

SPAN 4334 – The Culture of *Fútbol*

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Office hours: Thursdays, 2:00PM-4:00PM

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Catalog Description:

Watched and played by millions, soccer represents one of the most significant cultural institutions in Spain and Latin America. Its regional popularity has resulted in numerous visual and literary texts dedicated to the topic, and in recent years, the emergence of a cultural subgenre. This course examines questions of nationality, race, gender, identity, politics, religion, and violence as they relate to soccer and society. Students will not only examine how the sport often embeds associated ideologies, but also how these are popularly disseminated through soccer-themed cultural texts. The course will not count toward the Spanish major or minor if a student takes it pass/fail or earns a grade of C- or lower.

Pre-requisites:

SPAN 3404 or 3414 or 3444 or 3464 or 3474 or 3484

Resources:

Alabarces, Pablo. [*Historia mínima del fútbol en América Latina*](#). México: El Colegio de México, 2018.

Ridge, Patrick. "[Football \(Soccer\) in Latin America](#)." *Oxford Bibliographies: Latin American Studies*. 12 Jan. 2022. (Full version also accessible on Canvas)

Sebreli, Juan José. [*La era de fútbol*](#). Buenos Aires: Debolsillo, 2005.

[Football \(Soccer\) – English-Spanish dictionary](#)

Objectives:

- Learn about soccer's history and sociocultural impact in Spain and Latin America
- Explore themes such as nationalism, race, gender, identity, politics, religion, and violence and their relation to soccer
- Interpret the significance of soccer-themed cultural production
- Develop skills for the digital dissemination of knowledge
- Develop strategies for carrying out a concise literary or cultural analysis
- Develop presentation skills for professional and conference settings

Grading Scale

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|------------------|----------|----------|
| • A 94-100 | A- 90-93 | |
| • B+ 88-89 | B 84-87 | B- 80-83 |
| • C+ 78-79 | C 74-77 | C- 70-73 |
| • D+ 68-69 | D 64-67 | D- 60-63 |
| • F 59 and below | | |

Participation (5%)

Active and thoughtful participation is required of every student, every day. Readings and homework assignments must be completed before class as discussions will build on what is done at home. If class meets online, students must keep their cameras on and remain in frame. All cell phones must be on silent. Failure to follow these guidelines will negatively affect the student's participation grade.

Quizzes (10%)

Quizzes are multiple-choice or short answer and designed to provide a quick evaluation of class preparation and comprehension of assigned material. Questions are based on assigned texts and questions included in the associated reading guides (accessible through Canvas). Students must take these online quizzes (Canvas) before class using LockDown Browser.

Presentation (20%)

From the course schedule below, students will select one of the assigned cultural texts and prepare an oral presentation (undergrad, 7-8 minutes; graduate, 14-15 minutes). Regarding content, students should carry out a brief cultural analysis of text. This includes commentary on cultural/historical context, themes, genre, language or cinematography, and a personal interpretation. After the presentation has concluded, time will be provided for students to ask questions. There will be no make-ups on oral presentations unless the professor is notified beforehand. Students must prepare some form of visual aid (PowerPoint, Prezi, images, etc.) that will accompany presentation, and they should not read from slides as this will affect their final grade. Presentations must be emailed to the professor by 9:00PM the evening before the presentation. After reviewing the list of texts located on the course schedule below, students should email professor with first and second preferences. Grading criteria: content, pronunciation, grammar, visuals, rapport with audience.

Film Entry – Website (5%)

Students will contribute to the website's annotated bibliography on soccer-themed films from Latin America or Spain. After choosing one of these—a short list can be found [here](#)—they should watch film and create an entry for their selection. This should include movie poster and/or trailer/clip, bibliographic information ([MLA, 9th edition](#)), and a short synopsis (4-5 sentences) that mentions relevant themes, genre, and cultural context. It should not be a film watched in class. Students should confirm their selection with the professor before completing assignment. Students should cite entry using the [MLA guidelines](#) (see “Films or Movies” sub-section). Entries should be alphabetized by the title of film. Grading criteria: content, grammar, images/videos, MLA format.

Literature Entry – Website (5%)

Similar to the film entry, students will contribute to the websites's annotated bibliography on soccer-themed literary texts (short story, poetry, novel, chronicles, etc.) from Latin America or Spain. For ideas, students can review the anthologies included in “[Football \(Soccer\) in Latin America](#).” Students are unable to repeat one of the entries found in the

mentioned bibliography, but can use a text included in a cited anthology (ex. a short story included in *Las dueñas de la pelota*). It also should not be a text assigned in class. Students should confirm their selection with the professor before completing assignment. Entry (4-5 sentences) should include bibliographic information ([MLA, 9th edition](#)), cover photo of selected text, relevant themes, cultural context, and narrative or poetic elements. Students should cite entry using the [MLA guidelines](#). Different from the film entry, these entries should be alphabetized by the last name of the author. Grading criteria: content, grammar, photo, MLA format.

