

Course Syllabus:
Global Soccer, Global Politics
Sean Jacobs, Tony Karon
Thursdays 6.00pm - 7.50pm

Course Description: This course will explore the connections between soccer -- particularly in its most "globalized" form through the World Cup and also the European professional leagues that are watched every week by hundreds of millions of TV viewers (and fans) on every continent -- and global political, economic and cultural power relations. It will explore the game's relationship with issues ranging from political power and resistance, globalization, identity politics, migration, economic and social inequality, and transnational commerce, among others. Case studies include the World Cup as spectacle, migration and African football, identity politics and imagining the "national", the business economics of European football, Spain's La Liga and the English Premiership as global cultural performance, as well as the significance and potentials of soccer in the United States. We will also explore soccer in world film and literature. Class discussions will be complemented by visiting speakers and film screenings, and where possible, field trips.

Assignments	
Book Review	40%
Final Project	40%
Class Participation	20%

Reading List

All readings are available online unless otherwise indicated.

* Thanks to Laurent Dubois, Chris Bolsman, Martha Saavedra and Peter Alegi for sharing their syllabi with us.

Class Schedule

September

1 Introduction

What Are We Seeing When We Watch the World Cup, or a Local Derby?

Football (or soccer, if you prefer) is far more than just a game. As a spectacle beamed around the world to billions of people, it's a representation of many of the historical and contemporary political, economic and cultural power relationships and conflicts that frame our world -- and as such, often a site of fierce if often subtle political struggle. But because it's also a game, a thrilling spectacle whose outcome is never predetermined, the spectacle of televised global football is without peer in its ability to absorb the world's attention. In this section, we'll introduce the themes that we'll explore together over the next three months.

8 Does Football Explain the World? Is It an "Opiate of the Masses", or a Site of Struggle?

"What do they of cricket know who only cricket know?" - CLR James

Theories of sport, media and social conflict, and the history of football.

Readings:

Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, (Excerpts)

Terry Eagleton, "Football: a dear friend to capitalism," *Guardian: Comment is Free*, June 15, 2010. <http://bit.ly/o8iu3K>

Christian Bromberger, "Football as world-view and ritual," *French Cultural Studies*, 6 (1995), pp.293-331.

Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, pp1-33

Elif Batuman, "Life among Istanbul's soccer fanatics," *The New Yorker*, March 7, 2011.

15 Imagining the Nation/Rendering the Nation: Football as Global Media Spectacle

Football often serves as a fetish for war, replaying past conflicts and sometimes even setting off new ones. The international game offers a unique opportunity to unpack the concepts of nationhood and "imagined community". By inviting us to imagine the "nation" in new ways it also offers a unique opportunity the problematic questions of just who and what comprises "the nation" represented on the football field -- and by extension, beyond it.

Readings:

John Nauright, "Global Games: Culture, Political Economy and Sport in the Globalised World of the 21st Century," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol 25, No. 7. 2004. [Online access via Databases of New School Library]

Maximilian Viatori, "Soccer Nationalism: Ecuador and the World Cup," *City & Society*, Volume 20, Issue 2, pages 275–281, December 2008 [Online access via Databases of New School Library]

Frank Lechner, "Imagined Communities in the Global Game: Soccer and the Development of Dutch National Identity," in Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson (eds), *Globalization and Sport*, 107-121.

Loring M. Danforth, 'Is the "World Game" an "Ethnic Game" or an "Aussie Game"?' *Narrating the Nation in Australian Soccer*, *American Ethnologist*, Vol 28, No. 2, 2001 [accessible via Databases of New School Library]

Two short essays by Gary Younge on football and English identity:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/society/2010/06/british-football-england>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2010/jun/28/england-identity-national-football>

22 Barcelona vs. Real Madrid: What's at Stake in 'El Clasico'?

We'll also examine some other highly charged derbies -- Glasgow Celtic vs. Glasgow Rangers; El Ahly vs. Zamalek (in Cairo); Lazio vs. Roma etc. for the political conflicts projected onto them, and performed through the rituals of supporting one or the other side.

One key question that arises in the era of globalization: Does foreign ownership or the dominance of foreign players affect the "local" content of football's identity?

Readings

Elga Castro, 2008, "Loyalties, commodity and fandom: Real Madrid, Barça and Athletic fans versus 'La Furia Roja' during the World Cup," *Sports and Society*, 11 (6) [I'm trying to get a copy from the author]

Henning Eichberg, "The Celtic Family: Football, non-recognition and self-recognition in Scotland."

