

JSIS 110: Sports and Global Affairs

Course description

Although soccer (or *football*) originated as a game to discipline British young boys in elite schools during the mid-19th century, it has become a massive sport practiced, consumed, and commented all around the globe. With the expansion of the British empire during the second half of that century, the popularity of the game grew rapidly in continental Europe first, and then, slowly but steadily, Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. In the last couple of decades and with the huge investment from television rights, oligarchs from Russia, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, and multinational corporations in the English Premier League, soccer is now a hot commodity all over the Asian continent, a fascinating development considering that China has only participated in the men's World Cup once (2002), while both Thailand and India have never had that privilege. In the U.S., despite rallying behind "American" sports like football, basketball, and baseball, soccer aims to become the most popular sport in this part of the continent, and perhaps the U.S.-Canada-Mexico men's World Cup in 2026 will cement the place of the sport among the American audiences.

Soccer is more than a frivolous game in which twenty-two players kick a ball for 90 minutes. Despite the disdain many intellectuals have shown towards this sport, its rich history is intrinsically connected with several socioeconomic, political, and historical issues at local, national, and global levels. In addition to exploring soccer's history and main event (the men's and women's World Cup), this course will examine the link between football and international affairs, including wars, dictatorships, racism, and women and LGBTQIA communities' discrimination.

Objectives

At the end of this quarter, students should be able to

- Explain the history of soccer, including its origins and its major event (men's and women's World Cup)
- Analyze current global socioeconomic, political, historic issues related to soccer by using terms related to International Relations as a field
- Examine the place of soccer in the contemporary American society, as the 2026 US-Canada-Mexico World Cup approaches
- Create a group podcast about soccer and its connection to local/regional/global communities

Conduct, Accommodation, Inclusion and Acknowledgement

This class is conducted in-person. Students are expected to participate in class to fully benefit from course activities and meet the course's learning objectives. Students should only register for this class if they are able to attend in-person. To protect their fellow students, faculty, and staff, students who feel ill or exhibit possible COVID symptoms should not come to class. When absent, it is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor in advance (or as close to the class period as possible in the case of an unexpected absence), and to request appropriate make-up work as per policies established in the syllabus. What make-up work is possible, or how assignments or course grading might be modified to accommodate missed work, is the

prerogative of the instructor. For chronic absences, the instructor may negotiate an incomplete grade after the 8th week, or recommend the student contact their academic adviser to consider a hardship withdrawal (known as a Registrar Drop).

This class will require students to actively discuss sensitive topics and work together on group assignments. As such, we have a shared responsibility to make this class is an inclusive and respectful space where everyone feels that they are welcome and can participate, regardless of gender, religion, disability, race and ethnicity, sexuality, national origin, migratory status, political beliefs, or other identities or experiences. My hope is that this class challenges each of us, including me as your professor, to be better global and local citizens through the acquisition of knowledge and the appreciation of difference. It is also important that we acknowledge that we are on Coast Salish territory, the traditional homelands of the Duwamish, Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations and other Natives peoples. The Jackson School understands that the international community includes sovereign American Indian tribes, Indigenous nations, and peoples across the world.

There are also a number of specific accommodations that you have a right to and I have a duty to promote and protect. The first are accommodations for students with disabilities. Disability Accommodations are rights under the Americans with Disabilities Acts and other disability nondiscrimination protections. Accommodations are tools that grant students with disabilities access to educational opportunities. The Disability Resources for Students Office works with students and faculty to ensure reasonable accommodations are provided in the classroom and other student experiences to ensure full and equal access to the university. Please register with DRS to ensure that I am aware of your accommodations and fully provide them at:

<http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/current-students/accommodations/>.

Secondly, Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/) (<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>).

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/)

(<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).

Grading and Assignments

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| - Participation 1 (Weeks 1-5) and 2 (Weeks 6-11) | 10% (5% each) |
| - 1 Group Mid-term Exam (in class, October 24 th) | 15% |
| - 1 Group Final Exam (in class, December 5 th) | 10% |
| - 60-second individual recorded report (October 17 th) | 5% |
| - Two-minute film review (recorded in pairs; Nov. 20 th) | 10% |
| - Group Podcast project | 50% |
| a. 1 work-in-progress report; November 5 th (5%) | |
| b. 7-minute group podcast; December 9 th (35%) | |
| c. a 250-word personal reflection; December 11 th (10%) | |

60-second individual report: Due on October 17th by 11:59 pm.

Choose one of the following options and follow the prompt individually. Your response should be recorded in a 90-second voice file. Upload it to Canvas.