Critical Game Recap – Website (15%)

During the semester, students are required to watch one 90-minute game. One of the teams (international or club) must represent a nation from Spain or Latin America (ex. Real Madrid, Chivas, México, River Plate, Bolivia, etc.). Students must watch a broadcast conducted in Spanish (ex. Univision, Fox Deportes, beIN Sports en Español, etc.). More information about fixtures (match schedules) can be found at these links, among others: [Liga MX Femenil](#), [UEFA Champions League](#), [AFA](#), [ESPN fixtures](#). Students should take notes during the game and later create a post (250-500 words) on homepage of class website. Heading should include the names of each team and date of match. It should relate to topics discussed in class and include screenshot or image from match. See below for more ideas on critical commentary:

- Partido: goles, jugadas, táctica, alineaciones, jugadores
- Temas: nacionalismo, comercialismo, masculinidad, elementos queer, feminismo
- Narrativa: protagonistas, narración, conflicto, drama
- Producción: cinematografía, edición, efectos especiales, gráficos

Grading criteria: content, image, grammar, heading.

Social Media Critique – Website (10%)

On website homepage, students will create two posts during the semester related to the use of social media and soccer. The entry (post) should first include a repost from X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, Reddit, Youtube, etc. (must be between course dates and written in Spanish). This should relate to a topic discussed in class (ex. nationality, race, gender, identity, politics, religion, violence, etc.). Below this repost, students will write a critical reflection (150-200 words) on how their repost embeds and/or challenges the dominant ideologies typically associated with soccer (ex. masculinist nationalism, commercialism, neoliberalism, etc.). For ideas, students are encouraged to use social media throughout the semester to keep up with league or international play and relevant issues related to soccer in Spain and Latin America. Following accounts or the use of hashtags (ex. #futbolfemenino, #ligamx, #eltri, #halamadrid) provide helpful strategies. Additionally, students must post at least two comments to other classmates' posts. These should create a meaningful dialogue with posted content. Grading criteria: repost, content, grammar, comments.

Final Paper (30%)

Student will prepare a textual analysis (undergraduate, 4-5 pages excluding works cited; graduate, 9-10 pages excluding works cited) of one soccer-themed literary or cultural text (short story, novel, poem, film, documentary, photography, etc.). *It cannot be a text

analyzed in class. This essay must include a clear theoretical framework as well as a thorough interpretive analysis of the text in question. Student must confirm topic with professor. It is recommended that you choose a topic and text that is of personal interest. Consult with the professor for ideas or suggestions. All essays must follow the guidelines set forth by the Modern Language Association (MLA). These can be found online at [MLA Guidelines, 9th edition](#). Students will turn in a rough draft on the assigned due date. They will receive feedback and a preliminary grade. Students will then address feedback in final drafts to be turned in on the indicated date. Essays must include the following:

- Brief introduction (text to be analyzed, presentation of author / artist, thesis statement)
- Analysis (format, language, themes, genre, historical context, literary / cultural movement, personal interpretation)
- Works cited (students must consult and cite at least two scholarly sources, as well as the work analyzed). Tools for locating scholarly sources:
 - [Virginia Tech Libraries](#)
 - [MLA International Bibliography](#)
 - [Project Muse](#)
 - [Jstor](#)
 - [Google Scholar](#)

Grading criteria: content, introduction and thesis, grammar, organization and transitions, MLA format, scholarly sources

Attendance Policy

Students are allowed two unexcused absences. These are intended to be used for short-term illness such as the flu, funerals, job interviews, oversleeping, etc. After two absences, each unexcused absence will lower the final grade by one percentage point. The professor will decide on a case-by-case basis whether to excuse absences for highly extenuating circumstances (such as long-term, medically documented illness).

Honor Code

The Undergraduate Honor Code pledge that each member of the university community agrees to abide by states: “As a Hokie, I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

Students enrolled in this course are responsible for abiding by the Honor Code. A student who has doubts about how the Honor Code applies to any assignment is responsible for obtaining specific guidance from the course instructor before submitting the assignment for evaluation. Students are strongly discouraged from misusing sites such as Chegg and CourseHero, as well as misusing ChatGPT and other Generative Artificial Intelligence. Students are strongly encouraged to consult their faculty members regarding the use of such outside materials as the misuse of these sources may constitute a violation of the Honor Code. Ignorance of the rules does not exclude any member of the University community from the requirements and expectations of the Honor Code.

