



SYLLABUS

THE CULTURE OF SPORT AND SPORTS JOURNALISM IN THE UK

Instructor: Adrian Warner

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Contact Hours: 40

LONDON, UK

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Britain is one of the world's major sporting powerhouses. In the past years we have seen the London Olympics in 2012, the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014, the Rugby World Cup in 2015, the 2017 London World Athletics and Para-athletics Championships, the Cricket World Cup in 2019 and the 2022 Women's soccer European Championships.

It is the home of the Premier League, the most lucrative and popular soccer league in the world, as well as the Wimbledon tennis championships and the Open golf championship. During the course, you will be able to not only visit the Wimbledon championships but also experience the buzz in London of England fans watching the women's European soccer championships in Switzerland which run from July 2 to July 27 2024.

During this course we will analyse the perceived benefits of hosting major sporting events and look into the culture of sport. Why does sport matter so much to so many people?

We will delve into the practices of sports journalism, studying how the techniques used by sports journalists can be compared with those used by other news journalists.

There will also be a very special focus on sports broadcasting. The course will include a broadcasting masterclass, with all students given the opportunity to record a TV broadcast.

This course will appeal in particular to those planning a career in Sports Journalism. Students will attend key sporting events which they will report on and analyse. They will also write leading articles on some of the themes highlighted during the course. They will have the opportunity to draw on their own experience of sport theory and practice in the United States.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the course are:

- To acquaint students with the major historical themes and debates in British Sport.
- To examine the theories associated with individual sporting excellence and sporting decline.
- To acquaint students with the UK systems of sports organisation.
- To explain how different news media report on sporting events.
- To compare American Sporting systems with those in the UK.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

The class will be taught through classroom lectures and seminars, guest speakers, as well as practical reporting exercises. There will be at least two visits to relevant sporting venues in London. These are obligatory and will most likely be an evening T20 cricket match at the Oval and a day trip to Wimbledon.

Written Work

Three pieces of written work are required from students taking this course.

Students will be asked to write one journalistic piece and two essays on topical themes. The first essay will be between 800 and 1000 words in length. The second will be longer at 1500 words.

In addition, students will need to write a feature report (700 words) on their visit to Wimbledon. Detailed knowledge of tennis is not expected, but students will be expected to demonstrate an ability to turn a quizzical 'American eye' on a quintessentially British event.

The third piece of work will be a longer piece (1500 words) analysing and giving critical insight as well as current examples on either a historical theme of sport in the UK or one of the issues related to topics we will be discussing in class.

The longer essay will encourage students to draw on their experience and knowledge of sport in the US. It will look to test the student's grasp of the theoretical concepts in analysing sporting culture.

Written work will require students to work independently. They will be offered support and advice at all stages of the course. Additionally, students can submit draft assignments well before deadline, for comment and further advice before finalising their work.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

25% Essay 1: Sports Media Issue (800 words)

40% Essay 2: Sports Media issue (1500 words)

20% Essay 3: Tennis feature (700 words)

15% Participation in class, and attendance

Academic Integrity

It is expected that any written work submitted for this work is entirely a student's own work. If within your work you have relied on outside sources, you will be required to identify them. Failure to acknowledge any source may leave you open to the charge of plagiarism and, at the very least, result in failure to secure a credit for this course.

Artificial Intelligence

Students may use GenAI tools in this class to help with course work and assignments. Helpful uses include brainstorming ideas, creating outlines, editing, and so forth. However, if you include in your assignment submissions any content that is generated by GenAI, such as text, images, graphics, etc., you must cite the GenAI tool that is your source, in the same way that you must cite any content you use from other sources, such as books, articles, videos, the internet, etc.. Although open use of GenAI is allowed in this class, be advised that GenAI suggestions or content can be inaccurate, incomplete or otherwise problematic; using GenAI can impact negatively the quality of your work and your grades. I welcome questions and discussion about GenAI use in this course.

Academic Misconduct

Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act.

Attendance

Every class must be attended. See attendance policy for details.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week One:

- Wednesday 25 June – Class: Introduction to Sports Journalism course, *Does Sport Matter* debate?
- Friday 27 June – Visit: planned by leading British sports journalist (to be confirmed). How does British and European sport differ from the United States?

Reading: 'The Meaning of Sport' by Simon Barnes

Week Two:

- Monday June 30 – Class: Women in sports journalism. A debate and we will be joined by **British journalist Rebecca Adams** to talk about the challenges of working in what is often a male-dominated world.
- Wednesday July 2 – Class: Women in sports journalism continued.

Set essay 1 (1000 words): *Discuss the major changes in women's sport in recent years and whether the media's coverage is catching up with the coverage of men's sport? Is it treated in the same way as men's sport? Has anything changed in the last 10 years. Is there a difference in approach in the UK to the United States?*

Due Tuesday 8 July

Week Three:

- Monday 7 July – Class: The unpredictability and the excitement of an Olympic city bidding process. Why host a major sports event? Do sports politics matter? We conduct our own Olympic vote.
- Tuesday 8 July – Class: Sport is about a lot more than action on the field of play. **Former Sunday Times investigative sports journalist Steven Downes** talks to us about his career covering all the other types of stories – from drugs in sport to corruption.
- Wednesday 9 July, all day – Visit: Wimbledon Tennis Championships. We will study the organisation that goes into the running of such a big sports event, and we will look at how journalists report from it. We will visit the media centre at the Wimbledon championships and meet reporters covering the event.

Set essay 2 (Journalistic 700 words): *Feature piece on your day at Wimbledon. What is so special about the Wimbledon championships?*

Due Monday 14 July

Week Four:

- Tuesday 15 July – Class: The art of broadcasting. Adrian worked on air for TV and radio as a BBC sports correspondent and will teach you all the tricks of the trade.
- Wednesday 16 July – Class: All students to take part in a special broadcast interview with breaking news and live scenarios. **Digital and TV producer Simon Waldman will be with us filming and providing advice.** We look forward to our trip to a cricket match at Lord's in the evening with a briefing on the sport.
- Wednesday 16 July, evening – Visit: cricket match at Lord's

Set long Essay 3 (1500 words): *Students will be given the option of writing in more detail about a topic which has been raised during the course (agreement on the essay title will need to be given by Adrian in advance), or writing about the following subject: The international sporting landscape in 2050 – A chance for students to get out their crystal balls, and, using analysis of past and current trends, to predict how the world of sport will look in 2050. The focus should be on results on the field of play, as well as the politics away from it.*

For example: Is the increasing prominence of the Middle East funding of major sport in the last years just the start of a shift away from traditional Eastern and Western

host venues and influence on world sport? What is the likely advance in performance by African nations over the next thirty years?

Due Wednesday 23 July

Week Five:

- Wednesday 23 July – Class: The Grand Debate. Who really is the greatest sports personality of all time? Preparing for our big debate.
- Thursday 24 July – **THE BIG DEBATE**. All students give presentations on who is the greatest sports personality of all time. We vote on the quality of the presentations.

COURSE READINGS

- Simon Barnes, *The Meaning of Sport*, Short Books 2007, ISBN 978-1904977858 (provided)
- Various journalistic and academic articles (provided)