
Spring 2015
TTH 1:40 – 3:20

PHIL 285R

Topics in Philosophy: Philosophy of Sport

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Overview

This course is an introduction to some of the major questions and themes of Philosophy of Sport, with a particular focus on normative issues, and on sport as a social practice including both athletes and spectators. Students will learn to apply philosophical tools of analysis to sport, and to think about the ways in which sports practices might help to illuminate standard philosophical problems.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will understand and be able to articulate the most important philosophical questions raised by sport, and common methods of responding to them.
- Students will develop skills in analyzing, evaluating, and creating philosophical arguments about sport.
- Students will develop their skills in critical reading and writing.
- Students will develop skills their skills of verbal expression and the concise delivery of their own philosophical arguments.
- Students will learn to apply philosophical concepts to pressing questions in contemporary sports.

Evaluation

Assignments:

Critical Reading Reflection Papers (5, lowest 1 dropped):	15%
Quizzes/In-class Assignments (lowest 1 dropped):	10%
Participation	5%
Midterm	15%
Discussion Lead/Interview Project	5%
Final Philosophical Project	35%
• Presentation/Video component (10%)	
• Essay component, 5-7 pgs (25%)	
Final Exam	15%

Assignment Descriptions

Materials

Feezell, Randolph. *Sport, Philosophy, and Good Lives*. U of Nebraska Press, 2013.
Holowchak, M. Andrew. *Philosophy of Sport: Critical Readings, Crucial Issues*. Prentice Hall, 2002.

Milestones

Feb 26

Midterm Exam

March 5

2 CRR Papers must be complete

April 2

Thesis/Project Proposal Due

April 16

Last Day to Submit CRR Papers

April 21-23

Final Presentations/Videos

April 27 (MONDAY)

Final Papers due on Blackboard by 6 PM

May 5

Final Exam

Critical Reading Reflection Papers

You must submit five (5) reflection papers before the end of the semester. In these papers, which are due online before the beginning of the class period for which you are submitting, you will respond philosophically to at least one of the essays for that particular day's reading. When your readings include "questions for discussion" at the end, I encourage you to choose one of these questions to form the basis of your paper. All responses must demonstrate critical philosophical reflection on the substance of the text in question: they should cite and engage with the text, and demonstrate original thought. You may submit responses to the essays of your choosing (or film/game experience, as the case may be), but note that ***you must submit at least 2 CRR papers by March 5***. You may only submit one response per class period, and you must be in class in order to submit a response for that period. Responses should be 1-2 pages typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12-point font with 1-inch margins all the way around. Reflection papers will be graded on a scale from 1-10. Note that papers with grammatical, syntax, or spelling errors will *never* be awarded a 10. I will drop the lowest Reflection Paper score from your overall average.

Quizzes/Assignments

You will have assigned readings for each class, which you should complete before coming to class. Quizzes on these readings will be unannounced, and will typically happen during the first 5 minutes of class. If you are late to class, you will miss the quiz. Quizzes may also cover material from the previous class, so you will be wise to re-read your notes from the previous day as you prepare for each class. Additionally, I will sometimes have you complete assignments in class (or prior to it) for a quiz grade. I will drop the lowest quiz/assignment grade. Please note that I do not make up missed quizzes/assignments except in the case of a documented illness or an official college absence (athletics, debate, etc.). In the case of official college absences, you must provide documentation within the first two weeks of class that such absences are scheduled in order to be eligible to make up quizzes.

Participation: Philosophy is fundamentally conversational. Thus, regular, engaged participation in our ongoing conversation is a required element of this class. Participation in this class requires, minimally, that you do the following:

- Come to class regularly, and do not miss more than 2 classes for any reason.
- Refrain from using cell phones or other electronic devices in class unless given explicit permission to do so.
- Regularly contribute to the conversation by:
 - o Asking questions
 - o Making comments informed by the text (and citing it when you can)
 - o LISTENING to your classmates and responding to them
 - o Taking care not to dominate the conversation
- Bring your book/materials to class
- Be on time
- Actively participate in small group activities
- Participate in the Class Wiki

Please note that students who never speak up in our large-group discussions will earn, at most, a C for their participation.

Discussion Lead/Interview Project

In pairs, you will be responsible for leading discussion during one class period. Your discussion should focus on one or two central questions raised by the text for that day's class, and should incorporate a comparative analysis of interviews that you conduct prior to the discussion period with at least two people—one whose perspective is primarily that of a sports "producer" (i.e., an athlete, coach, athletic director), and one whose perspective is primarily that of a sports "consumer" (i.e., a fan or spectator). The interview you conduct should allow you to analyze the individual in question's perspective on that day's topic of discussion (so, for example, if you are leading discussion on Title IX, you could get an athlete's and a fan's perspective on the values/problems/effects of Title IX). Use your philosophical skills to compare the reasoning of the people you interview, and then use this as a springboard to continue in-class discussion. A few additional guidelines:

- DO NOT begin your discussion lead by summarizing the readings. I will interrupt you if you do this, and ask you to move on. We may need to do some textual analysis in the course of the discussion, but do not start here. Your focus should be on questions, not lecturing the class on what they should already know.

