

# Sports as Soft Power

## COURSE DETAILS

**Course Designator and Number: SNDY 3043W**

**Number of Credits: 3**

**Language of Instruction: English**

**Contact Hours: 45**

**Instructor: Michael K. Park**

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines sports as soft power (persuasion, influence, and attraction) in the attempt to bridge communities and cultures and on the local, national, and global stages. Case studies demonstrate the attraction and effectiveness of sports as a communication strategy utilized by local, national, and international governments and NGOs as part of a strategic communication plan, as well as its role in spontaneous grassroots movements. Critical to our studies is the appreciation that sport may challenge/reinforce social and cultural values at the local, national, and international levels.

## Learning Outcomes

Specific outcomes include: 1) Demonstrate proficiency in examining sports and global politics critically; 2) Become conversant in the language of sports research and theory; 3) Understand the evolution of sports media in the United States and internationally, and its impact on global culture; 4) Recognize new and recurrent trends in sports and global politics; 5) Become conversant in the language of sports media, and its intersection with politics.

## Course Objectives

This course will introduce students to the interactions between sports and global politics. It will also examine the often-symbiotic relationship between sports and media and how that interrelationship reinforces social, cultural, and political values, but also challenges social and political norms. It addresses the role of globalized sports in international relations and global and domestic politics, and it provides an introduction to central issues, institutions, and conflicts of modern global politics through the lens of globalized sports. Issues include global sport events and celebrity athletes as soft power tools of international diplomacy; global sports and the global public sphere; global sports, race, and gender; sports and institutions of global governance; and sports and the politics of national and cosmopolitan identity. Drawing on theories of cultural studies, public diplomacy, and political communication, we will examine the government and media's role in telling the story and shaping the narrative of sports and, in telling that story, shaping, reinforcing, and sometimes challenging cultural and political values.

## Methodology

Complementing readings and discussions, the course may also include guest lectures from individuals in the sports fields so that students are provided with a firsthand understanding of the challenges faced by those participating and working in the field.

## Required Readings/Materials

- The bulk of the course readings will be on Emerson's Canvas online site and will include scholarly articles, journals, reports of sporting events, editorials on sport, and critical analyses of sports films and television shows. There will also be articles and book chapters on larger social issues that have both impacted and been impacted by sports and the communication complex that creates the story of sport. Thus, students have readings on a variety of sports communication, public diplomacy, and political communication issues, including several published articles authored by the instructor. Therefore, it is important that students read them (and, come on, they are a lot more fun than reading for other courses!). They will give students a much stronger sense of how sports and politics intersect and how this intersection reflects culture, identity, and nationalism, but also how such an intersection can be an agent of change.

## SUNY-Oswego Online Library Resources

- Students are advised to review assignments and readings. If no access to sufficient additional resources exists from their home institution to complete the coursework for this class, students may request access to the online library resources of SUNY-Oswego: [libraryguides.oswego.edu/c.php?g=500670](http://libraryguides.oswego.edu/c.php?g=500670). To access this resource, students must request access during the first week of the program.

# Grading

## Grading Rubric

<b>Letter grade</b>	<b>Score or percentage</b>	<b>Description</b>
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 meet fully 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
One-page " <i>Sports as Soft Power</i> "	10%
Aussie Sports and Soft Power	20%
Olympics as Soft Power	20%
Swans AFL trip & assignment	10%
Participation & attendance	10%
Final paper	30%
Overall grade	100%

### Assessment Details

#### ONE-PAGE SPORTS AS SOFT POWER (10%), Due Unit 2

This is a one-page paper that demonstrates students' ability to express and define, citing relevant examples from the reading, and class, hard and soft power AND how sports is a soft power. Students may choose to focus on one (or several) events/games, teams, or individuals as prime examples of sports as a soft power. Further detailed instructions will be provided in class.

#### FINAL PAPER (30%, Due Final Week of Class)

By the time students draft a final paper, they will have conducted research on a popular Australian sport (e.g., cricket, Australian rules football, rugby, football (soccer), netball, etc.) and presented it to the class. Informed by this presentation, students will extend their research findings to write a final paper to address: What is the history of the sport and what led to its popularity? How does the sport reflect Australian culture, identity, history, and even politics? What are the most prominent controversies surrounding the sport? What are the major differences between Australian sports culture reflected in the sport, versus American sports culture? Finally, how is or can the sport be utilized as a form of soft power?

