

HNR25XX - Aesthetic Inquiry
A Beautiful Game: The Aesthetics of Soccer
Section • Time • Place



Instructor: Dr. Adam L. Winkel
(he/him/his; él)

Office Hours: TBD

Office: Wilson School of Commerce 108
(Department of WLLC)

Phone: 336.841.9312

Email: awinkel@highpoint.edu

HNR 2500-2599: Aesthetic Inquiry. Students confront questions about the nature, value, and purpose of art, with consideration of how art is produced and consumed and of how we define beauty. Structured interactions with works of art and critical theory, as well as hands-on experiences in studios, hone students' abilities to see from multiple perspectives, employ spatial reasoning, appreciate ambiguity, and craft interpretations. (4 credits)

Catalog Description. This course approaches soccer through the lens of aesthetics to ask what it means to appreciate sport as an art. Students will read texts on aesthetics and sport, examine how soccer has been represented in a variety of artistic forms, contemplate the art in soccer, and create their own artistic interpretations of beautiful moments in sport.

Course Description. Soccer (football) is the world's most popular sport. Its international tournaments, biggest stars, and wealthiest professional leagues unite a worldwide audience in spectacle. To play soccer demands physical strength, speed, endurance, awareness, courage, and wit. To be a fan of soccer involves you in an international community that shares a common language and a thirst for the highs and lows of competition. This course approaches the global game and its economic, political, national, cultural, and gender impact through the lens of aesthetics to ask what it means to appreciate sport, particularly soccer, as an art, that is, as something beautiful. The course begins with an introduction to the history and language of soccer. Next, students will read and discuss classic and contemporary texts on aesthetics and sport to consider the implications of an appreciation of athletic beauty. The class will look at how soccer has been represented in a variety of artistic forms (digital media, painting, public art, sculpture, etc.) before examining the art in soccer. To view soccer as a "dance in space" is to appreciate not just the thrilling goals, but the movement that the female and male athletes perform across the entire pitch. Throughout the semester, students will create their own interpretations and reinterpretations of beautiful moments in sport. By the end of the course, the Honors Scholar will appreciate what the Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano meant when he confessed, "I am a beggar for good soccer. I go about the world, hand outstretched, and in the stadiums I plead: 'A pretty move, for the love of God.' And when good soccer happens, I give thanks for the miracle and I don't give a damn which team or country performs it."

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Honors Scholar Program Student Learning Outcomes

By blurring the boundaries between disciplines, students begin to see that creative problem solving requires multimodal knowledge. The integration of one discipline's skill set to another uncovers new ways of thinking about and interacting with our intellectual world. Creative problem solving, collaboration, and analytical reasoning skills are applicable in all disciplines, and as 21st century citizens face a society more technologically evolved and culturally diverse than any before, the ability to effectively communicate one's ideas to an ever changing audience could be considered the most sought after trait among college graduates today.

As part of the **Honors General Education Curriculum**, students who complete HNR2500 will be able to:

- **TRADITIONS:** Investigate, interpret and synthesize information from a variety of disciplines to answer questions of enduring and contemporary importance by engaging the intellectual traditions and research methods that shape studies in the mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and the arts;
- **AWARENESS:** Demonstrate awareness of the diversity across cultures and individuals in an interconnected world and seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities;
- **COMMUNICATION:** Communicate effectively, often publicly – in writing, speech, and visual media – employing careful analyses of rhetorical purposes, audiences, messages, and modes of delivery;

Course-Specific Student Learning Outcomes

The Honors Programs learning outcomes will be assessed through the assignments below and through the following course-specific goals:

1. Students will identify fundamental tactical elements and major historical figures of world soccer. [TRADITIONS, AWARENESS]
2. Students will recognize crucial moments in a soccer season and share updates with their classmates. [AWARENESS]
3. Students will interpret visual representations of iconic moments in sport based on aesthetic principles and theories. [TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION]
4. Students will compare philosophical arguments regarding the aesthetic value of sport and physical activity. [TRADITIONS, COMMUNICATION]
5. Students will examine artistic representations of soccer in painting, sculpture, film, fashion, and other media, and will develop and present orally and in writing their original interpretation of those representations. [TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION]
6. Students will create artistic representations of aesthetic moments in historical and contemporary sport. [TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION]

Primary Texts

Note: Selected readings will be available on Blackboard.

