Ok, Emmanuel & William, Barny. (2025). Globalization and Sport: The impact of globalization on sports, including the spread of sports culture and international competition, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389068554_Globalization_and_Sport_The_impact_of_globalization_on_sports_including_the_spread_of_sports_culture_and_international_competition (8 pages)
Week 10	Sports and brands - Sponsorship in sports - How teams and competitors have become brands - Storytelling in sports - How French sports fans have changed their way of "consuming" sports competitions	Case study: How Netflix made Formula 1 cool again Reading: Marie Agnès Parmentier and Eileen Fischer, « How athletes build their brands », International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing 11, no 1/2 (2012) : XXXX, https://doi.org/10.1504/ijism.2012.045491. (17 pages).
Week 11	Sports and new technologies - The data revolution - How equipment has improved and enhanced performance - The new levels of physical and mental preparation	Case study: Are tennis players more powerful and fit than before? Videos: The business of football: the big data arms race FT Scoreboard, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_pxpJgY7V4 (10 minutes) How Brentford's Moneyball Approach Works, Tifo Football by the Athletic, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrwwVoD1RQQ (7 minutes)
Week 12	The future of sports - Modern ways of watching and consuming sports - Are we still able to watch an entire game? - New sports, new rules?	Case study: The soccer Kings League Readings: Minal Modha, "How sports can compete for people's time in the attention economy", Sports Pro, 26 February 2024, https://www.sportspro.com/insights/opinions/sports-attention-economy-netflix-nba-drive-to-survive-ampere-

		analysis-data/ Emma Shepherd, "Sports streamers adapt strategies to cater to younger audiences' short attention spans", The Current, 21 September 2023, https://www.thecurrent.com/sports-streamers-strategies-attention-spans-digital-technology Amr Elrawi & Avery Dennison "The Attention-Span Myth: Why Sports Marketers Need To Reimagine Youth Engagement", September 2024, https://fcbusiness.co.uk/news/the-attention-span-myth-why-sports-marketers-need-to-reimagine-youth-engagement/#_ftn1
Week 13	Final session Presentation of individual research projects and final exam review	
Week 14	Final Exam Date TBD	Exam dates and times set by IES • See official exam calendar

Guest lecturers and professionals from the studied fields will be regularly invited to discuss with the students and share their experience.

COURSE-RELATED TRIP:

REQUIRED READINGS:

In order to lay the groundwork and acquire the requisite knowledge for the course, students are required to read, watch and listen to the following resources:

- the sports section of or sports related articles from major newspapers and magazines,
- videos and podcasts.

All of the material is either available online via a link provided by the professor or will be uploaded directly to the class Moodle page.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

- Chris Arkenberg, Pete Giorgio, and Chad Deweese, "Redesigning stadiums for a better fan experience. Putting sports fans at the center of smart stadium transformation", Deloitte Insights, 2019, https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/insights/us/articles/5097_redesigning-stadiums-for-better-fan-experience/DI_Redesigning-stadiums-for-a-better-fan-experience.pdf (16 pages)
- Andreasson, Jesper, and Thomas Johansson. "The Fitness Revolution. Historical Transformations in the Global Gym and Fitness Culture." Sport Science Review 23, no. 3–4 (January 1, 2014). <https://doi.org/10.2478/ssr-2014-0006>. (23 pages).
- Asante, Godfred & Ok, Emmanuel & William, Barnty. (2025). Globalization and Sport: The impact of globalization on sports, including the spread of sports culture and international competition, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389068554_Globalization_and_Sport_The_impact_of_globalization_on_sports_including_the_spread_of_sports_culture_and_international_competition (8 pages)
- Miquel Carreras and Jaume Garcia, "TV rights, financial inequality, and competitive balance in European football: Evidence

from the English Premier League and the Spanish LaLiga". *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 2018, vol. 13, no 3, p. 201-224.

- Clausen, Josephine. Dissertation. *The Interrelationship between Professionalisation and Commercialisation in International Sport Federations*. Dissertation, UNIL, 2018.
- Cashmore, Ernest (2000) *Making Sense of Sports* (Routledge).
- Coakley, Jack, Eric Dunning (eds.) (2002) *Handbook of sports studies* (Sage).
- "The Stadium Experience Keeping sports fans engaged—and loyal", Deloitte, 2018, <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/us-tmt-stadium-experience-keeping-sports-fans-engaged-loyal.pdf> (15 pages)
- Amr Elrawi & Avery Dennison "The Attention-Span Myth: Why Sports Marketers Need To Reimagine Youth Engagement", September 2024, https://fcbusiness.co.uk/news/the-attention-span-myth-why-sports-marketers-need-to-reimagine-youth-engagement/#_ftn1
- Hache, Emmanuel. "The Geopolitical Economy of Russia's 'seduce and Shock' War with Sport." *IRIS*, January 27, 2025. <https://www.iris-france.org/en/165946-the-geopolitical-economy-of-russias-seduce-and-shock-war-with-sport/>.
- Houlihan, Barrie (ed.) (2003) *Sport and Society: A student introduction* (Sage).
- Fight against sporting- related match-fixing - IRIS. https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/EPOSM_-_FrenchNational-Action-plan_final.pdf. (49 pages)
- Minal Modha, "How sports can compete for people's time in the attention economy", *Sports Pro*, 26 February 2024, <https://www.sportspro.com/insights/opinions/sports-attention-economy-netflix-nba-drive-to-survive-ampere-analysis-data/>
- Murray G. Phillips, Douglas Booth, and Carly Adams ed.(2022). *Routledge handbook of sport history*. Abingdon, Oxon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Marie Agnès Parmentier and Eileen Fischer, « How athletes build their brands », *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* 11, no 1/2 (2012) : XXXX, <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijsmm.2012.045491>.(17 pages).
- S.W. Pope, "The origin and diffusion of modern sport", in Phillips, Murray G., Douglas Booth, and Carly Adams. *Routledge Handbook of Sport history*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2022.
- Rowe, David (ed.) (2004) *Critical readings: sport, culture and the media* (Open University Press).
- Staff, CoSW. "'Behind the Blue': The Psychology behind Sports Rivalries, Why We Love to Loathe the Other Team." University of Kentucky College of Social Work, December 13, 2024. <https://socialwork.uky.edu/behind-the-blue-the-psychology-behind-sports-rivalries-why-we-love-to-loathe-the-other-team/> (49 minutes)
- Emma Shepherd, "Sports streamers adapt strategies to cater to younger audiences' short attention spans", *The Current*, 21 September 2023, <https://www.thecurrent.com/sports-streamers-strategies-attention-spans-digital-technology>
- Sugden, John; Alan Tomlinson (eds.) (2002) *Power Games: a critical sociology of sport* (Routledge).
- Tomlinson, Alan; Christopher Young (eds.) (2006) *National Identity and Global Sports Events: culture, politics, and spectacle in the Olympics and the football World Cup* (New York: SUNY).