Joseph Bradley, "Sport and the Contestation of Ethnic Identity: Football and Irishness in Scotland: ," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37 (7), 2006.

John Burns and Ravi Somaiya, "Mail Bombs are Prelude to Soccer Showdown," *New York Times*, April 23, 2011.

David Goldblatt, "The Secret Policeman's Football - Al Ahly v Zamalek," BBC, 2011 (audio)

Adel Iskander, "Geddo and messianic football," *Al Masry Al Youm*, August 5, 2010.

Dave Zirin, "Soccer clubs central to ending Egypt's 'Dictatorship of Fear'" *Sports Illustrated*, January 31, 2011.

Watch Paul McGuigan's film "Faith, Flutes and Football" before class (watch online)

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October

6 "Not a Real French Team": Race, Nation and Identity in French Football

When France won the World Cup in 1998 with a team dominated by players whose origins were either in sub-Saharan Africa or the Maghreb, anti-immigrant National Front leader Jean Marie Le Pen grumbled that they were not a "real French team". Nobody paid him much heed then, but when France's 2010 World Cup campaign in South Africa imploded, the French football authorities seemed to embrace Le Pen's outlook and dedicated themselves to cultivating a team based on "our history and our values", which included setting racial quotas on players at France's elite youth academy.

Readings:

Laurent Dubois, *Soccer and Empire. The World Cup and the Future of France* (Chapters Five, Six and Seven)

John Hoberman, "France's Soccer Debacle Lifts Lid on Racial Tensions," *Foreign Policy* (July 2010)

Paul Silverstein, "The Tragedy and Farce of French Football Politics," *Social Text* (2010).

"Exclusive: French football chiefs' secret plan to whiten 'les Bleus'," *Mediapart*, April 28, 2011

Laurent Dubois, "The Whites-Only French," *Africa is a Country*, April 30, 2011.

The 2010 World Cup saw two brothers who had grown up in the same household playing for opposing national teams: Kevin-Prince Boateng anchored Ghana's midfield, while his brother Derek played in Germany's defense. Their mother was German and their father Ghanaian, giving the brothers the option to choose either country. But they're simply one example of the challenges posed by globalization, and its attendant migrations, to national identity, both on the field and in the stadium, and beyond.

Readings

Andrei Markovits and Lars Rensmann, *Gaming the World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture*. Chapter 1.

Blatter, Sepp (2003) 'Soccer's Greedy Neo-colonialists', *The Financial Times*, December 17, 2003.

Maik Grossekathe, "The Boateng Brothers' World Cup Duel," *Spiegel Online*. April 16, 2010.

Grant Wahl, "They Pledge Allegiance," *Sports Illustrated*, June 13, 2011.

Wahl, "Global Gamers," *Sports Illustrated*, June 13, 2011.

Alexander Provan, "The Work of Sports in the Age of Globalization," *Bidoun*, 24 (2011).

Football in Africa is intimately tied to the history of colonialism and the struggle for liberation, as well as more contemporary issues of national unity and migration. The state of football in Africa also reflects the continuing exploitative power relations between the continent and Europe, which "extracts" most of Africa's football riches for its own professional leagues, and also has a major impact in the global balance of power within the game through the international federation, FIFA.

Readings:

Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game*, Chapter 1 ("The White Man's Burden") and Chapter 5 ("Football Migration to Europe Since the 1930s").

Paul Darby, "Africa, the FIFA Presidency, and the Governance of World Football: 1974, 1998, and 2002," *Africa Today*, Vol 50, No 1, 2003. [Available through New School Library Online Databases]

Ian Hawkey, *Feet of the Chameleon: The Story of African Football*, Chapter 1 ("Big Game Hunting"), Chapter 2 ("The White Witchdoctor")

Achille Mbembe and Laurent Dubois, "Vuvuzelas All Around," *Africa is a Country*, July 11, 2010.

27 Dictating the Game: Football and State Power in Authoritarian Regimes

Exploring the experience of football in relationship to the military dictatorships in Brazil and Argentina in the 1970s, as well as in the authoritarian regimes of the Arab world.

Readings:

Eduardo P. Archetti, "Argentina, 1978: Military Nationalism, Football, Essentialism, and Moral Ambivalence," in Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young (eds), *National Identity and Global Sports Events*.

Wendel Steavanson, "Tunisia," Matt Weiland and Sean Wilsey (editors), *The Thinking Fan's Guide to the World Cup*, 2006.

Houchang E Chalabi, "The Politics of Iran," *Soccer and Society*, 7 (2 & 3), pp. 233-261, 2006. [Available through New School Library Online Databases]

Watch "The Year My Parents Went on Vacation" before class.