Collins, Tony. *How Football Began: A Global History of How the World's Football Codes Were Born*. Routledge, 2019.

Critchley, Simon. *What We Think About When We Think About Soccer*. Penguin Books, 2017.

Cruyff, Johan. *My Turn: A Life of Total Football*. Nation Books, 2018.

Dubois, Laurent. *The Language of the Game: How to Understand Soccer*. Basic Books, 2018.

Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich. *In Praise of Athletic Beauty*. Belknap P of Harvard UP, 2006.

Holowchak, Mark, editor. *Philosophy of Sport: Critical Readings, Crucial Issues*. Prentice Hall, 2002.

James, C. L. R. *Beyond a Boundary*. Vintage Books, 1963.

Kehinde Wiley Studio | Brooklyn, NY. <https://kehindewiley.com>.

Kovich, Maureen. "Sport As an Art Form." *Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation*, vol. 42, no. 8, 1971, p. 42.

McDougall, Alan. *Contested Fields: A Global History of Modern Football*. University of Toronto Press, 2020.

Mumford, Stephen. "The Aesthetics in Football: The Beautiful Game?" *Routledge Handbook of Football Studies*, edited by John Hughson, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017.

Soriano, Osvaldo. "The Longest Penalty Ever." *The Global Game: Writers on Soccer*, edited by John Turnbull et al., translated by Miranda Stramel, U of Nebraska P, 2008, pp. 88–95.

Stride, C. B., et al. *The Sporting Statues Project*. 2012, <http://www.sportingstatues.com>.

Richards, Ted, editor. *Soccer and Philosophy*. Open Court, 2010.

Films

Note: All films will be viewed outside of class.

Alves, Tocha, et al. *Ginga: The Soul of Brazilian Football*. O2 Filmes, Nike, Wieden & Kennedy, 2005.

Erschine, James. "Wonder." *This Is Football*, 6, Brutal Media, October Films; Amazon Prime, 2019.

Gordon, Douglas, et al. *Zidane, Un Portrait Du 21e Siècle*. Anna Lena Films, Naflastrengir, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, 2006.

McMath, Duncan. *Take the Ball Pass the Ball: The Making of the Greatest Team in the World*. Zoomsport International, 2018.

Evaluation

A. Class Participation and Preparation	15%
• (Includes in-class exercises, active participation, and online discussion board)	
B. Aesthetic Appreciation Assignments	
• Theoretical Debate Essay	10%
• Iconic Images in Sport (Part A)	10%
• Soccer Art Critique	10%
C. Aesthetic Experience Assignments	
• Favorite Team Poster	10%
• Iconic Images in Sport (Part B)	15%
• Final Project	30%

Course assignments will be divided into two sometimes overlapping categories:

AESTHETIC APPRECIATIONS and AESTHETIC EXPERIENCES. For the Aesthetic Appreciation assignments, students will engage with artistic objects, iconic moments in sport, and aesthetic theories as observers and critics. These assignments will mainly be assessed through oral and written responses [COMMUNICATION] in which students use evidence-based reasoning to interpret a variety of sports-related cultural objects. Aesthetic Experience assignments will ask students to create original artistic representations of different moments in sports history, aspects of their chosen team (see below), and highlights from the team's season that coincides with the semester in which the course is taught [TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION].

Your Favorite Team. At the beginning of the course, students will choose one soccer team as their "favorite team" to follow throughout the semester. The student may choose a team of which they are already a fan or may choose a new team to follow. The student may choose any soccer team from any country (professional, college, or national; women's or men's), as long as it meets the following requirements: 1) the team must be "in season" during the semester in which the course is offered; 2) the team must have an active social media presence that the student can follow; 3) broadcasts and/or highlights of the team's matches must be readily available for the student to watch. Students will use their favorite team as the basis of several of the assignments throughout the semester.