All assignments submitted shall be considered “graded work” and all aspects of your coursework are covered by the Honor Code. All projects and homework assignments are

to be completed individually unless otherwise specified. The Academic Integrity expectations for Hokies are the same in an online class as they are in an in-person class. Hokies are expected to meet the academic integrity standards at Virginia Tech at all times. Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute academic misconduct. This listing is not, however, exclusive of other acts that may reasonably be said to constitute academic misconduct. Clarification is provided for each definition with some examples of prohibited behaviors in the Undergraduate Honor Code Manual located at <https://www.honorsystem.vt.edu/>

- **CHEATING:** Cheating includes the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise, or attempts thereof.
- **PLAGIARISM:** Plagiarism includes the copying of the language, structure, programming, computer code, ideas, and/or thoughts of another and passing off the same as one's own original work, or attempts thereof.
- **FALSIFICATION:** Falsification includes the statement of any untruth, either verbally or in writing, with respect to any element of one's academic work, or attempts thereof.
- **FABRICATION:** Fabrication includes making up data and results, and recording or reporting them, or submitting fabricated documents, or attempts thereof.
- **MULTIPLE SUBMISSION:** Multiple submission involves the submission for credit – without authorization from the instructor receiving the work – of substantial portions of any work (including oral reports) previously submitted for credit at any academic institution or attempts thereof.
- **COMPLICITY:** Complicity includes intentionally helping another to engage in an act of academic misconduct, or attempts thereof.
- **VIOLATION OF UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, DEPARTMENTAL, PROGRAM, COURSE, OR FACULTY RULES:** The violation of any University, College, Departmental, Program, Course, or Faculty Rules relating to academic matters that may lead to an unfair academic advantage by the student violating the rule(s).

If you have questions or are unclear about what constitutes academic misconduct on an assignment, please speak with me. I take the honor code very seriously in the course. The normal sanction I will recommend for a violation of the Honor Code is an F* sanction as your final course grade. The F represents failure in the course. The “*” is intended to identify a student who has failed to uphold the values of academic integrity at Virginia Tech. A student who receives a sanction of F* as their final course grade shall have it documented on their transcript with the notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION.” You would be required to complete an education program administered by the Honor System in order to have the “*” and notation “FAILURE DUE TO ACADEMIC HONOR CODE VIOLATION” removed from your transcript. The “F” however would be permanently on your transcript.

Principles of Community

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university, committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- **We affirm** the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- **We affirm** the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- **We affirm** the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- **We reject** all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.
- **We pledge** our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of *Ut Prosim (That I May Serve)*.

Special Considerations

If any student has special needs related to learning in this course, or other special circumstances that I should know about, including any issues related to the events of April 16, 2007, please inform me as soon as possible so that I may be of assistance. For privacy's sake, you may make an appointment or come to office hours. Please ask the Office of the Dean of Students to send me information of any accommodations. Useful numbers: Office of the Dean of Students (231-3787), The Cook Counseling Center (231-6557), Services for Students with Disabilities (231-3788).

Late Work Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted without a valid note from a doctor or dean. Exams can only be made up with a note from a doctor or dean (Health Center notes will not suffice for an exam make-up). If you have any conflicts with an exam or presentation date, please make alternate arrangements with me well ahead of time. All assignments are marked on the syllabus.

Course Schedule

Students should read or view assigned texts before class on the indicated dates below. Quizzes are based on these readings and questions included in the associated reading guides (accessible through Canvas). Since students will be graded on classroom participation, they should be prepared to share their personal interpretations of narrative,

genre, a text's sociopolitical context, literary devices, cinematography, etc. Texts will be accessible online via Canvas, VT library, or external streaming websites like [Netflix](#), [Amazon Prime](#), [The Criterion Channel](#), [Pantaya](#), [Youtube](#), etc. Note that some of these may require the initiation of a free trial or a fee. In most cases, DVD versions have been placed on course reserve and are available to check out through Newman Library. Extra DVD copies may be available upon request through the professor, but if lost or damaged, the student will be responsible for paying for a replacement copy. Note that some DVDs are from different regions (i.e. PAL, Region 2, etc.) and will require special DVD players. These will be available at the circulation desk in Newman library. It is the student's responsibility to plan accordingly and read and/or view assigned texts before the indicated date. Warning: some assigned readings or visual texts in this course contain violent, graphic, and/or disturbing content. These are indicated with the term ¡OJO! An asterisk* indicates a guest speaker or special event.