- a. Select one of pre-modern versions of soccer or its modern “relatives” we saw in class (cuju, kemari, tlachtli, calcio storico, and rugby; “American” football is not included). Do more research about it, and explain to your audience extra details and fun facts about this pre-modern version that were barely or not explored in class. Make sure to mention your source(s) briefly.
- b. Select a player from your country who represents the connection between soccer and any topic related to global affairs that we will see in this course between Week 3 and 5 (wars and conflicts; dictatorships, human rights, social movements; women’s and LGBTQIA communities). Tell us about this player’s life and how it embodies the topic you selected. Make sure to mention your source(s) briefly.
- c. Volunteer for at least one hour at any of these local institutions, and tell your audience what this institution is, what their mission is, and what you learned about them while volunteering.
 - Street Soccer Seattle (<https://www.streetsoccerseattle.org/>)
 - Soccer Without Borders – Seattle (<https://www.soccerwithoutborders.org/blog/categories/seattle>)
 - America Scores Seattle (<https://www.americascorresseattle.org/>)
 - Any local boys&girls or youth club (but double-check with me first)

Two-minute film review (recorded in pairs): Due on November 20th by 11:59 pm.

- In pairs, record a 2-minute conversation in which you discuss:
 - What was the documentary about?
 - What was the part that each of you enjoyed the most?
 - What part did each of you find surprising?
 - Would you recommend the documentary to other soccer fans? Why?
- Don’t forget to introduce yourselves and mention what podcast group you are in.
- For questions 2 and 3, include at least 1 brief excerpt from the documentary per question in the conversation and make sure you discuss it.

Mid-Term (October 24th) and Final Exam (December 5th)

- Groups of 3. Bring your computer to class.
- You will have 50 minutes in class to respond some required questions, and some elective questions related to the contents of the course seen in class.
- You can use notes and readings.
- You will have to quote texts assigned.

Group podcast

1. Work in progress report
 - a. Due on November 5th by 11:59 pm.

- b. Topic and type of podcast
 - c. Music soundtrack
 - d. List of sources: For the podcast, you need to use at least
 - i. 1 academic article/book chapter
 - ii. 2 news articles from reputable sources
 - e. Explain briefly how each source contributes to your podcast (50 words each item)
 - f. Timeline
2. Podcast
- a. Due on December 9th by 11:59 pm.
 - b. Final version of 7-minute podcast
 - c. Add a transcript (10% of this grade)
3. Individual report
- a. Due on December 11th 11:59 pm.
 - b. In 250 words explain
 - i. Your contribution to the group
 - ii. What did you enjoy the most?
 - iii. Explain at least 1 challenge you faced
 - iv. What was the most interesting fact you learn while making the podcast?

Potential topics for podcasts: Soccer and _____

- Health protocols (concussion)
- Mental health
- Technology (use of AI for predictions, use of xG/xA, VAR)
- Immigration
- Social movements
- Non-profits
- Corporations
- Greatest rivalries (local, regional, international, global)
- Your national team(s)
- Gender (in)equality
- The Women's World Cup (past or upcoming)
- The Men's World Cup (past or upcoming)

READINGS

Assignments

Week 1: Introduction to course, Soccer vs. Football

1.1. Sept 26th

Students receive "World's Fastest Podcast Introduction" activity. Submit activity by Wednesday, October 2nd

Week 2: Modern "relatives" and soccer's current state

2.1. Oct 1st

Goldblatt, David. *The Ball is Round*. "Foreword to the American Edition" pp. ix-xii

Lisi, Clemente. *A History of the World Cup*. "The World Cup is Born", pp. 1-8

"World's Fastest Podcast Introduction" activity. Submit activity by Wednesday, October 2nd

2.2. Oct 3rd

Goldblatt, David. *The Ball is Round*. "Introduction". pp. xiii-xviii

Presentation by Podcast workshop (UW Libraries)

Week 3: Wars and Conflicts

3.1. Oct 8th

Kapuscinski, Ryszard. *The Soccer War*. "The Soccer War" (excerpts). pp. 157-170, 175-184

Presentation by UW Libraries

3.2. Oct 10th

Kuper, Simon. "Soccer in the trenches: Remembering the WWI Christmas Truce".