A. Class Preparation and Participation (15%)

SLOs: TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6

Your participation grade is based on your demonstration that you have read, prepared and reflected on the materials assigned. HNR2500 is an intensive course that requires that you work diligently throughout the semester and that you keep up with the work assigned.

Prepare for class by reading the assignment before the day it is schedule for discussion.

Students are expected to prepare for each class by reading the assigned material *carefully* and *as many times as needed*. Preparation will be assessed through a combination of homework assignments, in-class writing exercises, and active participation in discussions. See Grading Rubric for Class Participation at the end of this document.

Active participation in the course discussion forum on Blackboard is required. At least once a week, the instructor or your classmates will post a discussion question related to a

specific reading assignment. You are responsible for writing a brief response to this question before our class meeting. This is meant to help you prepare for our discussions and encourage you to read and to think about the material before we meet. **In order to give the instructor and your classmates time to prepare class, your responses are due before 8:00am the day we will be discussing the text.**

Regular attendance and active participation are important to the student's success in this course. Participation refers to your ability to engage attentively in classroom activities. Although it is difficult to transcend subjective factors in evaluating class participation, there are several explicit criteria. They include:

1. preparedness
2. the subsequent ability to make valuable contributions in the target language to the course. In turn, valuable contributions are, among others,
 - a. volunteering relevant information
 - b. asking questions whose answer benefit the group at large
 - c. the ability to provide intelligent answers to the teacher's and peers' questions
 - d. the ability to engage in productive group and pair work
 - e. the contribution of relevant personal experiences and observations

B. AESTHETIC APPRECIATION Assignments

1. Theoretical Debate (10%). Students will write a response paper in which they argue for or against the interpretation of sport as art. Students will base their responses on their own perspective but use evidence and theories from our course readings to support their position. **SLOs:** TRADITIONS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 4, 5

2. Iconic Images in Sport (Part A) (10%). Students will research and select an iconic photographic image from sports history (any sport). The student will write an essay in which they evaluate and interpret the image based on aesthetic criteria that the class has previously read and discussed. In the essay, students will present a brief history and context of the iconic moment, compare the still image to the moving image (video highlight) of the moment, and interpret the image as an aesthetic object. (See Part B under Aesthetic Experience, below.) **SLOs:** TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 3, 4, 5

3. Soccer Art Critique (10%). Students will choose one artistic representation of world soccer from an online source or exposition catalogue and write a critical interpretation essay of that work, based on critical methods and aesthetic theories read and discussed in class. **SLOs:** TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 4, 5

C. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE Assignments

1. Favorite Team Poster (10%). Students will create a one-page visual depiction of their favorite team to use as a basis of presenting the team to their classmates. The poster can be physical or digital. It must include certain basic elements (team name, team badge/logo, etc.) but the student's interpretation of the team and its visual identity is otherwise open. **SLOs:** TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 1, 2, 6

2. Iconic Images in Sport (Part B) (15%). After interpreting the iconic photographic image in sport (Part A, above), students will reinterpret the same moment in sports history in a different artistic medium. That is, students will begin with the photographic image (and its video context in motion) and recreate the moment in another form (drawing, painting, animation, sound recording, choreography, sculpture, digital design, etc.) **SLOs:** TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 2, 5, 6

3. Final Project (30%). During the semester, students will follow their “favorite teams” to be aware of any moments that meet the criteria of aesthetic beauty that we have studied. Students will select one such moment from the season to use as a basis for their own original artistic interpretation of that moment. Students will present their final artifact to the class along with an oral and written (essay) explanation of why they selected that moment and how they reinterpreted it, supported by aesthetic theories that we have read and discussed. **SLOs:** TRADITIONS, AWARENESS, COMMUNICATION; **Course:** 2, 4, 5, 6

Course Policies

Grading Scale:

97-100	A+	94-96.99	A	90-93.99	A-		
87-89.99	B+	84-86.99	B	80-83.99	B-		
77-79.99	C+	74-76.99	C	70-73.99	C-		
67-69.99	D+	64-66.99	D	60-64.99	D-	Below 60	F

Grading Criteria: The *High Point University Undergraduate Bulletin* establishes the following grading criteria system:

A= (superior/outstanding) is the highest grade earned; it is reserved for those students whose work is of a markedly outstanding quality in all the different components of the course.