- Your interview material will better connect with your discussion lead if you ask questions with the specifics of the reading in mind (i.e., don't just ask about NCAA regulations, but about the specific types of objections to NCAA regulations made by the author whose reading you are discussing).
- Please keep the subjects of your interview anonymous unless they explicitly ask you to identify them.
- **On the day of your discussion lead, please submit to me (either electronically or in hard copy) a copy of any visual presentation materials you use (note that this is not required) or a summary of your discussion plans, ALONG WITH a peer review/evaluation of your partner's contribution.**

Final Philosophical Project

In this assignment, you will produce an original contribution to the philosophy of sport, which will draw on and/or respond to some text or question we have encountered during this course. You will defend a thesis about that text or topic, and present your defense in two different components:

- **Presentation/Video Component:** This should be a tight, rehearsed, engaging presentation of the problem you are addressing, your response to it, and reasons for that response. Your presentation should be executed in a way that would be interesting and accessible to a popular audience—think of this as an ESPN-style editorial version of your paper. I strongly encourage you to make use of the Oxford Hotspot's resources to produce this as a video, but in-person presentations are also acceptable, as long as they are engaging and fit the time limit. You may work in pairs or groups of three for this project, but note that if you do so, you should be sure that each individual person's views are clearly represented in the final product. Your final presentation/video should run **NO MORE THAN 15 MINUTES**.
- **Essay Component:** This is the formal philosophical essay version of your philosophical project. You should defend the same basic thesis as your presentation/video, but do so in a more detailed, argumentatively rigorous way, citing the primary text and at least two scholarly outside sources that you locate via research. The final paper will be 5-7 pages typed, Times New Roman 12 point font with 1-inch margins all the way around. Use the Chicago Author-Date citation style. You must submit individual papers for this component. Papers will be submitted via Blackboard.

Midterm/Final Exam

All exams in this class are cumulative of all material covered to that point in the semester. I do not reschedule final exams, period, and will not reschedule makeup Midterm exams except in the case of a documented illness or official college business. All Final Exam schedule change requests must be submitted through the office of Academic Affairs. Please note the following Academic Affairs policy: "Leaving early for rides or flights, vacations, relatives' or friends' weddings or graduation, jobs, or having more than one exam on one day, are not considered valid reasons to request an earlier or later exam."

Class Policies

Email Policy

I strive to stay in touch with you outside of class hours, and will generally attempt to answer messages within 24 hours. Please note, however, that I will not respond to questions sent the evening before a scheduled test or exam. Additionally, I **do not discuss grades via email**. Please make an appointment to see me if you would like to discuss any course grades.

Academic Honesty

Academic Honesty is extremely important, and so violations of the Oxford College Honor Code will not be tolerated. I will not hesitate to report any such violations to the Honor Council. Infractions of the Honor Code include plagiarism, cheating, seeking or giving unauthorized assistance, and lying related to academic matters. Further information on Honor Code infractions and procedures are available in the Oxford College Student Handbook, and online: http://oxford.emory.edu/audiences/current_students/Academic/academic-success/student-honor-code/index.dot

Disability Access

I encourage any students with disabilities that may impact their access to or performance in any component of this course to register with Oxford College's ADSR, and to let me know about necessary accommodations as soon as possible. Additionally, please be aware that my office is located on the second floor of a building without disability access. I will, accordingly, be happy to make arrangements to meet with any student on the first floor of Humanities Hall, should this be necessary.

Schedule

What is the nature of sport? What is a team? Metaphysical and definitional concerns

1/13: Introduction, Suits excerpt in class

1/15: Suits, "Tricky Triad," and Meier, "Triad Trickery" (H, pp. 29-54)

1/20: Feezell Chapter 1[Add/Drop Deadline]

1/22: Mumford, "Allegiance and Identity" (BB), Searle excerpt (BB)

1/27: Reid, "Mind and Body" (BB)

Sports, Value, and Aesthetics

1/29: Feezell Chapter 2

2/3: Best, "The Aesthetic in Sport" and Boxill, "Beauty, Sport, and Gender" (H, pp. 109-137)

2/5: Young, "Throwing Like a Girl" (BB)

2/10: Segrave, "A Matter of Life and Death," and Dundes, "Into the Endzone for a Touchdown" (H, 55-63 and 241-249)

2/12: Izod, "Television Sport and the Sacrificial Hero" (H 371-386)

2/17: Reid, "Sport and Education" (BB), Arnold, "Democracy, Education and Sport," (H 484-493)

2/19: Mumford, "Should Athletes be Role Models?" (BB) and Feezell Chapter 6

2/24: Review/Catch-up day

2/26: Midterm Exam

Ethical issues in Sports: Fans and Social Issues

3/3: Feezell Chapter 3.3 and 4 (pp. 69-91)

3/5: Tännsjö, "Is Our Admiration for Sports Heroes Fascistoid?" and Tamburrini, "Sports, Fascism and the Market" [2 CRR papers must be complete by this date; Withdrawal deadline 3/6]

3/10: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

3/12: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS

3/17: Jones and Fleming, "I'd Rather Wear a Turban than a Rose" (BB)

3/19: Churchill, "Let's Spread the Fun Around" (BB) and Lindsay, "Representing Redskins" (BB)

3/24: Hawkins, Excerpts from *The New Plantation* (BB)

3/26: Film: *Ballplayer/Pelotero*

3/31: Boxill, "Title IX and Gender Equity," and Francis, "Title IX: Equality for Women's Sports?" (H 395-402, 414-427)

4/2: Kidd, "The Men's Cultural Center: Sports and the Dynamic of Women's Oppression/Men's Repression" (H, 403-413)
[THESIS/PROJECT PROPOSAL DUE]

Ethical issues in Sports: Athletes and Competition

4/7: Tännsjö, "Against Sexual Discrimination in Sports" (BB)

4/9: Tamburrini, "The Hand of God," and Fraser, "It's Not Cricket" (BB)

4/14: Brown, "Paternalism, Drugs, and the Nature of Sports," and Gardner, "On Performance-Enhancing Drugs and the Unfair Advantage Argument" (H 284-306)

4/16: Sandel, "Bionic Athletes," McNamee, "Whose Prometheus?" (BB)

4/21: Final Presentations

4/23: Final Presentations

4/27 [MONDAY]: Final Papers Due on Blackboard by 6 PM.

5/5: FINAL EXAM