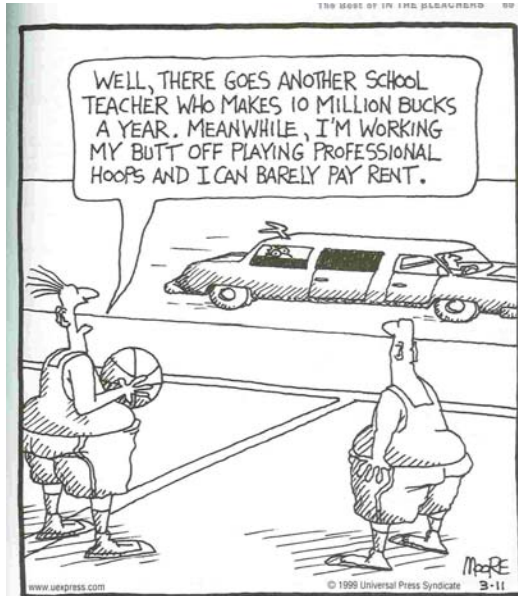


## THE GOOD, THE BAD, THE UGLY: SPORTS IN AMERICA

"Hey, it's only a game," a young child cries in a fit of playful exuberance, or perhaps frustration, as she invests her time and attitude in the participation of a sport. Teammates may concur; a parent affirms the children's credo with a nod. A feeling begins to pervade then that it is indeed *just* a game - a trivial pursuit with just a winner and loser, a one-dimensional physical endeavor whose



In another universe.

meaning is limited to the field upon which it is played. But is it? Is it really just physical activity, just a game, just a sport? Or is it so much more complex and significant than that? In fact, the importance of studying sports in society goes far beyond a court's boundary lines and into the ways we view and interact with our world in societal and cultural terms.

Over the years, sports sociologists have proven that sports are truly social phenomena (occasions or events that involve social relationships and collective actions which have relevance in the social life) whose meaning goes far beyond scores and statistics. "They are

related to the social and cultural contexts in which we live; they provide the stories and images that many of us use to explain and evaluate these contexts, the events in our lives, and our connections to the world around us," says sport sociologist Jay Coakley.

While sports can mirror the human experience, they also reflect society in other profound ways. Sports then are considered social constructions - activities to which human beings give form and meaning as they live their lives with one another. On one level, sports help build character, sustain community, and create shared social values. On another level, sports reveal character, threaten community, and challenge social values. Simply, sports allow us to express the best and the worst of who we are!

Even those who claim to not be interested in, or actively have a dislike for sports, must admit that sports' influence on society is hard to deny. Think, for example, of the following:

- the attention regularly devoted to sports in the mass media;
- the amounts of money, public and private, spent on sports;
- the dependency of business on sports for advertising;

- the numbers of people who regularly take part in sports as performers and spectators, to say nothing of those who are directly or indirectly dependent on them for their livelihoods;
- the fact that sports function as something akin to a common language which permits not only the consolidation of bonds among friends but also the breaking of ice between strangers;
- the abundant use of sporting metaphors in such apparently diverse life-spheres as politics, industry, and the military; and finally,
- the ramifications, national as well as international, negative as well as positive, of worldwide spectacles such as the Olympics or soccer's World Cup (Dunning, 1999).

So then, sports are decidedly more than just games; they are social institutions created by people who then impose their cultural practices (ways of life) and ideologies (everyday logic of living life) on it. In doing so, we make sports an integral and vital part of our relationships, communities, and nations. The study of sports sociology can show us how significant the realm of sport is in the way we view broader issues such as violence, bigotry, sexism, capitalism, and nationalism, and it can give us a greater sensitivity to the way we choose to be consumers, leaders, or change agents in society through sports.

