

## Course Syllabus

Seminar: Thursdays 1:30pm-4:20pm  
Location: 002 Wallace Hall

Professor Sam Trejo  
Office: 187 Wallace Hall  
Office Hours: By Appointment  
Email: [samtrejo@princeton.edu](mailto:samtrejo@princeton.edu)

### Course Description

*"Beauty is not the goal of competitive sports, but high-level sports are a prime venue for the expression of human beauty... Its power and appeal are universal."*

In the U.S. and around the globe, formal and informal sports are a fundamental component of social life. This course will help you become a more academically literate consumer of or participant in sport. Our main focus will be on sport and recreation in the United States. Students will consider their own experiences with athletics and compare them to examples drawn from first-hand accounts of sports in a variety of different community settings. Our readings and class discussions will afford opportunities to appreciate the individual and social benefits of participation in athletics, as well as the risks and value distortions that competitive sports may entail. By the end of the course, students will be equipped to better appreciate the ethical, social, and political undercurrents of societal debates regarding sports.

### Wellness

As your professor, I truly value your physical and mental well-being. Ideally, this will be a fun, engaging environment that contributes toward your growth and development as an individual. Please take care of yourself and practice positive self-care. As such, I am willing to negotiate due dates on a case-by-case basis; please reach out to me if you find yourself struggling.

## Email Policy

I will respond to emails within 24 hours during normal business hours (9am-5pm, Monday-Friday). I check my email only twice a day, once at the very beginning of the day and once at the very end. Please do not expect immediate responses, especially during non-business hours and over the weekend.

## Assignments & Grading

Your final grade will weight the assessments as follows:

Attendance & Participation	30%
Discussion Leader	20%
Midterm Paper	15%
Final Paper	35%

**Attendance & Participation:** Each week, students expected to post reflections on the assigned reading. These reflections will contain (i) an at least 250-word discussion of some aspect of the reading that they found interesting, did not fully understand, or want to know more about and (ii) a relevant discussion question to explore as a group during seminar. Discussion questions can be about the underlying concepts in a reading, the real-world implications of the ideas discussed, or any other aspect of the reading that sparked intrigue; be as specific as possible. These questions will both ensure our intellectual space is student-driven and also assist that week's discussion leader. Posts are due on Canvas by Wednesdays at 1:30pm (24 hours before the start of each week's seminar). Students are allowed to skip their weekly submission, no questions asked, once during the semester – just send an e-mail letting me know that you're electing to use your free week.

**Discussion Leader:** Once during the semester, each student will be expected to lead and facilitate the precept discussion (either by themselves or with a partner). Discussion leaders will facilitate conversation during that week's seminar and provide a document summarizing main themes from that week's readings as well as student-submitted discussion questions. This document should be emailed to me by 6:00pm on the Wednesday before seminar so that I can provide feedback.

**Paper/Project Draft:** In lieu of a midterm exam, students will submit a rough draft or detailed outline of their final paper (at least 5 pages in length). If a student is electing to do a final project rather than a final paper, they should submit a plan for that instead (e.g. draft podcast script/outline). Paper drafts/outlines are due via e-mail by 10pm on Sunday, March 19.

**Final Paper/Project:** In lieu of a final exam, each student will prepare a final project that explores a social, ethical, or policy question related to sports and recreation, broadly defined. The final project is designed for students to show mastery and deep engagement

with course content. To do this, students can choose one of several options. The most straightforward option is to complete a 10-12 page final paper. The paper may not strictly be a literature review and instead must synthesize sources to advance a novel argument. To select a topic, each student should consider which facets of the course were most compelling to them. Each paper must be in .pdf format (double-spaced, 1" margins, Time New Roman font) and are due via e-mail by 5pm on May 9th (Dean's Date). Students who do not wish to write a final paper are free to develop any project they desire, as long as they check in with me first. This can be recording a podcast episode, developing an artistic performance or display, building a website, etc.

WHICH SPORT ARE THEY ARGUING ABOUT?  
 ~ MY CHEAT SHEET ~

	US:	NON-US:
JANUARY	FOOTBALL (⓪)	FOOTBALL (⓪)
FEBRUARY		
MARCH	BASKETBALL	
APRIL		
MAY	BASEBALL	
JUNE	BASKETBALL	
JULY	BASEBALL	
AUGUST		
SEPTEMBER	FOOTBALL (⓪)	
OCTOBER	BASEBALL	
NOVEMBER	FOOTBALL (⓪)	
DECEMBER		

# Course Reading

## Required Texts

*Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream.* H.G. Bissinger (Addison-Wesley, 1990).

*Reclaiming the Game: College Sports and Educational Values* by Sarah A. Levin & William Bowen (Princeton University Press, 2003).

*The Sports Gene: Inside the Science of Extraordinary Athletic Performance* by David Epstein (Portfolio Press, 2014).

*Protecting Home: Class, Race, and Masculinity in Boys' Baseball* by Sherri Grasmuck (Rutgers University Press).

*Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* by Michael Lewis (W.W. Norton & Company, 2003).

*Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Women's Sport* by Susan Cahn (University of Illinois Press, 2015).

# Course Calender

THURSDAY	
Feb 2nd Course Introduction (Professor Trejo)	1
9th Friday Night Lights I (Annie & Lydia)	2
16th Friday Night Lights II (Autumn)	3
23rd Reclaiming the Game I (Hannah & Jackson)	4
Mar 2nd Reclaiming the Game II (Gabby & Ali)	5
9th The Sports Gene I (Serena & Andy)	6
16th <i>-Spring Break-</i>	
23rd The Sports Gene II (Katie & Lexi)	7
30th Guarding Home I (Lola)	8
Apr 6th Guarding Home II (Andie/Elena)	9
13th <i>-Peer Edits-</i>	
20th Moneyball I & II (Maggie & Keeshawn)	10
27th Coming on Strong (Grace & Elizabeth)	11