

IAFS 4500-001

Sports and International Affairs

Contact Information

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 12:30pm -2pm (or by appt). Virtual upon request

Course Information

January 8th – April 24th

Classroom: KTCH 1B64

Class-time: 3:35 to 4:50pm

Course Description: Every two years, the world sends their best to compete in the Olympics. On the surface, the Olympics are about celebrating athleticism, but much like the rest of organized sports from the local schoolyard to the global stage, they highlight the overlap of global politics and sports. In this course, the fundamental objective is to study the confluence of sports and global affairs. How do sports reflect trends in the broader global arena and the balance of power throughout the global system? In what ways do sports not only represent global affairs, but shape them? How do sports influence domestic politics and various global issues?

This course is a seminar style course where I will provide some lecture material, but we will spend most of our time discussing the link between sports and international affairs. Along the way students will learn how to engage in original research and compile a research project from start to finish.

Course Requirements and Grading:

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| Research Paper | 70% |
| Paper Proposal (5%) | |
| Annotated Bibliography (10%) | |
| Literature Review (15%) | |
| Final Paper (30%) | |
| Presentation (10%) | |
| Midterm Exam | 15% |
| Participation | 15% |

Letter grades will be assigned at the end of the semester based on the following scale. I will **not** round your grade, and grades will not be curved.

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| | | B+ | 87-89% | C+ | 77-79% | D+ | 67-69% |
| A | 94-100% | B | 84-86% | C | 74-76% | D | 64-66% |
| A- | 90-93% | B- | 80-83% | C- | 70-73% | D- | 60-63% |

Research Paper (70%)

As a capstone course for the IAFS major, the core requirement is to write a substantial research paper of 4500 to 5000 words. This is, in essence, a mini-senior thesis. Students will be expected to identify an interesting academic research question, develop a theory to answer that question, and examine that theory using available evidence. Students may focus their research on any topic that is relevant to the course themes.

Since this is the primary objective of this course, most of the coursework for this class is focused on developing your research paper. This is not an assignment you can do in the final week of class—I will not let you! While the research project is 70% of your final grade, it is divided into smaller

assignments, all helping you develop your paper and get feedback as you progress through the research process. Each assignment will have more information provided on Canvas. They are due as follows:

- Paper Proposal (5%) **January 23rd**
- Annotated Bibliography (10%) **February 13th**
- Literature Review (15%) **March 13th**
- Presentation (10%) **April 13th – April 22nd**
- Final Paper (30%) **April 24th**

Midterm Exam (15%)

There will be one exam in this course. This exam will be cumulative and will consist of one essay question. The midterm is scheduled for **April 1** during class-time.

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Active participation in this course is critical! Coming to class well prepared and offering comments and questions in discussions or otherwise fostering an engaging and enriching learning environment in class, will result in a superior participation grade. This class will be taught in person with all students attending each scheduled class. Students may be dropped from the course for non-attendance. In lieu of tracking excused and un-excused absences, each student gets **three PTO days** which cover both excused and un-excused absences. Use these carefully throughout the course of the semester.

Each subsequent absence will result in a decrease in the participation and attendance grade of 5%. If you have six total absences, you will receive a 0% for this category. Eight or more absences will result in an “F” in the course. If something comes up that prevents you from attending class regularly, or you have university approved exemptions to this policy, then please e-mail me as soon as possible. Otherwise, **please do not e-mail me for each absence**. Attendance alone is not sufficient to receive full credit. Students with perfect attendance but no participation in class should expect to receive a 33% on the participation and attendance grade (5% of your overall grade).

Late/Makeup Assignment Policy

All assignments must be submitted by their specified due date as designated in the syllabus. Late assignments will suffer a 10 percent penalty for each day that they are late and will not be accepted after three days unless discussed in advance of the deadline. In general, there will be no make-up exams or extensions without a university approved excused absence. However, if you find yourself in a situation where you cannot complete the work on time, please communicate with me as soon as possible before the deadline or day of the exam. **There are no extensions under any circumstances for your presentation, final paper, or midterm.**

Canvas & Email Policy

I will primarily communicate with you via Canvas Announcements. Please ensure Canvas notifications are enabled, and announcements go to your inbox. **Please do not use Canvas to send me a message.**

E-mail is the best way to get in touch with me. When communicating with me, emails must have IAFS4500, Sports, or a logical alternative indicating the email pertains to this course. Emails to me must be sent from your official University of Colorado email address. It is class policy that grades will not be discussed over email. I will generally reply to e-mails within 24 hours.