## **THE FUNDAMENTALS**

**Our classroom is DeVos 2A07. We meet at 9:30 am on Tuesday and Thursday.**

**I'm your professor/coach, Eva Dean Folkert.** I'm also the athletic director and former women's golf coach. You can call me Eva Dean, Prof F, Coach, AD Eva, or if you really want to make a good impression, All-Knowing Sports Guru, or AKSG, for short. You know, the crazed sports nut who feels that the front pages of the newspaper are merely protective covering for the sports section. Any of the above are perfectly fine, but honestly, AKSG may be a bit much! It was just a thought. Really, most students call me Eva Dean!

**You can reach me a few different ways:**

Call me at my office at x7694; write me an email at [folkert@hope.edu](mailto:folkert@hope.edu), stop by to see me at my DeVos office most any time but by appointment is best, or, better yet, come by just about any home Hope athletic event and find me in the crowd, by the scoring table, or on the sidelines. I'm at almost every Hope sporting event! (But I like theatre too!)

**Our texts and readings are:**

- Coursepack: *The Good, Bad, Ugly: Sport in America*, Folkert
- *Fair and Foul: Beyond the Myths and Paradoxes of Sport* by D. Stanley Eitzen (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009)
- *Friday Night Lights* by H.G. Bissinger (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1990).

## THE COACH'S PEP TALK

American short-story writer Flannery O'Connor once penned this in a letter to a friend:

"As a freshman in college you are bombarded with new ideas, or rather pieces of ideas, new frames of reference, an activation of the intellectual life which is only beginning, but which is already running ahead of your lived experience." How right she is! And since I couldn't say it better myself, I used her words. But what Flannery didn't go on to say -and so I will - is that all those thoughts are exciting things, wonderful things, embraceable things that make this new beginning for you both a joy and a challenge. How lucky you are, we all are, to experience this together. So, be open-minded, take part in class, don't stress out, have fun and decide to enjoy the work. If you enter this course and your Hope career with enthusiasm, you will surely be a success on every educational path you take. It's really that simple!

Oh, there's one other deep American philosopher I'd like to quote. His illustrative wisdom says it all. I think you'll get the picture!

**Peanuts®**

**Charles Schulz**



## THE GAME PLAN

All teams must have goals and objectives they hope to achieve to win. Here are ours:

In this class in general, you will come to:

- Know 20 other Hope freshmen and one professor in a stimulating classroom;

- Develop habits and skills leading to interpretative reading and writing for a stimulating classroom;
- Develop study habits and library skills imperative to a college student's education in a stimulating classroom;
- Learn to listen with respect and speak with authority in a stimulating classroom; and,
- Think critically in a stimulating classroom. (You notice a theme here!)

In this class specifically, you will come to:

- Understand and define marginalized, separated, integrated, and assimilated identities and subcultures and how sport can move people through these subcultures into the dominant culture;
- Identify the process behind a person's becoming involved and staying involved in sports;
- Know advantages, disadvantages, and the differences between informal, player-controlled sports versus organized, adult-controlled sports;
- Define gender logic, race logic, character logic, and class logic as it pertains to sports;
- Address issues related to fairness and equality (Title IX) and to ideological and cultural issues as they relate to sport and gender;
- Discuss sport participation patterns among racial and ethnic minorities in America;
- Understand how social class influences sports and sport participation and whether playing sports can contribute to career success and social mobility;
- Find how college sports programs relate to the educational experiences of both athletes in particular and students at large;
- Define sport ethic and its effect on deviance in sport;
- Define hubris and its effect on deviance in sport;
- Understand how overconformity and underconformity to the norms of sport creates deviance;
- Discuss whether rates of deviant behaviors on and off the sports field are out of control;
- Define four different types of on-field violence;
- Discuss the impact of off-the-field violence among players and spectators;
- Know the arguments and counterarguments for new stadium subsidies and construction;
- Discuss the effects of commercialization and income levels of professional athletes; and,

- Think about future trends and changes in sports in America.