B= (excellent/very good) is the grade earned for work which, while not notably superior, is clearly above average in all the different components of the course.

C= (average) is the grade earned for satisfactory work in all or almost all component of the course. It is the work done by the average student.

D= (inferior/below average) is the grade for work which, while not altogether satisfactory, is good enough to receive credit for the course.

F= (failure) is the grade earned for failure and indicates that no credit can be received for the course except by repetition. The student failed the majority of the course components.

Attendance Policy: The university does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. **Any student who accumulates two (2) absences for any reason will be placed on attendance probation. Any student who accumulates two (2) absences after being put on probation may be dropped from the course.** Students who must miss class because of required university activities (such as participation on an inter-varsity sport team) should notify the instructor prior to the absence and make any necessary arrangements for work missed. There are normally no make-up quizzes/exams. Unjustified

failure to take a quiz or exam may result in a grade of “0” for that quiz or test. If the test/quiz was missed due to extreme circumstances the instructor will discuss with the student alternate means of assessment. Work is due when stipulated in the syllabus. Assigned work will not be accepted late, except in cases of documented illness or personal emergency.

University Policies and Services*

(*Note: These statements will appear in their complete and most up-to-date form when the course is offered.)

Academic Honesty.

Academic Development and OARS Accommodations.

Diversity & Inclusivity Statement.

Title IX.

Counseling Services.

Writing Center.

Tutoring.

Library Services.

Course Content

Unit I: How to Understand Soccer

In order to provide a fundamental understanding of the sport of soccer to those students who may have little or no prior knowledge, the class will read and discuss texts related to the historical and cultural importance of the sport. These texts approach soccer through a consideration of the modern game’s rules, positions, tactics, important figures, teams, and importance as a global phenomenon. During this unit, students will choose their “favorite team” and present key historical, cultural, and sociological information about the team to the class. In this way, we can investigate how fans, players, and club administrators navigate identity through their allegiance to the team.

Unit II: The Aesthetics of Sport

This is the main critical and theoretical portion of the course and will form the basis of later analyses and interpretations of the connections between art and soccer. The main question of this unit is, “Is Sport Art?” Students will read and discuss classic and contemporary essays on aesthetics and on the relationship of aesthetics to sport. Students will engage with philosophical perspectives on both sides of the debate and will argue their own opinions on what it means to consider sport (not just soccer) from an aesthetic point of view.

Unit III: Soccer in Art

Unit Three will focus on how artists from the late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries have represented soccer in a variety of media and artistic forms. These may include painting, sculpture, murals, advertising and video, literature, and fan chants and songs, video games, and other media. The class will consider what it means to display this art in public spaces and in museums and galleries, and will produce their own critical interpretations and analyses of soccer-related artwork.

Unit IV: The Art of Soccer

Finally, the class will return its attention to the action on the pitch to consider why soccer has been dubbed “The Beautiful Game.” Students will read and discuss a combination of philosophical essays on the aesthetic aspects of soccer along with documentary films and other attempts at capturing the beauty in the sport. The course culminates with student presentations of their own creative reinterpretation of a significant moment in their team’s season, supported by aesthetic theories that we have discussed during the semester.

Course Calendar

The accompanying course schedule provides a basic outline for the course activities. The instructor may vary the schedule occasionally if circumstances call for it.