Artificial Intelligence

Generative artificial intelligence tools—software that creates new text, images, computer code, audio, video, and other content—have become widely available and pose new threats to academic integrity. **You may not use generative AI tools on assignments in this course.** Generative AI tools are typically trained on limited and pre-existing datasets that may be out of date and are designed to produce content that *appears* to be written by a human. As a result, work produced using generative AI is considered plagiarism and will often produce potentially outdated and inaccurate work that is not your own. If you use generative AI tools to complete assignments in this course, in ways that I have not explicitly authorized, this will be considered a violation of the Honor Code and there will be consequences appropriate to your specific case. These include getting a zero on the assignment, and possibly failing the class. Please act with integrity, for the sake of both your personal character and your academic record.

Please be **extremely careful** if you use tools like Grammarly or other generative AI for proofreading. This can and will rewrite your text and is considered a violation per the policy stated above if it does so. Use Spellcheck or other non-AI proofreading tools. If you aren't sure if you are using AI, err on the side of caution and don't use it.

Course Materials

The following books are assigned for this course:

- Foer, Franklin. 2010. *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization*.
- Markovits, Andrei and Lars Rensmann. 2010. *Gaming the World: How Sports are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture*. Princeton University Press

All other readings will be made available on Canvas. Assigned readings and deadlines are subject to change, but you will be notified in advance

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| <h2>Schedule</h2> |
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Week 1: Studying Sports and International Affairs

Monday, January 12: *Course Introduction and Syllabus*

- No Reading

Wednesday, January 14: *Sports and International Affairs*

- Nauright, John, and Sarah Zipp. 2018. "The Complex World of Global Sport." *Sport in Society* 21(8): 1113–19.
- Markovits and Rensmann Chapter 1

Week 2: Sports and Soft Power

Monday, January 19: No Class (Martin Luther King Jr Day)

Wednesday, January 21: Soft Power

- Grix, Jonathan, and Donna Lee. 2013. "Soft Power, Sports Mega-Events and Emerging States: The Lure of the Politics of Attraction." *Global Society* 27(4): 521–36.

Research Proposal Due Friday January 23rd

Week 3: Sports and War

Monday, January 26: War-Starters or War-Enders

- Bertoli, Andrew D. 2017. "Nationalism and Conflict: Lessons from International Sports." *International Studies Quarterly* 61(4): 835–49.
- Ubaidulloev, Zubaidullo. 2018. "Sport for Peace: A New Era of International Cooperation and Peace through Sport." *Asia-Pacific Review* 25(2): 104–26.

Wednesday, January 28: Sports as Proxy Wars

- Hardy, Stephen and Andrew Holman. 2018. *Hockey: A Global History*. University of Illinois Press. **Chapter 17**
- Boykoff, Jules. 2016. *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics*. Verso. **Chapter 3**

Week 4: Sports and Culture

Monday, February 2: Cultural Imperialism

- Maguire, Joseph A. 2011. "The Consumption of American Football in British Society: Networks of Interdependencies." *Sport in Society* 14(7–8): 950–64.
- Markovits & Rensmann Chapter 3

Wednesday, February 4: Research Seminar in Norlin

Week 5: The Olympics (I)

Monday, February 9: Who Gets to Host and Why They Want To

- Kobierecki, Michał Marcin, and Piotr Strożek. 2021. "Sports Mega-Events and Shaping the International Image of States: How Hosting the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cups Affects Interest in Host Nations." *International Politics* 58(1): 49–70.
- Maennig, Wolfgang, and Christopher Vierhaus. 2017. "Winning the Olympic Host City Election: Key Success Factors." *Applied Economics* 49(31): 3086–99.

Wednesday, February 11: Power and Protest

- Cottrell, M. Patrick, and Travis Nelson. 2011. "Not Just the Games? Power, Protest and Politics at the Olympics." *European Journal of International Relations* 17(4): 729–53.

Annotated Bib Due Feb 13

Week 6: The Olympics (II)

Monday, February 16: Olympics and Human Rights

- Scharpf, Adam, Christian Gläsel, and Pearce Edwards. 2023. "International Sports Events and Repression in Autocracies: Evidence from the 1978 FIFA World Cup." *American Political Science Review* 117(3): 909–26.