## **PRACTICE DRILLS**

So, how will I know if you've hit all the goals mentioned above, drained the three, split the uprights, served an ace, recorded your personal best? Every coach wants to know his or her players' stats after all! Well, here's how you run up the score:

### **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:**

For every class period you attend and participate in, you earn up to 5 points - for a grand total of 140 points for the semester. You are allowed three excused absences without penalty. Miss a fourth class period and you will spend some time in the penalty box. Actually, your grade for attendance gets lowered by a full letter if this happens. Being more than 10 minutes late for class counts as an absence. Attend every class throughout the semester and you automatically receive 20 extra points. It's like a one-and-one bonus - but worth more! However, you are expected, for a full five points, to do more than just hold down your chair for an hour! You are expected to participate, in and out of that chair, in order to make our class more meaningful. Yes, you will be active in a class on sport.

### **SPORTS AUTOBIOGRAPHY:**

Worth 25 points, write a reflective paper entitled "Why I Play." It needs to be 750 words (3 pages) at a minimum. Using "Why We Play" as a guide, you will address these questions: (1) What is your most vivid memory of playing sports? MacGregor gives you his. (2) What role does/did sports play in your life? (3) Do you think organized sports really are "the perfection of the unnecessary?" Why or why not? Explain MacGregor's point here. (4) Do you ask too much of sports, or do sports ask too much of you? Again, what does MacGregor mean by this? What do you think? (5) Summarize, thinking about those other points, why you do play - for family, for friends, for yourself, for the love of the game, for the health of it? This exercise will help me understand more about you and the way sports influence your life. I will be looking for clarity of writing and thought and depth of insight. A little creativity helps too - pictures, headlines, first, second, third -person narrative. I'm sure you can

think of more ways than I can to make your sports autobiography like an AE Network Special! You will be graded on writing competence, critical reflection, and depth of thought.

### **ME REPORTING:**

Put on your cub reporter hat! For this assignment you will attend and report back on two campus events -- a CIS keynote and a women's athletic contest. Yes, two very divergent happenings. Being an intellectual member of the campus community means experiencing, analyzing, absorbing, and processing ALL that college has to offer, even a sporting event. As a reporter, you will engage your observational, listening, and analytical powers to divulge the 5 W's - what, where, why, when, and how (how is how a W!). These are the facts, of course, but you will go beyond that. As objective as reporters try to be, their biases often creep into any event they are covering so I am actually asking you to be biased on purpose! After giving the facts, you will interpret. For the CIS event, you will report the facts (5 W's) then write a concluding statement that summarizes your feelings/interpretations of the keynote - Your first impressions of the topic? Quotes that impacted you? Facts that made your head spin and why? Compile and write your reflections in at least 750-words (3 pages). YOU MUST GET A PROGRAM AND HAVE A WITNESS SIGN IT TO SHOW TO ME THAT YOU WERE THERE. Turn this in with your paper.

For the women's athletic event, you will again report the facts and stats then write a concluding statement about your observations that can include your perceptions/feelings on fan participation, intensity of competition, quality of play, or overall atmosphere. Ask yourself how gender logic and ideologies of masculinity and femininity play into those perceptions and feelings and write those findings in a concluding statement in a 750-word, 3-page paper. AGAIN, YOU MUST GET A PROGRAM AND HAVE A WITNESS SIGN IT TO SHOW TO ME THAT YOU WERE THERE. Turn this in with your paper. Your writing competence, depth of thought, and accuracy in reporting will be the grading criteria. Each paper in Me Reporting is worth 25 points.

### **QUIZZES AND HANDOUTS:**

At 20 points each, you will, at random, without announcement, be given up to 10 quizzes or handouts throughout the semester to test your dedication to completing the readings. In other words, I'm testing the preparedness of your brain muscle and its ability to adapt to different training regimens! By the

way, two of your lowest quiz/handout scores will be dropped. A good coach always accounts for occasional muscle fatigue!

### **CLASS PRESENTATION:**

You will select a sports legend to report on in AE Biography fashion. (Stay tuned for the selection process.) For approximately 10-12 minutes, you and a teammate will take us through the life of the legend, explaining why his or her sports history is important for us in this class to know. Find quotes from and about the legend, use PowerPoint to show pictures of the legend, or get creative and get in character - be the legend! The presentation will be graded on look, tone, words/content, and visual aids. To help you, handouts will be distributed that explain your best use of look, tone, words, and visual aids. Point total: 75.