<https://www.espn.com/soccer/blog/espn-fc-united/68/post/2191045/christmas-truce-soccer-matches-during-world-war-one>

The Soccer Analytics Podcast. Football and the War in Ukraine

(<https://www.buzzsprout.com/819853/10161098>)

Week 4: Dictatorships, Human Rights, Social Movements

4.1. Oct 15th

Farred, Grant. *Long Distance Love. A Passion for Football*. "Los Desaparecidos y la Copa Mundial" (excerpt) pp. 60-72

4.2. Oct 17th

Horowitz, Jason and Chaundler, Rachel. "A Forced Kiss, and a Reckoning With Sexism in Spain"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/28/world/europe/spain-kiss-sexism-rubiales.html>

Burn It Down Podcast. Episode 162: Black Lives Matter

(<https://www.burnitalldownpod.com/episodes/162>) (excerpt) Start at 8:08 "Jessica, can you get us started, please?" until 39:26 "Absolutely, thank you for having me"

60-second individual report due

Week 5: Women's Soccer and LGBTQIA+ communities

5.1. Oct 22nd

Williams, Jean. *A Beautiful Game*. "To Play or Not to Play". pp. 177-188

5.2. Oct 24th

Stuver, Brad. "Opinion: I'm a pro soccer player. Banning transgender kids from sports sends worst message". <https://www.statesman.com/story/opinion/columns/your-voice/2021/08/26/banning-transgender-kids-sports-sends-worst-message/5588758001/>

Burn It Down Podcast: Interview: Brad Stuver, Austin FC Goalkeeper and Trans Youth Advocate (<https://www.burnitalldownpod.com/episodes/interview-brad-stuver-austin-fc-goalkeeper-and-trans-youth-advocate>)

Group mid-term exam (2nd hour in class)

Week 6: Premier League / Barcelona vs. Real Madrid

6.1. Oct 29th

Robinson, Joshua & Clegg, Jonathan. *The Club. How the English Premier League Became the Wildest, Richest, Most Disruptive Force in Sports*. "Author's Note" & "Epilogue". pp. ix-xiv, 307-317

6.2. Oct 31st

Soccer 101. Episode #31. *Why is El Clásico so important?*

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/1X54BBWBqa2HGI15MLluA6?autoplay=true>

Week 6: Soccer in Latin America

7.1. Nov 5th

Nadel, Joshua. *Fútbol! Why Soccer Matters in Latin America*. "Introduction: Soccer Narratives" pp. 1-16

Turn in group report

7.2. Nov 7th

Elsy, Brenda & Nadel, Joshua. *Futbolera. A History of Women and Sports in Latin America*. "Introduction". pp. 1-16

Weeks 8-9: The World Cup

Watch this documentary, and record a film review in pairs by Wednesday November 20th

Soccer 99ers. https://youtu.be/1EK0u-qmncj?si=tNr_bqFupDDEEHv5

8.1. Nov 12th

Lisi, Clemente. *A History of the World Cup*. "The First Steps", (excerpts) pp. 9-11, 18-19, 20-23, 30-31

8.2. Nov 14th

Wilkinson, Alissa. "'Copa 71' and the Hidden History of Women's Soccer"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/21/movies/copa-71-womens-world-cup.html>

Anzidei, Melanie. "'Copa 71' aims to shine light on women's soccer tournament nearly erased from history"

<https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/5557349/2024/06/20/copa-71-womens-soccer-tournament-history/>

9.1. Nov 19th

Alegi, Peter. *African Landscapes. How a Continent Changed the World's Game.*

"Epilogue. South Africa 2010". pp. 127-132

Goldblatt, David. *The Age of Football.* "Conclusion. The Global Potemkin Village: World Cup 2018". pp. 457-465

Submit film review (in pairs) by Wednesday November 20th

9.2. Nov 21st

World Corrupt Podcast. *Episode 4: The Dark Side of the 2022 World Cup.*

<https://crooked.com/podcast/world-corrupt-episode-4-the-dark-side-of-the-2022-world-cup/>

Week 10: The 2026 Men's World Cup – Seattle FWC26

10.1. Nov 26th

Kuper, Simon & Szymanski, Stefan. *Soccernomics.* "Why Hosting a World Cup Is Good for You?" (excerpts) pp. 273-274, 288-295

Breaking Travel News. "Seattle celebrates hosting FIFA World Cup 2026"

(<https://www.breakingtravelnews.com/focus/article/visit-seattle-and-seattle-sports-commission-celebrate-hosting-fifa-world-cu/>)

Week 11: Soccer in Saudi Arabia. Conclusions, and Final Exam

11.1. Dec 3rd

Total Soccer Podcast. The Big Thing: What Ronaldo's move to Al-Nassr tells us about the future of soccer in Saudi Arabia.

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/4RegDi8Rgnj70VyxTneuXn>

11.2. Dec 5th

Group final exam (1st hour in class)

Podcast feedback (2nd hour in groups)