November

3 'Football is Freedom' - Bob Marley: Liberation Struggles on the Soccer Field

Investigating the place of football in national liberation struggles in Algeria, South Africa and the Arab Rebellion of 2011

Readings:

Ian Hawkey, 2010, *Feet of the Chameleon: The Story of African Football*, Chapter Five ("Desert Foxes")

Paul Gilroy, "Could You Be Loved? Bob Marley, anti-politics and universal sufferation," *Critical Quarterly*, Volume 47, Issue 1-2, pages 226–245, July 2005

10 Why Isn't the USA a Men's Football Power, at the Same Time as Being a Dominant Force in Women's Soccer?

The U.S. has the economic power, the population base and a strong and continuing influx of immigrants from football-playing countries to make it a powerhouse of the international game. Yet for all of that potential, it remains a middling soccer power whose World Cup exploits typically end in or before the Round of 16. Does American exceptionalism hold back Team USA?

Readings

Andrei Markovits and Steven Hellerman, *Offside! Soccer and American Exceptionalism*, Chapter 1 (pp7-51) and Chapter 7 (pp235-265)

Andrei Markovits and Steven Hellerman, "Women's Soccer in the United States: Yet Another American Exceptionalism?" in Fan Hong and JA Mangan (eds) *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking off a New Era*

Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, (Chapter 10, "How Soccer Explains the American Culture Wars") 235-248.

Kuper, Simon & Szymanski, Stefan *Soccernomics*, Chapter 8 ("Football vs Football", Excerpts)

Andrew Ross, "The Ballad of Becks and Posh," *American Quarterly* 59, 4 (2007). [Via Proquest Database]

Excerpts from "One Goal USA"

Grant Wahl, "How Beckham Blew It," *Sports Illustrated*. July 6, 2009

17 Football as Transnational Corporate Enterprise: Following the Money

Fans lamenting the loss of some star player in their local team to a wealthier club in another country lament the "commercialization" of the game. But how does football rate as a sphere of corporate investment: Where's the money to be made? An investigation of the media-based economy at the heart of the global game.

Readings:

Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski, *Soccernomics*, Chapter 4 ("The Worst Business in the World: Why Soccer Clubs Don't and Shouldn't Make Money") 75-96.

Readings TBA.

Videos:

Adidas Promo: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Zd_khk6zXo

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December

1 FIFA: Bastion of Corruption, or a Last Defense Against Corporate Power?

The international federation that runs global football and stages the World Cup is notoriously corrupt and anything but democratic or transparent. Yet, curiously enough, when under fire from federations in the Anglo-American world, FIFA President Sepp Blatter was fiercely defended by federations in Africa and the rest of the developing world. And the primary challenge to its authority in Europe comes from the "G-14", an alliance of privately owned (and therefore corporate) European clubs looking to protect their commercial interests in the game.

Readings:

J Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, "Global Power Struggles in Football: FIFA and UEFA, 1954-1974 and Their Legacy," *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol 14, No. 2, 1997.

Alan Tomlinson, "FIFA and the World Cup: The Expanding Football," in J Sugden and Alan Tomlinson (eds) *Hosts and Champions*, 1994.

Peter Alegi, " 'A Nation to be reckoned with': The Politics of World Cup Stadium Construction in Cape Town and Durban, South Africa" *African Studies* Volume 67, Number 3 (2008), pp. 397-422 [Online access via Databases of New School Library]

David Goldblatt, "FIFA, Football, Power and Politics, BBC, 2011

8 Football, Film and Popular Culture

Investigating the representation of the game in cinema and literature. For a game as popular as football, there are remarkably few great soccer movies (compared, say, with boxing) -- and most of those are indies rather than mainstream commercial cinema. What is it about the game that defies Hollywood kitsch?

Guest from Kicking and Screening Film Festival: <http://www.kickingandscreening.com/blog/>

Readings TBA.

View: "Escape to Victory" and "Goal" before class.

15 Final Class and Presentations

Recommended Websites:

When Saturday Comes: <http://www.wsc.co.uk/>

Football Scholars Forum: <http://scholars.footy-forum.net/>

The Turbulent World of Middle East Soccer: <http://mideastsoccer.blogspot.com/>

BBC Series on World Soccer: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p002vsyx/episodes/player>

From a Left Wing: <http://fromleftwing.blogspot.com/>

Guardian's Football Weekly Podcast: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/football/series/footballweekly>

The Global Game: <http://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/>

Football is Coming Home: <http://www.footballiscominghome.info/>

Soccer Politics: <http://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/>