



Sports & Culture in France

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: MONT 3701

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructors:

Dr. Ludovic Marin - Associate Professor, University of Montpellier

Dr. Robin Recours - Associate Professor, University of Montpellier

Dr. Geoffrey Lassalle - Associate Professor, University of Toulon

Jean-Marie Vautrin - Lecturer, University of Montpellier

Fabien Charreyre-Calvez - Lecturer, University of Montpellier

Course Description

This program focuses on the study of sports and sports culture from a French perspective. Course topics include: the history of sports, sports tourism, sports psychology and sports pedagogy. Most days are split between the classroom learning the theory, technique and pedagogy of sports and then sessions where students engage in activities, such as football (soccer), beach volleyball, Petanque, trampoline, basketball, handball tennis, stand-up paddle, climbing, and hiking.

Course Objectives

- Deepen cross-cultural understanding by examining sports, sports psychology and the nature of professional sports in France and the USA and through interaction with local faculty, staff and students.
- Gain French, European, and international perspectives on sport.
- Increase independence and self-reliance by learning to navigate French society.
- Acquire practical knowledge in sports-related professions such as coaching, sport management and kinesiology.

Methodology

Students will combine the study of the theory of sports and sports psychology and engage in a variety of sport activities. Weekly exams will test the students' comprehension of the material covered. Weekly papers will reflect the content and significance of the program activities.

Required Reading / Materials

- Various newspaper and journal articles to be distributed in France.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis: Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes. Available for free download from Google Books:
https://www.google.fr/books/edition/Travels_with_a_Donkey_in_the_Cevennes/G2k-AAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class and activities	10%
Weekly activity write ups (5% each)	30%
Weekly Exams (20% each)	60%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

Attendance at all class sessions and activities is required unless a student is excused in advance. Participants will not be graded on their athletic abilities, but for being present and actively trying.

Activity Write-Ups

Each week students will be required to submit 2 reflection papers (minimum 1 page single spaced each) about their experiences participating in the various activities. Students should choose one of the prompts below for the paper. The same prompt should not be used for both papers in any given week.

- What did today's activity teach you about the culture of sports in France / the Francophone world?
- Look up the historical origin of the activity or sport and write up a quick summary; has it evolved over time? Is the history the same in the US and France?
- Compare your experience with this activity to a similar experience you might have had before. What was different and what did you learn?
- What was challenging about today's activity? Was there an aspect of this activity that you might have done differently if you had been asked to organize it? Explain.
- Was there a unique cultural aspect to this activity? Explain.

Weekly Exams

The exam administered at the end of each week will cover the content presented in the lectures from the week. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and fill in the blank.

Accommodation, Equipment, & Packing Details

This program includes many physical activities. Most activities can be adapted to accommodate the needs of the participants. It is important to discuss any accommodations with the LAC Montpellier team before departure.

Students should pack clothing and footwear which is well adapted to hiking, gym sports and beach activities. In particular, be sure to bring with or be prepared to purchase:

- Hiking shoes or all terrain tennis shoes
- Water bottle
- Regular tennis shoes
- Sandals, flip flops or shoes for the beach
- Hat, sunscreen, and sunglasses
- Swimsuit
- Beach towel
- Raincoat
- Backpack (for weekend in the Cevennes)
- Clothes adapted for physical activities in the sun

Departure from the U.S.

May 11:

4:05 p.m. Arrival in Montpellier(DL9367 from Amsterdam)

Transportation provided by program to housing at [Citadines Apart'hotel Antigone](#), 588 boulevard d'Antigone, 34000 Montpellier

6 p.m. Meet in the hotel lobby - Brief Orientation to the City, Visit to purchase a French SIM card (if needed), TAM Passes, etc.

7 p.m. Welcome Dinner Café Leon

May 12:

- Before 9:15 a.m. Breakfast in the hotel (included the first morning)
- 9:15 a.m. Meet in the hotel lobby - Visit to the Antigone market
- 10:30 a.m. Guided tour of the city (Tourist Office)
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch
- Afternoon visit to [FISE - Montpellier Festival of Extreme Sports](#)

Course Content

Class & Activity Times (unless otherwise noted) Morning: 9 a.m.–12 p.m.; Afternoon: 1–4 p.m.