- Chappelet, Jean-Loup. 2022. "The Olympics' Evolving Relationship with Human Rights: An Ongoing Affair." *Sport in Society* 25(1): 1–22.

Wednesday, February 18: Does Winning Matter?

- Rhamey, J. Patrick, and Bryan R. Early. 2013. "Going for the Gold: Status-Seeking Behavior and Olympic Performance." *International Area Studies Review* 16(3): 244–61.

Week 7: Sports and Identity

Monday, February 23: Ethnicity and Religion

- Foer: Chapter 1, 2, and 3
- Mousa, Salma. 2020. "Building Social Cohesion between Christians and Muslims through Soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq." *Science* 369(6505): 866–70.

Wednesday, February 25: Nationalism

- Foer: Chapter 6 and 8
- Pinto, Gabriele. 2025. "Sports Nationalism and Xenophobia: When Cheering Turns into Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 62(3): 595–612.

Week 8: Sports and Globalization

Monday, March 2: The Globalization of Sport

- Berglund, Bruce. 2021. *The Fastest Game in the World: Hockey and the Globalization of Sports*. University of California Press. **Introduction and Chapter 7**
- Markovits & Rensmann Chapter 2

Wednesday, March 4: International Competition and Domestic Impacts

- Schneider, Rodrigo, Peter Von Allmen, and Garrett Munck. 2022. "The Impact of Winter Olympic Games Participation on NHL Attendance." *Economics of Governance* 23(3–4): 253–70.

Week 9: Sports and Development

Monday, March 9: Wealth Inequality

- Foer: Chapter 4 and 5
- Baade, Robert A., and Victor A. Matheson. 2016. "Going for the Gold: The Economics of the Olympics." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 30(2): 201–18.

Wednesday, March 11: No Class. Work on Lit Reviews

- Office Hours during Class Time

Lit Review Due March 13

SPRING BREAK (No Class): March 16 – March 20

Week 10: Future of Global Sports

Monday, March 23: Backlash and Localization

- Markovits and Rensmann Chapter 5 and 6

Wednesday, March 25: Future of Global Sport

- Foer: Chapter 9
- Boykoff, Jules. 2016. *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics*. Verso. **Chapter 6 (237-252)**
- Berglund, Bruce. 2021. *The Fastest Game in the World: Hockey and the Globalization of Sports*. University of California Press. **Epilogue**

Week 11: Midterm Exam

Monday, March 30: *Review for Midterm*

Wednesday, April 1: *Midterm Exam (In Class)*

Week 12: Research Papers

Monday, April 6: *Individual Meetings*

Wednesday, April 8: *Individual Meetings*

Week 13: Research Presentations

Monday, April 13: *Guest Speaker: To Be Announced*

- No Readings

Wednesday, April 15: *Student Presentations*

Week 14: Research Presentations

Monday, April 20: *Student Presentations*

Wednesday, April 22: *Student Presentations*

Friday, April 24 (Monday Schedule): *Student Presentations (If we need the time)*

- **Final Paper Due**

Classroom Behavior: Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, marital status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. For more information, see the [classroom behavior policy](#), the [Student Code of Conduct](#), and the [Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance](#).

Accommodation for Disabilities: If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or DSinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

If you have a temporary illness, injury or required medical isolation for which you require adjustment, please let me know as soon as possible via e-mail.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns: CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code: All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the [Honor Code](#). Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology [such as essay bots]), cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. Understanding the course's syllabus is a vital part in adhering to the Honor Code. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: StudentConduct@colorado.edu. Students found responsible for violating the [Honor Code](#) will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit [Honor Code](#) for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Note: Use of AI in your written answers is considered plagiarism in this course and is not permitted and will result in an "F" in the course!

Discrimination and Harassment: CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits [protected-class](#) discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner abuse (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who have been subjected to misconduct can contact

OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email CUreport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, [reporting options](#), and [support resources](#) including confidential services can be found on the [OIEC website](#). Please know that faculty and graduate instructors must inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive outreach from OIEC about resolution options and support resources. To learn more about reporting and support for a variety of concerns, visit the [Don't Ignore It page](#).

Religious Holidays: Campus policy requires faculty to provide reasonable accommodations for students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Please communicate the need for a religious accommodation in a timely manner. In this class, **please let me know by the end of week 3 of any religious accommodations you may require.** See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness: The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact [Counseling and Psychiatric Services \(CAPS\)](#) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7. Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through [Academic Live Care](#). The Academic Live Care site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.