### **MEDIA OBSERVATION**

Yes, I'm actually going to tell you to plunk down on your couch and watch tv. But it's sports on tv, so that's okay. Tune into an hour of SportsCenter, or watch an hour of a live sporting event. In that hour (and make sure you tell me the date and time you are watching), I want you to: (1) list and identify the commercials; (2) tell me the advertiser and what it are selling; (3) give me the theme/scenario of the commercial; (4) suggest the demographic -- who the advertiser is targeting or selling to; (5) give the core American value that the company is trying to sell along with the product. A *theme/scenario* of a commercial is the recap. For instance, a youth football dad touting the virtues of a mini-van means that families matter. Or, Vikings storming a mall to pillage an unsuspecting credit card user means that credit, and debt, do not have to be hassles. A *core American value* is the thing that we US citizens like to say makes our country great and subconsciously buy along with a product, things like freedom, originality, excitement, health-consciousness, perseverance, adventure, capitalism, strength, innovation, family, sacrifice, entertainment, and independence, to name a few. Complete this data-observing paper with a concluding statement that summarizes your findings from your hour of commercial watching. This project has a value of 50 points.

### **SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE**

Movies are fun to watch but often have messages more profound than we think! After seeing the movie and reading the story/book acutely struck you and helped you better understand the social ramifications and significance of *Radio* and *Friday Night Lights*. Describe how each medium drove its points home. You may find that the movie version diverges from the true

account given in the book, or that the book version expands upon a point shown in the movie. That's fine. You can use instances like these to your advantage when writing your paper. These two papers are each worth 25 points and must be 750-words, 3-pages long at a minimum. You will be given a movie/book worksheet to help you record your thoughts on certain topics as you watch and read these media. As always, you will be graded on writing competence, critical reflection, depth of thought and supporting evidence.

### **A LETTER TO MY SENIOR SELF:**

So, you're spending a semester learning the liberal arts way. Congratulations! You now have seven more to go. But before you do, I want you to consider your next four years? What do you want to accomplish by the time you prance across the stage toward a college president holding your diploma? What are your academic, spiritual, athletic, or social goals, dreams, and aspirations? Simply, what type of student and person do you want to become? You will answer those questions in letter form from your freshman self to your senior self. This has time warp, paradoxical consequences, but we can do it by going back to the future without a DeLorean.

Here's how it'll go:

**First**, you must write a personal mission statement for your education at Hope. We will discuss and complete that exercise together.

**Second**, read the "Philosophy of Education" from the Hope College catalog (you'll receive this as a handout), and reflect on the following questions: What does Hope College say you should get out of a Hope College education? Which of these goals do you find inspiring, puzzling, intimidating, or conflicting with your personal mission statement? What features would you expect to find in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities you engage in at Hope? What parts of this Philosophy of Education matter most to you and why? How might your own personal mission statement be deepened and enlarged by it?

**Third**, write a three-page, "Dear Freshman Joe or Jane" letter that includes your personal mission statement and your reflective answers to the questions above. Be sure to quote Hope's "Philosophy of Education" to prove your point. Your letter must have all the things that are found in personal letters (and not in tweets!). They are: A heading, a greeting, the body, the complimentary close, the signature line, and a post-script (PS). Grading of the 75-point total will be based on the following qualities: writing competence,

creativity, relevant detail, and depth of thought and critical reflection. No length minimum but thoroughness required!

