

Fall 2015

SOCIOLOGY 251

# SPORT, COMPETITION & SOCIETY

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Sommers

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## COURSE OBJECTIVES

The tools of social science can help understand debates and puzzles posed by contemporary sports and other competitions. These contests provide many telling examples of social dynamics and trends.

This course will help you become a more socially literate consumer or participant in sport. You will better appreciate the broad scope of stakeholders at play in competitions and the broader ethical principles realized in sports debates.

## COURSE DESIGN

Although the course has many students, it is designed to engage you. We will use a student response system in lecture, and many small opportunities to earn credit rather than a few big ones.

Grades for this course are not based on percentages. Instead, the grade you earn will be based on the total number of points that you earn, and you can choose which ways of earning points best suit how you wish to approach the course. This course is not intended to be difficult, but it will require you to stay on top

of things, in the same way that competitive performance typically rewards steady effort over last-minute bursts of commitment.

## COURSE MEETINGS

Lectures are held Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30-10:50am, in Annenberg G15. Please be prompt and do not leave early.

Sections meet for 50 minutes at the following times and places: Wednesdays at 2 (Annenberg G31) and 4 (University 112); Thursdays at 9 (555 Clark 230), 2 (Annenberg G31), and 3 (University 412); and Friday at 9 (Harris L04).

## CONTACTING US

E-mail is the most reliable way of interacting with us about the course.

Your professor's e-mail address is [jfreese@northwestern.edu](mailto:jfreese@northwestern.edu); your TAs will provide theirs at your first section meeting. Your professor's office hour is Wednesday at 11, but he is also available by appointment. His office is located at 1810 Chicago Avenue, room 221.

# SOCIOLOGY 251 - ASSESSMENT

Your grade is based on the number of points you earn over the quarter								
<b>360</b>	345	330	315	300	290	280	270	250
<b>A</b>	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D

## Lecture Attendance

5 points standard for attending lecture after 9/27

(2 point deduction for skipping check-in, check-out or too many middle items)

Must be present in order to use Top Hat to obtain credit.

Classes will also feature opportunities for some students to earn bonus point(s)

Standard credit for everyone contingent on orderly classroom environment

## Section Meetings

4 points for standard attendance at section on "Debate & Discuss" days

6 points for being a Debate & Discuss leader (up to 3 times)

## Concept checkpoints

*Quizzes to demonstrate mastery of social science concepts*

Only concepts covered in class will be on checkpoint

Week 4 and 7 checkpoints: **20** points possible each

Exit checkpoint: **40** points possible  
Cumulative, December 10, 3pm

## Exercises

Varying # of points

Available every class, for every reading and more

Unless specified, due 8am morning of class

No credit for late exercises

Must do reading if exercises based on reading

## Exercise grading

Grade	Means	Score on x-point exercise	Example: 6-point exercise
+	Good	x	6
+/-	OK	.75x	4.5
-	Below standard	.5x	3
0	Inadequate	0	0
++	<i>Bravo!</i>	1.5x	9

## End of quarter activities

### Exit exemplars

*Occasion to suggest new class examples*

**8** points standard credit

### Project pitch

*One-page pitch for a project idea*

**18** points standard credit

Details available in Canvas  
Due December 10, at 3pm

## How many total points will be available?

Over **425**: At least **180** from exercises (at standard credit); **85** from lecture attendance (17x5); **80** from concept checkpoints (24x2 + 42); **24** from section attendance (6x4); **18** for discuss/debate leader (3x6); **8** from exit exercises; **18** for project pitch; at least **15** in bonuses

## "Standard credit"

For a given credit opportunity, standard credit is the number of points will be given to good performance. The quality of NU students means we anticipate this to be the typical score.

# SOCIOLOGY 251 - TOPICS AND READINGS

*All readings are available on Canvas*

## OVERVIEW

M	Sep 21	Opening Day	
W	Sep 23	What is Sport?	All material in "General Course Information" folder in Canvas
M	Sep 28	Warmup	On Australian Skeleton ( <i>The Sports Gene</i> )

## APPEAL

W	Sep 30	Audience	On winning as virtue ( <i>Winning</i> ); On extracurricular activities ( <i>Pedigree</i> ); "Is Religion Losing Ground to Sports?" (Wash Post)
M	Oct 5	Competitors	"Gus Caesar" ( <i>Fever Pitch</i> ); "Competitive Eating's Fastest Rising Star" (Beejoli Shah); "Why I Still Play Football" (John Urschel)