Unit 1

Introduction

- **Instructor:** Robin Recours
- **Lesson:** From Antiquity to the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris

Morning:

- **10:30 a.m.** Meet in hotel lobby to walk to Program Center
- **11 a.m.** Orientation and class overview with Peggy
- **12 p.m.** Lunch on your own

Afternoon:

- **4 p.m.** Activity around the Olympic Flame passing through Montpellier

Unit 2

Survival French

Morning:

- **10 a.m.** Meet in hotel lobby to tram to the Arceaux neighborhood; visit the Arceaux Market
- **12 p.m.** Lunch with typical/regional products at the Program Center

Afternoon:

- **1 p.m.** Survival French
- **4 p.m.** Bouldering activity with Peggy

Units 3 & 4

Historical, Sociological, & Marketing Approach to Sports and Leisure

Morning & Afternoon

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Geoffrey Lassalle
- **Lesson:** A history of leisure and sports in France and Europe - Parts 1 and 2
- For those authors who study the origin of modern sports, there are two main schools of thought: the first maintains that sports are an ancient practice (Bernard Jeu; Roger Caillois; Georges Duby; Marc Augé) that began in archaic times. The second school of thought holds that sports are a recent phenomenon that was born in 18th-Century England, and that they are indicative of a socio-historical rupture with ancestral games (Norbert Elias; Georges Vigarello; Pierre Bourdieu). Whatever the approach, it is always worthwhile to examine the past in order to better understand the present. The goal of this session of the course will be to explore the evolution from traditional games to modern sports.

Unit 5

Recreation, Sports, & tourism

Morning

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Robin Recours
- **Lesson:** Sport tourism: Les Cévennes
- Sports and leisure activities always take place in space, from well-equipped centers (stadiums, gymnasiums, sports centers) to rural locales, from the mountains to the deserts. In this session we will describe the 5 location types for sports tourism (the city, the country, the desert, the mountains, the sea); we will present the sports that can be performed there and their respective imaginary realms.
- **First exam**

Unit 6

Social Psychology Approach to Human Movement

Morning

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Ludovic Marin
- **Lesson:** Notions and concepts of the human body in France and in the USA (a cultural comparison)
- When people think of ways of characterizing the culture of a given place, the most obvious parameters that come to mind are language (the way they talk), fashion (the way they dress) and food (the way they eat). If we try to delve a bit deeper into examining what defines different “cultures,” beyond just the obvious, we realize that there are many subtle clues that give insights into the different ways a culture is defined. The way we perceive and interpret actions and behaviors can be totally different from one country to another. For example, why are Americans often seen as too superficial from a European perspective? Why do Americans consider French or Italians to be “too touchy” and not understand the value of a market physical gesture (a handshake or a kiss) to greet friends and colleagues each day? Many of these behaviors are based on how people perceive their own body. But paradoxically since we are often not aware of these subtle interactions, a misunderstanding in communications can result in conclusions and judgments that may not be totally warranted. The goal of this class is to decipher the main cultural aspects of how Americans and French (and

Europeans in general) perceive their body and its interactions. Some practical examples will be studied in order to better understand the interactions between American and French people.

Afternoon

- **1 p.m.** Departure from the hotel for the Cévennes mountains (overnight excursion) Be sure to pack: clothing (layers), rain gear?, toiletries, hiking shoes, hat, sunscreen, water bottle, swimsuit and towel, something to read, and games.

Unit 7

Cévennes Mountains (overnight excursion)

- **5 p.m. next day** Return to Montpellier

May 20—National Holiday

- Activity organized by the student assistant

Units 8 & 9

Social Psychology Approach to Human Movement

Morning

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Ludovic Marin
- **Lesson:** Notions and concepts of the human body in France and in the USA (a cultural comparison)
- This class is related to the class given last Friday. Besides the perceived body, the distance and space that people build around them is part of their own self. For example, if someone that you don't know comes too close and invades your personal space, you often feel uncomfortable or even threatened. The rules about respecting and maintaining "personal space" distance vary from culture to culture. The goal of this class is to highlight these cultural differences in order to reveal the differences between American and European societies.

Afternoon

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Ludovic Marin
- **Lesson:** Interpersonal coordination applied to sports
- Once students have understood the importance of non-verbal communication (see the previous class description), we will characterize different coordination signs present in team sports. The objective of this class is to apply the interpersonal motor coordination topic to team sport practice. An example will be given in a non-American team sport: handball. (Although, there is an American called handball, the one we will be studying is not the same game.) This game contains goals (and goalkeepers) with basketball-like ball transportation (dribble, hand passes and so on). This game is internationally known and is an Olympic event. The French handball team is the current world champion; they won the gold medal in the last Olympics and Montpellier's handball team is the best in France.

Dinner at the Marché du Lez with semester students (optional)

Units 10 & 11

Historical, Sociological, & Marketing Approach to Sports & Leisure

Morning

- **9:30 a.m.** Departure from Citadines Antigone to travel to Piscine Pitot Meet the professor at the Tram Stop Peyrou

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Jean-Marie Vautrin
- **Lesson:** Fencing Practice
- Fencing has been around forever, or almost forever. As soon as man knew how to work wood and then iron, he made weapons to defend himself and survive. Many civilizations have therefore integrated the learning of the handling of weapons and the study of fencing into their fundamental principles. The oldest manifestation of the practice of fencing dates to 1190 BC. A competition is depicted on a bas-relief from the temple of Medinet-Abou, built in Upper Egypt by Ramses III It was in Spain, at the beginning of the 15th century, that modern fencing took off, but it was the Italians who first put the principles of fencing in order. The French fencing school was officially founded in 1567, the year Charles IX authorized the creation of the Academy of Fencing Masters. Fencing

made its grand entrance into the international sporting concert by being included in the program of the first Olympic Games in 1896.

