

Britain and the Global Game ***HIST 34949—Spring 2024***

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30pm-1:30pm and by appointment

Course Description: There is no other cultural practice more global than soccer. From its origins today, the hold “the global game” has on billions of people is profound. Through everyday involvement in soccer, people define who they are as well as who they think others are. As “The Home of Football,” Britain’s relationship to the game is fundamental to its relationship with the rest of the world, and a thorough understanding of soccer history will serve students well while studying abroad in London.

The course begins with the codification of its rules by elites in the Victorian Era and comes of age during the Second Industrial Revolution as the game moved down the socio-economic scale, “from the classes to the masses.” During the early 20th century, soccer also became a tool of “soft power” as it traveled to nearly every corner of the British Empire, and it factored into the formation of national identities during two world wars. With the game at its postwar peak, it then suffered a dramatic decline, culminating with its violent nadir in Thatcherite England. Finally, the course will look at the coming of the English Premier League, an era that has set the stage for perhaps “Britain’s most durable export.”

Utilizing a range of source material as well as engaging field trips, the aim of this course is to explore how and why sport history intersects with power relationships, economic interests, and social identities such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, community, and nationhood. The main objectives of the course are to acquire historical knowledge about British soccer’s significance and to understand the multiple and complex ways in which “history” is produced, represented, disseminated, and received.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this course, students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the history of soccer in Britain from its origins in the 1860s to the coming of the English Premier League in the 1990s, and be able to articulate continuities and changes over time (Temporal). This understanding will allow them to interpret Britain’s national sport as well as the many meanings that human beings have attributed to it (Contextual). By interrogating primary and secondary source materials, students will learn how historical arguments are constructed and put “in conversation with one another.” They will be able to analyze and synthesize information through social, cultural, political, gender, racial, ethnic, and national lenses (Analytical and Respectful). Through discussion, presentations, and written assignments learners will practice public speaking and hone writing skills as they assess information and speak/write about it historically (Literate). By virtue of appreciating soccer from British and global perspectives, students will gain insight into the breadth and depth of a sporting phenomenon (Respectful).

Required Reading: Richard Sanders, *Beastly Fury: The Strange Birth of British Football* (Bantam Books, 2009), Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch: A Fan’s Life* (Gollancz, 1992), and David Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives: The English Premier League and the Making of Modern Britain*. Other readings, usually academic articles or book chapters, will be available as PDFs on Canvas.

Assessment:

1) Participation (20%): This grade will be assessed by performance in discussions, in-class activities, and a “Create” Assignment, which is a short “field report” of a soccer activity or encounter outside the classroom. *“Create” Deadline: before mid-term break.*

2) Examination (20%): This in-class one-hour examination includes a combination of identification of key terms/ideas, primary document assessments, and essays. *Exam date: March 5, 2024.*

3) Book Review (20%): *Soccer & Society*, the premier academic soccer journal, needs a review for its latest volume. 1) review Richard Sanders, *Beastly Fury: The Strange Birth of British Football*, 2) Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch: A Fan’s Life*, **or** David Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives: The English Premier League and the Making of Modern Britain*. Your review must begin by describing the book’s core argument(s) and the different types of sources used. It must then discuss at least two strengths and two weaknesses and conclude with a brief statement about the work’s main contribution to the history of soccer. Responses must be between 600-750 words. Grades are based on clarity of writing, strength of argument, and the quality of specific examples drawn from the assigned materials.

Deadline: on or before April 9, 2024.

4) Research Essay (40%): Essay of no more than 3,000 words that focuses on a theme or issue from the course. Consult possible essay topics below, but students can also design their own. We will talk about the nature of the assignment during the course of the semester. *Deadline: May 3, 2024.*

–Discuss the elite origins of soccer and how the game then moved down the socio-economic scale, from “the classes to the masses.”

–During the 1880s, issues of amateurism and professionalism almost tore British soccer apart. Discuss this cultural war and how it impacted the game.

–England still calls itself “The Home of Football.” Contest this claim by writing a revisionist history that assesses the impact of Scotland on the global game.

–Scholars have called soccer “England’s most durable export.” Discuss the process of cultural diffusion of what would become the world’s most popular game. And, in doing so, provide case studies.

–Throughout the world “powerful collective identities” informed the founding of various soccer clubs. Compare and contrast two intense intra-city rivalries (think Manchester, London, Glasgow AND Buenos Aires or Rio) and the main issues influencing the formation of these identities.

–The struggle for Africa’s place in world soccer has been intensely political. In fact, as imperialism crumbled after the “scramble for Africa” during the 20th century, soccer became essential to nation building. Discuss how soccer and politics have gone hand-in-hand on the African continent.

–German Marxist Karl Kautsky believed soccer was “an opiate of the masses,” and essayist Eduardo Galeano has written, “The spread of soccer throughout the world was an imperialist trick to keep oppressed peoples in an eternal childhood, unable to grow up.” Defend or refute these claims.

–Dutch national team coach Rinus Michels, nicknamed “The General,” once famously said, “Soccer is war.” Eduardo Galeano says international soccer is “a flag that rolls.” Defend or refute these statements, but do so by comparing and contrasting the role of soccer during wartime and peacetime.

–“The Match of Death” in Kiev in 1942 has been misunderstood, but historians have tried to set the record straight. Discuss the role of mythmaking and revision of the historical record in wartime Ukraine.