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W	Oct 7	Industry	"Are the Chicago Cubs Cursed?" ( <i>Scorecasting</i> ) "Getting Established" ( <i>Making the Majors</i> )
M	Oct 12	Compensation	"Return on Investment" ( <i>Billion-Dollar Ball</i> ) "Player Drafts and Revenue Sharing Will Improve Competitive Balance" ( <i>15 Sports Myths</i> )

## PERFORMANCE

W	Oct 14	Talent	"The Matthew Effect" ( <i>Outliers</i> ); "Big Bang of Body Types," "Talent of Trainability," and Jamaican talent-scouting ( <i>The Sports Gene</i> )
M	Oct 19	Practice	"10000 hours" ( <i>Sports Gene</i> ) + "The Dan Plan"; "The Mundanity of Excellence" (Daniel Chambliss)

## RATIONALITY

W	Oct 21	Innovation	"Made in Amsterdam" ( <i>Soccernomics</i> ) "The Art of Speed" (Ben McGrath)
M	Oct 26	Quantification	"Changing Rules, Changing Practices" (Stacy Lom) On Bill James, Chad Hatteberg, and Voros McCracken ( <i>Moneyball</i> )

## SYSTEMS

W	Oct 28	Order	On fighting in ice hockey ( <i>The Code</i> ); "NHL Enforcers Down for the Count" (Patrick White)
M	Nov 2	Conflict	"Either/Or" (Ariel Levy); On Serena Williams ( <i>Citizen</i> )

## HARMS

W	Nov 4	Addiction	On Henry and Mike ( <i>The Art of Fielding</i> ); "Matching the Market" ( <i>Addiction by Design</i> )
M	Nov 9	Injury	On Leigh Steinberg and clients ( <i>League of Denial</i> ) "When 772 Pitches Isn't Enough" (Chris Jones)

## YOUTH

W	Nov 11	Childhood	"Competitive Kid Capital" (Playing to Win) Selection from <i>Play Their Hearts Out</i>
M	Nov 16	College	On Kenya Scholar-Athlete Project ( <i>The Sports Gene</i> ) "The Shame of College Sports" (Taylor Branch)

## VICE

W	Nov 18	Cheating	On performance-enhancing drugs and Lance Armstrong ( <i>The Secret Race</i> ) "What Isn't in the Mitchell Report?" ( <i>Scorecasting</i> )
M	Nov 23	Corruption	"How Soccer Explains the Survival of Top Hats" ( <i>How Soccer Explains the World</i> ); "Rigged" (Declan Hill & Jeré Longman)



## SOCIOLOGY 251 – BIBLIOGRAPHY

*(These are the full titles and authors of books that appear on the readings calendar.)*

*Addiction by Design*, by Natasha Dow Schüll

*The Art of Fielding*, by Chad Harbach

*The Big Fix: The Hunt for The Match-Fixers Bringing Down Soccer*, by Brett Forrest

*Billion-Dollar Ball: A Journey Through the Big-Money Culture of College Football*, by Gilbert M. Gaul

*Citizen: An American Lyric*, by Claudia Rankine

*Fever Pitch*, by Nick Hornby

*15 Sports Myths and Why They're Wrong*, by Rodney Fort and Jason Winfree

*Making the Majors: The Transformation of Team Sports in America*, by Eric Leifer

*Moneyball: The Art of Winning and Unfair Game*, by Michael Lewis

*Outliers*, by Malcom Gladwell

*Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs* by Lauren A. Rivera

*Play Their Hearts Out: A Coach, His Star Recruit, and the Youth Basketball Machine*, by George Dohrman

*Playing to Win: Raising Children in a Competitive Culture*, by Hilary Levey Friedman

*The Secret Race: Inside the Hidden World of the Tour de France*, by Tyler Hamilton and Daniel Coyle

*Scorecasting: The Hidden Influences Behind How Sports Are Played and Games Are Won*, by L. Jon Wertheim and Tobias Moskowitz

*Soccernomics*, by Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski

*The Sports Gene: Inside the Science of Extraordinary Athletic Performance*, by David Epstein