27 ago.	Introduction	Watch: Las reglas de juego de la FIFA
29 ago.		Read: Eduardo Galeano (Uruguay) – El fútbol a sol y sombra (“Confesión del autor”, “El fútbol”, “El jugador”, “El arquero”, “El ídolo”, “El hincha”, “El gol”, “El árbitro”, “El director técnico”)
3 sep.		Read: Eduardo Galeano (Uruguay) – El fútbol a sol y sombra (“El teatro”, “La guerra danzada”, “El estadio”, “Los orígenes”, “Las reglas del juego”, “Las invasiones inglesas”, “El fútbol criollo”, “La pelota como bandera”)
5 sep.	Fútbol and narrative	Watch: Domingo (México) – dir. Raúl López Echeverría
10 sep.		Read: Lucía Marroquín (Argentina) – “Gol de media cancha” View: Quino (Argentina) – selección
12 sep.		Read: Inés Fernández Moreno (Argentina) – “Milagro en Parque Chas”
17 sep.	Fútbol and nationalism	Read: Juan Parra del Riego (Perú) – “Polirritmo dinámico a Gradín, jugador de football”
19 sep.		View: Thomaz Farkas (Brasil) – <i>Pacaembu</i> and Hildegard Rosenthal (Brasil) – <i>Cenas urbanas</i>
24 sep.	Fútbol and dictatorship	Watch: Estadio Nacional (Chile) – dir. Carmen Luz Parot ¡OJO! Film Entry - Website
26 sep.		Ver: <i>O Ano em que Meus Pais Saíram de Férias</i> (Brasil) – dir. Cao Hamburger
1 oct.	Fútbol and masculinity	Read: Roberto Fontanarrosa (Argentina) – “El ocho era Moacyr” View: las viñetas de <i>El fútbol es sagrado y Fontanarrosa de penal</i>
3 oct.		Read: Vicente Leñero (México) – <i>Gol</i>
8 oct.	Fútbol <i>feminista</i> *	Read: Norma Saralegui (Argentina) – “Triunfamos (el día de la mujer futbolista)”
10 oct.		Watch: Mujeres con pelotas (Argentina) – dirs. Ginger Gentile y Gabriel Balanovsky *Guest lecture: Verónica Moreira (Universidad de Buenos Aires) Social Media Critique #1 - Website

15 oct.		Read: Dalia Rosetti (Argentina) – <i>Dame pelota</i> (p. 5-13)
17 oct.	Fútbol queer*	Read: Santiago García y Pablo Ríos (España) – <i>Fútbol: la novela gráfica</i> (p. 80-106) Literature Entry – Website
22 oct.		Read: Raphael H. Martins, Pedro Vieira, and Cara Snyder – “The MBB Manifesto” View: Isabel Abreu (Brasil) – <i>Vestiário</i> (selection) and Rafa Canoba (Brasil) - <i>#MeuKooPraCensura</i> (selection) *Guest lecture: Cara Snyder (University of Louisville)
24 oct.		Watch: Fulboy (Argentina) – dir. Martín Farina
29 oct.	Fútbol and religion	Read: Eduardo Sacheri (Argentina) – “El golpe del Hormiga”
31 oct.		Watch: <i>El camino de San Diego</i> (Argentina) – dir. Carlos Sorín
5 nov.	Fútbol and violence	Read: Edmundo Paz-Soldán (Bolivia) – “Como la vida misma” (p. 34-46) ¡OJO!
7 nov.		Watch: 90 minutos (Honduras) – dir. Aeden O’Connor Agurcia ¡OJO!
12 nov.	Fútbol and politics	Watch: Gringos at the Gate (USA-México) – dir. Roberto Donati, Pablo Miralles, and Michael Whalen Final paper – rough draft
14 nov.		Watch: Los colores de la montaña (Colombia) – dir. Carlos César Arbeláez ¡OJO!
19 nov.	Fútbol and the media	Read: José Hidalgo Pallares (Ecuador) – “El ídolo” (p. 130-42)
21 nov.		Leer: Jorge Luis Borges y Adolfo Bioy Casares (Argentina) – “Esse est percipi”
	BREAK	
3 dic.	Fútbol and money	Watch: El presidente (Chile-Argentina) – dirs. Armando Bó Jr., Natalia Beristain, and Gabriel Díaz (primera temporada) Social Media Critique #2 – Website
5 dic.		Watch: El presidente (Chile-Argentina) – dirs. Armando Bó Jr., Natalia Beristain, and Gabriel Díaz (primera temporada)
10 dic.		Watch: El presidente (Chile-Argentina) – dirs. Armando Bó Jr., Natalia Beristain, and Gabriel Díaz (primera temporada) Critical Match Recap – Website
13 dic.		Final paper – revised version