#### Olympics as a Soft Power Presentation (20%)

- Students will research and present on one of two recent Olympic events (either Summer 2016 in Brazil or Winter 2018 in Korea; *no other Olympic Games*).
- The focus of the presentation must focus on how the 2016 or 2018 Olympic events had a significant impact on culture, politics, and society both domestically and internationally.
  - Some issues to address: how did the nation, through one of more events, features, activities, or individual personalities, use the Olympic mega-event as a form of soft power, to either change or reinforce their image or standing in the world? How did the Olympics affect policies domestically and abroad? What themes did the nation employ and why?
  - Areas to examine: IOC, USOC, mass media, athletes, teams, local and national governments; students may want to focus on the media campaign for the Olympics or certain sporting events, or examine novel partnerships during the games, or how the nation used individual athletes.
- RESEARCH TOPICS DUE: First class meeting of Unit 2. Students must provide a ½-page summary of the Olympics event focus AND include a ONE-page reference page that contains the seven references (two must be academic sources: academic journals, articles, scholarly books).
- Students must write a 1-2 page (single-spaced) research summary and turn in a hard copy to the instructor at the beginning of their presentation (Unit 3).
  - Each research summary must contain a bare minimum of seven cited references (students should easily find far more than this in news reports alone); two must be academic sources. Research summaries must follow APA guidelines for research paper writing. Summaries will be graded on quality of writing, clarity of argument, depth of analysis, and quality of insights. While students will need to perform only limited academic research for this assignment (few journal articles), they must complete a full study of one story. The works cited page should note references to a complete cycle of reports.
  - Students must present this research to the class during a 20-minute, in-class presentation. They must use multimedia (e.g., Prezi, PowerPoint, videos, images, etc.) for the presentation.
  - Grading will be based on the research, content, design, and performance.
  - Students must follow the schedule and deadlines: Failure to follow instructions will cost them half a grade.

### Attendance & Class Participation (10%)

Students' attendance and participation in class discussion is expected and required. Attendance in class cannot be counted as participation. Students will receive participation grades based on the quality and quantity of their participation in class throughout the semester. The instructor will keep track of daily attendance as well as the frequency (or lack thereof) of participation. Mobile phones must be turned off during class. Leaving class to answer a cell phone will be counted as an absence. No eating is allowed in class.

Students must attend every class; if they are unable to attend class due to a health emergency, they must provide documentation as proof that the absence was necessary. Each unexcused absence will result in an automatic 5% deduction from students' final class grade. Also, remember that, when students are absent, they cannot participate in class. So excessive absences will also impact participation grade. Being tardy or leaving class early will

be counted as half an absence. Finally, students must not rely on a friend to sign them in; if students are found to be absent on a day that they are signed in, they will be counted as absent and reported to student conduct.

# COURSE CONTENT

## Unit 1

### Introduction

- Review of course assignments and syllabus.
- Soft power and hard power: an introduction. Why study sports and how is sports a soft power?
- “Getting Smart: Combining Hard and Soft Power” (Nye).
- “General Introduction: Sport—The Game and the Field” (Karen & Washington).

## Unit 2

### Sports Diplomacy

- Sports diplomacy; Sports as soft power in the age of celebrity.
- Sports as a soft power: Mega-events like the Olympics and World Cup as soft power
- Visit to Sydney Opera House or Rocks (tentative).
- “Mapping the relationship between international sport and diplomacy” (Stuart & Pigman).
- “Moving Beyond the Ping-Pong” (Murray, S).
- “Long Shot: The Prospects and Limitations of Sports and Celebrity Athlete Diplomacy” (Park).
- Visit to Parliament House.
- One-page Sports as Soft Power paper DUE.
- “The Contested Terrain of Sport Diplomacy in a Globalized World” (Jackson, S).
- “Sports Mega-Events as Part of a Nation’s Soft Power Strategy: The Cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012)” (Grix & Houlihan).
- Guest speaker (tentative).

## Unit 3

### Olympics as Soft Power Presentations

- Olympics as soft power in-class presentations.
- Olympic legacy visit to Sydney Olympic Park.

## Unit 4

### Politics, Culture, & Identity in Global Sport

- Australian Football League experience; comparative analysis.
- Politics, culture, and identity in global sport.
- AFL Sydney Swans game (comparative analysis).
- Comparative analysis paper DUE.
- “Politics, culture, identity make Les Bleus’ place in France complicated” (Krasnoff, Lindsay), 2016. *Sports Illustrated*. 24 June.
- 2018. “France’s Ghosts Return for the World Cup” (Dubois, Laurent), *The Atlantic*.

## Unit 5

### Politics, Culture, & Identity in Global Sport (cont’d)

- Politics, culture, and identity in global sport.
- Australian sports as soft power presentation.
- “Race, Hegemonic Masculinity, and the Linpossible” (Park).
- “Will Naomi Osaka Pick Japanese Citizenship or American?” (NYT).
- Guest speaker (tentative).
- Aussie sports as soft power in-class presentations.

## Unit 6

### Final Week

- Sports diplomacy strategies.
- Final paper DUE.

## 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.