### **I AM THE CHANGE**

The season is over! No more practices, no more games...but one more paper!! You have spent a full semester reading a number of articles and books and listening to a number of class lectures and discussions that have mostly challenged the benefits of organized sport. Some topics may have fired you up; some may have caused you to simply say, "that's just how it is!" Whatever the case, there must be at least one of our topics that caused you to consider your own behavior in and toward sport now and into the future. Hopefully you've asked yourself, "how would I have acted in that case and what would I have thought and what is my responsibility for the good of the games and those who play them?" With that in mind, you will write a two-page, 500-word essay to describe how you will be a social change agent for the betterment of sport as it pertains to ONE of the topics we covered: socialization, youth, gender, race, class, deviance, violence, health, and the economy. Describe the topic's problem as you see it, what you learned about that problem, what is happening today to perpetuate that problem, and how you will be a social change agent to help fix that problem in the future. Use quotes from our readings, from class lecturers and discussions, and from our movies to illustrate and back up your points. Mainly though as you write, you must ask yourself: who are the winners and who are the losers? As a social change agent, your goal is to make this "problem" become a win-win situation for all involved. So, go ahead and write as if you want to be the change you hope to see in the sports world. (I borrowed a bit of that from Gandhi!) Grading of the 50-point total (2-page length) will be based on writing competence, creativity, relevant detail, and depth of thought and critical reflection.

Okay, for those who like to keep score, here's:

### **THE UNOFFICIAL SCORECARD**

(Not to be confused with the OFFICIAL scorecard. I keep that!

If you EVER have questions about your grades and how you are doing, please see the official scorekeeper any time.)

By dividing the total points available with the points you've earned, you can determine your grade using this breakdown:

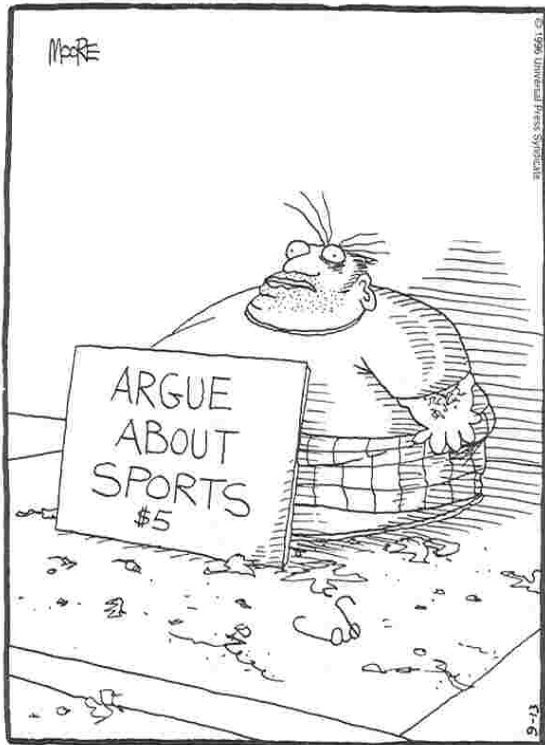
A - 100-96%; A- -- 95-90%; B+ -- 89-87%; B - 86-84%; B- -- 83-80%; C+ - 79-77%;

C -- 76-74%; C- -- 73-70%; D+ -- 69-67%; D - 66-64%; D- -- 63-60%; 59% and below, F.

ASSIGNMENT SCORE	TOTAL POINTS	MY
SPORTS AUTOBIOGRAPHY	25	_____
MOVIE OR BOOK: RADIO	25	_____
MOVIE OR BOOK: FNL	25	_____
A LETTER TO MY SENIOR SELF	100	_____
ME REPORTING	50	_____
MEDIA OBSERVATION	50	_____
CLASS PRESENTATION	75	_____
I AM THE CHANGE	50	_____
QUIZZES/HANDOUTS	160	_____
ATTENDANCE	140	_____
ATTENDANCE BONUS	30	_____

Your points/700 w/o bonus\_\_\_\_\_

Your points+30/700 w/bonus\_\_\_\_\_



**All** work is expected on its due date and **all** work must be handed in to pass this class. Late work will only be accepted under the most extenuating circumstances, like a rainout or ACL surgery, and I don't expect to see too much of that in class!

#### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:**

No one likes a cheater! Not in sports and not in school. It is unethical and a violation of academic integrity to copy from the work of others for a paper and on a test, or to submit the work of others as if it were your own. This includes, of course, any material available electronically. "Cut and paste" plagiarism is on the rise and will not be tolerated. All

sources must be acknowledged. Those caught in these unethical academic practices with either receive an 'F' for the assignment or for the class, depending upon perceived intention and severity. A full discussion of plagiarism, including ways to avoid it, can be found at

<http://www.hope.edu/lib/plagiarism/index.html>.

#### **THE SEASON'S SCHEDULE**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>READING</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT</b>
Tues., Sept. 1		Welcome/Syllabus/Intro	
Thurs., Sept. 3		Sports and Socialization	<i>Why We Play</i>
		<i>It Isn't Just a Game</i> F&F, Pgs. 1-16, 59-78	
Tues., Sept. 8		Sports and Socialization	<i>Someone to Lean On</i>
		<i>Alive and Kicking</i>	
Wed., Sept. 9	MOVIE: RADIO in the Granberg Room in Sport Autobiography: VW Library at 7:00 pm		"Why I Play"
Thurs., Sept. 10		Sports and Children	F&F, pgs. 101-140
Tue., Sept. 15		Sports and Children	<i>American Athlete: Age 10</i>
		<i>How Low Can Coaches Go?</i> <i>Baseball's LeBron</i> <i>Too Much, Too Soon</i>	
Thurs., Sept. 17		Sports and Race/Class	F& F, Pgs. 26-37
		The Bigger Picture: <i>The Color of Speed</i> <i>Blackout</i> <i>Latino Athlete Now</i>	Radio
Tues., Sept. 22		Sports and Race/Class	F&F, pgs. 41-54
		<i>Making Sense of the Amer Indian Mascot Issue</i>	
Thurs., Sept. 24	Whiffleball Challenge	RECESS: 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual GBU:FYS	
Tues., Sept. 29		Sports and Deviance	F&F, Pags. 73-93
		<i>Out of Control?</i> <i>Rite Gone Terribly Wrong</i>	
Thurs., Oct. 1	Floor, Computer Lab	Library Session VW Library, 2 <sup>nd</sup>	
Tues., Oct. 6	HALFTIME: CIS and the Liberal Arts		
Thurs., Oct. 8		Sports and College	F&F, pgs. 165-200

*Morality Play*  
*The Damage Done*  
*The Way It Should Be*

Tues., Oct. 13  
*Women*

Sports and Gender *A Tale of Two*  
*Letter to My Sr Self*  
*Sex & Sensibility*  
*Mother Load*

Thurs., Oct. 15  
from the AAGPBL

Sports and Gender Guest Speakers

### THE SEASON'S SCHEDULE CONTINUED

DATE	TOPIC	READING	ASSIGNMENT
Tues., Oct. 20		NO CLASS - FALL BREAK	

Thurs., Oct. 22

Sports and Violence *Code Red*  
  
*The Ugliest Game*  
*The Big Hit*

\*\*\*\*\*ADVISING WEEK FOR SPRING SEMESTER - OCTOBER 27 - NOVEMBER  
5\*\*\*\*\*

Tues., Oct. 27  
in VZN 152

Advising Advice with Maura Reynolds  
*Me Reporting*

Thurs., Oct. 29

Sports and Health F&F, pgs. 83-96  
*What You Don't Know Might Kill You*  
*I Want My Body Back*

Tues., Nov. 3  
Sports and Economy  
Observation

*Shake Me Down* Media  
  
F&F, Pgs. 221-238

Thurs., Nov. 5

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Tues., Nov. 10

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

\*\*\*\*\*REGISTRATION FOR FRESHMEN - NOVEMBER 12 - NOVEMBER 13, MAAS  
AUD\*\*\*\*\*

Thurs., Nov. 12

CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Tues., Nov. 17

NO CLASS

Wed., Nov. 18 MOVIE: FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS @ PROF. FOLKERT'S @ 7:00 pm  
(PIZZA SERVED!)

Thurs., Nov. 19  
*Odessa*

Friday Night Lights *Return to*