*Thrown*, by Kerry Howley

*Winning: An American Obsession*, by Francesco Duina

# SOCIOLOGY 251 - SECTION MEETINGS

## Schedule of activities

Sep 23 - Sep 25	Orientation
Sep 30 - Oct 2	Debate & Discuss #1
Oct 7 - Oct 9	Debate & Discuss #2
Oct 14 - Oct 16	Concept Checkpoint #1
Oct 21 - Oct 23	Debate & Discuss #3
Oct 28 - Oct 30	Debate & Discuss #4
Nov 4 - Nov 6	Concept Checkpoint #2
Nov 11 - Nov 13	Debate & Discuss #5
Nov 18 - Nov 20	Debate & Discuss #6
Nov 25 - Nov 27	(Thanksgiving Break)
Exit Checkpoint - Dec 10, 3pm (Location TBA)	

## Meeting times and locations

WHEN	WHERE	WHO
Wednesdays at 2	Annenberg G31	Kofi Asante
Wednesdays at 4	University Hall 112	Miri Eliyahu
Thursdays at 9	555 Clark 230	Miri Eliyahu
Thursdays at 2	Annenberg Hall G31	Zach Sommers
Thursdays at 3	University Hall 412	Zach Sommers
Fridays at 9	Harris Hall L04	Kofi Asante

## SOCIOLOGY 251 – TOP HAT

*Fall 2015 note: Given the nether-location of our room, I doubt that SMS will work as an option, so one will have to use one of the alternatives that involves connecting to Wi-Fi. I have been assured by NUIT that Wi-Fi capacity of the room is sufficient for everyone to use the system at once.*

We will be using the Top Hat ([www.tophat.com](http://www.tophat.com)) classroom response system in class. You will be able to submit answers to in-class questions using Apple or Android smartphones and tablets, laptops, or via text message (SMS).

You are responsible for:

1. remembering to bring a device on which you can use Top Hat to each class
2. ensuring that your device is adequately charged so that it can be used
3. knowing how to use Top Hat (tutorials are available on their website)

If you forget your device or your battery does not work, you can e-mail me after class explaining the situation, but you will only receive partial credit for attendance for that class.

If you have not received an e-mail invitation to join Top Hat, you can register on their website. Top Hat requires a subscription, which costs \$24 for 4 months (or \$72 for a “student lifetime” subscription). Our course number is **882384**.

You can visit <http://tinyurl.com/THStudentRegistration> for the Student Quick Start Guide which outlines how you will register for a Top Hat account, as well as providing a brief overview to get you up and running on the system.

### IF USING SMS

The number to send SMS responses is (315) 636-0905. I strongly recommend saving this number in your device so you do not have to enter it anew each time.

You will also need to enter a four-digit code prior to answering each question, and that code will be unique to each question. For example, if code is 1234 and you wish to answer “a”, you need to text “1234 a.”

### USING WEB

The direct URL for Top Hat is: <http://app.tophat.com/e/882384>

### IMPORTANT WARNING

A big problem with Top Hat is that students are tempted to cheat by reporting they are in class when they are not, and by asking classmates to help them cheat by texting information to them. This is academic misconduct and will be treated as such.

## **SOCIOLOGY 251 – ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As your professor, I consider it my sacred responsibility to protect the integrity of the course and its fairness to all students. I will adhere strictly to Northwestern's standards and policies regarding academic integrity. Among other things, this means that I will notify the WCAS Dean's Office without hesitation in all cases of suspected misconduct.

You are expected to be familiar with WCAS policies regarding what constitutes academic misconduct, and so if you are unfamiliar with them or could use a refresher, you should re-read their materials online.

Below, I make explicit some matters regarding academic misconduct for this course.

### **ATTENDANCE**

1. You may not "check-in," "check-out," or otherwise participate in the TopHat lectures if you are not physically present in the class at the time these opportunities are provided.
2. You are committing academic misconduct if you help any of your classmates attempt to receive credit without being physically present.
3. I reserve the right to use whatever means of auditing attendance to ensure that this is not being done.

### **EXERCISES**

1. You must do the reading in order to receive credit for the exercise associated with that reading. I recognize that you are mostly on the "honor system" in this respect, and hope very much that you do the honorable thing, but I do wish to be explicit that completing exercises about readings without having done the reading is considered academic misconduct in this course.
2. You may discuss exercises with classmates in the course, but answers must be "in your own words" as described below.

### **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**

1. On exercises and elsewhere, unless a very short factual answer is being asked (1-3 words), you are expected to put all answers in your own words.
2. Sometimes I will emphasize "in your own words," but it applies even if I do not say so explicitly. I reserve the right to use software to detect both plagiarism and similarity among student responses.