Week	Day	Topic
1	1	Introduction to the course. What is aesthetics? Beauty and sport.
	2	Unit I. How to Understand Soccer Dubois, <i>The Language of the Game</i> (“Introduction”); McDougall, <i>Contested Fields</i> (“Introduction”)
2	3	Collins, <i>How Football Began</i> (Introduction-Ch.7)
	4	Dubois, <i>The Language of the Game</i> (“The Goalkeeper,” “The Defender”)
3	5	Dubois, <i>The Language of the Game</i> (“The Midfielder,” “The Forward”)
	6	Dubois, <i>The Language of the Game</i> (“The Manager”, “The Referee”)
4	7	Dubois, <i>The Language of the Game</i> (“The Fan”)
	8	Favorite Team Poster Presentation
5	9	Unit II. The Aesthetics of Sport Aesthetic Appreciation: Definitions and Traditions; <i>NYTimes Close Read</i> Series
	10	James, CLR. “What Is Art?”; Kovich, “Sport as an Art Form”
6	11	Kaelin, “The Well-Played Game: Notes Toward an Aesthetics of Sport” and Best, “The Aesthetic in Sport” in Holowchak, ed. <i>Philosophy of Sport</i> .
	12	Boxill, “Beauty, Sport, and Gender” and Cordner, “Differences between Sport and Art,” in Holowchak, ed. <i>Philosophy of Sport</i> .
7	13	Theoretical Debate Essay due Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, <i>In Praise of Athletic Beauty</i> (“Everyfan”, “Definitions”)
	14	Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, <i>In Praise of Athletic Beauty</i> (“Discontinuities”)
8	15	Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, <i>In Praise of Athletic Beauty</i> (“Fascination”)
	16	Iconic Images in Sport (Part A) Essay due Gumbrecht, Hans Ulrich, <i>In Praise of Athletic Beauty</i> (“Gratitude”)

Week	Day	Topic
		Academic Break (No classes)
9	17	Unit III. Soccer in Art Soccer in the Museum. <i>The World's Game: Fútbol and Contemporary Art</i> (Pérez Art Museum Miami, 2018); The National Football Museum (UK)
	18	Statues From Pitch to Plinth: The Sporting Statues Project (website)
10	19	Painting Kehinde Wiley, <i>Puma; Lagos and Dakar</i>
	20	Music Fan songs and chants. "You'll Never Walk Alone" and others
11	21	Advertising and Digital Media Pepsi, Qatar Airways, Nike, Adidas, and others <i>EA Sports FIFA</i> Video Game
	22	Iconic Images in Sport (Part B) Artifact Presentation
12	23	Unit IV: The Art of Soccer Mumford, "The Aesthetics in Football: The Beautiful Game?"; "Jogo Bonito;" Film: Alves, dir. <i>Ginga - The Soul of Brazilian Football</i>
	24	The Goalkeeper Winters, "How to Appreciate the Fingertip Save" in Richards, <i>Soccer and Philosophy</i> ; Short story: Soriano, "The Longest Penalty Ever"
13	25	Soccer Art Critique Due The Defender Wall, "He Had to Bring Him Down!" in Richards, <i>Soccer and Philosophy</i>
	26	The Midfielder Critchley, <i>What We Think About When We Think About Soccer</i> (selections). Film: Gordon and Parreno, dirs. <i>Zidane: A 21st Century Portrait</i>
14	27	The Forward Elcombe, "Is Ronaldo a Modern Picasso?"; Olaya, Lammoglia, and Zarama, "A 'Messi' Way of Life" in Richards, <i>Soccer and Philosophy</i> . Erskine, dir. <i>This is Football</i> (Episode 6, "Wonder")
	28	Total Football Cruyff, <i>My Turn</i> (selections); Durà-Vilà, "Why Playing Beautifully is Morally Better" in Richards, <i>Soccer and Philosophy</i> . Film: McMath, dir. <i>Take the Ball, Pass the Ball</i>
15	29	Last Day of Classes The Final Debate: Is Soccer Art?
		Final Exam Day Final Team Artifact Presentation; Final Essay Due