Afternoon

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Jean-Marie Vautrin
- **Lesson:** Organization of the Sports Industry in France
- From the Gauls, via the Romans, through the Middle Ages, and to the Age of Enlightenment, the organization of sport in France has gone through multiple stages. Under British influence, sports federations appeared in France at the end of the 19th century. The law of July 1, 1901, relating to the contract of association, remains the basic way of organization. We will see, in general, how the sports movement is organized around four families of actors:
 1. State
 2. The sports movement
 3. Local and regional authorities
 4. Private companies

We will talk about what the life of a professional athlete in France looks like and what casual athletes do. With the 2024 Games in Paris, the management of sport in France is being redesigned within the framework of shared governance to become more collaborative and more efficient.

Unit 12

Recreation, Sports, & Tourism

Morning:

7 a.m. Departure from the Citadines

- **Instructor:** Jean-Marie Vautrin
- **Lesson:** Sport tourism - Hike in the mountains at St Guilhem le Désert In the heart of the Hérault Gorges, in the Val de Gellone, the medieval village of Saint-Guilhem-le-Désert is in a green setting along the meandering Verdus stream.
- Houses are nestled tightly together in ancient alleyways, with roof tiles baked by the Languedoc sun for twelve centuries. See traces of the past in their arcades, their lintels, their gemmed windows...Built around the Abbey of Gellone, the village has kept its impressive medieval imprint and constitutes a rare, harmonious site in Languedoc.

- This Classified Site is one of the most beautiful villages in France and today its abbey is registered as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in conjunction with the French section of St James' Way to Santiago de Compostela in western Spain.
- This four-hour hike will include meals and snacks that are tailored specifically to this level of physical effort. A registered dietician will present about the different types of food required for this type of effort. They will explain the importance of the management of your dietary intake during endurance effort to maximize your physical performance.

Units 13 & 14

Application & Observation of Applied Interpersonal Coordination in a Team Sport

Morning:

8 a.m. Departure from Citadines Antigone to go to STAPS

9 a.m.–12 p.m. Lecture

- **Instructor:** Ludovic Marin
- **Lesson:** A case study of a typical non-American team sport (handball)
- **Second Exam**

Short lunch break Be sure to pack your lunch for today. There will not be a place to purchase lunch on site.

Afternoon:

- **1–4 p.m.:** Handball practice

Memorial Weekend—Free Weekend

Unit 15

Sports Marketing/Management

Morning:

- **Instructor:** Fabien Charreyre-Calvez
- **Lesson:** How do people practice sports in France?
- Does the "license/membership system" still make sense in our Uberized way of consuming? Using French market figures, we will discuss and analyze the way sports consumption is changing as human behavior does. How do the federations adapt to these new ways of practice ? What about the sports clubs? We will talk about the main sports in France and what they represent for sports brands.

Afternoon:

- Visit the Montpellier Rugby (MHR) Center (TBC)

Unit 16

Sports Marketing/Management

Morning

Program Center

- **Instructor:** Fabien Charreyre-Calvez
- **Lesson:** How to market sports in France
- All the changes discussed the previous day obviously have an impact on the way brands communicate. We will discuss the evolution of brand sponsorship for athletes, clubs and federations. We will analyze the reasons for sponsorship at the global/speculative level and we will talk about the solutions to develop more creative sponsorship at the local level. Something that local sports clubs in France are trying to work on.

Afternoon:

- Visit the Montpellier Handball (MHB) Club (TBC)

Unit 17

Social Psychology Approach to Human Movement

Morning:

8 a.m. Departure from Citadines Antigone to travel to the MUC

8:30 a.m. Coffee and croissants with the representatives of the Montpellier University Club (MUC)

9 a.m.–12 p.m. Presentations

- **Instructor:** Jean-Marie Vautrin
- **Lesson:** Presentation of the Montpellier University Club – Their history and importance in Montpellier
- The MUC includes 29 sports sections, a training department, a health department, and a summer camp/activities department. You will learn about MUC's activities for athletes and their role in the larger Montpellier community.

Afternoon:

- Free time

Final Days

10 a.m. Third exam at Program Center

12 p.m. Farewell BBQ at the Program Center

8:30 p.m. Handball match (optional)

4:30 a.m. Departure from the hotel to go to the airport for flight AF 7469 at 6:05 a.m. to the US

Suggested Activities with the Assistant

Activities will be decided based on the interests of the group. Here are a few possibilities: Beach volleyball or football, rock climbing, karting, tennis, petanque, basketball

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).