–The history of soccer is a lens through which to look at society and its various power relations. Race, class, and gender can explain these relationships. Use two of these categories to discuss the nature of power within the context of British soccer.

–British soccer was at a high point during the 1960s, but it experienced a spectacular decline by the 1980s. Discuss the social, political, and economic factors that led to the demise of the game in Britain.

–The English Premier League is the most-watched professional league on the planet as billions watch each weekend. Discuss the rise of the league (why and how) and then assess whether it has been good for the game in Britain and elsewhere around the world.

Classroom Policies: Standard London Undergraduate Program attendance policies apply. Students are expected to be present at every class. In case of illness, please contact Undergraduate Program Office as soon as possible. Unexcused absences will result in academic penalties from a deduction in your class participation grade, to a partial letter grade drop in your final grade for the class (e.g., an A would become an A-, an A- would become a B+).

Policy on Academic Integrity: The Notre Dame Academic Code of Honor Pledge is observed in this course: “As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.” <http://nd.edu/~hnr/code/docs/handbook.htm>

Support for Student Mental Health at London Global Gateway: Students can receive mental health support through the weekly on-site counseling services and through local providers covered by GeoBlue insurance. Details can be found on the Student Portal and in the Conway Hall handbook. The University’s on-campus Care and Wellness Consultants provide support and resources to all students who are experiencing stressful or difficult situations that may be interfering with academic progress, including while abroad. Visit care.nd.edu.

Course Topics and Reading Assignments:

Jan. 16 Fever Pitch: The English Premier League as Global Phenomenon

David Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives*, Introduction and chapter 1.

Activity: Identity and Supporting a Football Club

Jan. 23 The Strange Birth of British Soccer

Richard Sanders, *Beastly Fury: the Strange Birth of British Football*, chapters 1-3.

Activity: “Let’s Play the ‘Simplest Game’” — Deciphering the Code Wars.

Jan. 30 Gentlemen Amateurs and Working-Class Professionals in Victorian England

Sanders, *Beastly Fury*, chapters 5-9.

Activity: Watch *The English Game* and analyze amateur vs. professional debate.

Feb. 6 Soccer Tribes and Scottish Professors: Making Modern Football in Glasgow

Sanders, *Beastly Fury*, chapter 4; Charles Edwardes, “The Football Mania,” *The Nineteenth Century* (October 1892), 622-631.

Activity: Explore revisionist history via the Scotch Professors’ contributions to modern football.

Feb. 13 Britain’s Most Durable Export? Case Studies in Global Diffusion

John Foot, *Calcio*, 1-17; Phil Ball, *Morbo: The Story of Spanish Football*, 43-70; Thomas McCabe, “New Jersey Soccerscape: An Early Cradle of American Soccer,” in *Soccer Frontiers*, 91-106; Peter Alegi, *African Soccerscapes: How a Continent Changed the World’s Game*, 1-17; Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, 28-34.

Activity: My research has focused on the game to the United States. Exploration of an uncooperative historical record to recover a “lost” soccer history. Guest appearance: Dr. Peter Alegi (Michigan State).

Feb. 20 Soccer Goes to War, 1914-1945

Sanders, *Beastly Fury*, chapter 10 and 13; James Riordan, “The Match of Death: Kiev, August 1942,” in *Soccer and Society*, 87-93; Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, 38-40.

Activity: Class visit to the Imperial War Museum and a critical examination of women’s soccer during the First World War as well as the Christmas Truce of 1914 and the Match of Death of 1942.

Feb. 27 Engineering Archie: Edwardian Neighborhood and Stadium Design

Simon Inglis, *Engineering Archie: Archibald Leitch, Football Ground Designer*, 10-33, 70-79.

Activity: Stadium tour of Craven Cottage, Fulham Football Club

Deadline Reminder: “Create” Assignment due before break.

March 5 The Three Kings: the Making of a Postwar British Football Culture

Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives*, chapter 2.

*** *THE KNOWLEDGE*, aka in-class Examination. ***

MID-TERM BREAK

Mar. 19 England 1966, Mexico 1970 and COPA '71: the World Cup Goes Global

Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch: A Fan's Life*, Part I, 1968-1975.

Activity: Examination of sport and nationhood that interrogates the adage: "Tell me how you play and I will tell you who you are as a people."

Mar. 26 Fan Violence and Stadium Disasters in Thatcherite Britain, 1979-1990

Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives*, chapter 3; Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, Part 2, 1976-1986.

Activity: The Hooliganism Debate and the Taylor Report, using the interim and final reports, period newspaper coverage, and Parliamentary debates to assess a sporting initiative for historical justice.

Apr. 2 Memoir at Fever Pitch: Walking Tour of a North London Neighborhood

Nick Hornby, *Fever Pitch*, Part 3, 1986-1992.

Activity: Walking tour of Highbury & Islington

Apr. 9 The English Premier League and Modern Britain

Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives*, chapters 3, 5 and 6.

Activity: Critical evaluation of *Fever Pitch: The Rise of the Premier League* (2021)

Apr. 16 Race, Ethnicity and Gender in Modern British Soccer

Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives*, chapters 4 and 7.

Activity: Critical evaluation of narratives of under-represented groups in soccer.

Apr. 23 Three Kings to a Fifth Beatle, Golden Balls to Lioness Lucy Bronze

Finish Goldblatt, *The Game of Our Lives*.

Activity: Writing Workshop.

Final Papers Due, May 3rd!