

# Game.Set. Match. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Sport

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Contact

## Course Description:

Sport has become an important subject within the humanities, with numerous sociological, economic, anthropological, and psychological studies collectively forming the field of sport studies. This course introduces key topics within this field, including the commercialization and globalization of elite sport, the role of sports mega-events, sport in relation to social and gender inequalities, the intersections between sport and politics, and differences between sports cultures in the United States and Europe. These themes will be examined through a series of case studies—such as the Olympic Games, the Super Bowl, and sportswashing in European football. The seminar will focus primarily on professional sport. A central aim of the course is to show that sport is not “just” a game, but a lens through which to understand significant and often urgent social issues. Emphasis will be placed on the interdisciplinary nature of sport studies, demonstrating how insights from sociology, philosophy, economy, cultural studies, and related fields complement and enrich one another.

## Course Prerequisites:

- None

## Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes:

- Examine **contemporary issues in sport from an inter-disciplinary perspective** of various humanistic disciplines and understand sport as an important social phenomenon
- Students will understand how **global forces shape contemporary sport** and critically reflect on **the role of sport in today's society**.
- Analyze the **specific nature and features of Czech sport and its organization within the global context**
- Learn how to **apply theoretical knowledge to concrete experience**
- **Compare sporting events in the Czech Republic and the US**
- Discuss and better understand **the importance of outdoor activities and sports**

## Course Requirements:

**Field Journals (20%):** Field studies are an essential part of this course. To enhance learning, students are required to submit two journal entries. Journal submissions should draw on the field studies conducted to date and include students' direct field observations, analysis thereof within the context of the themes, concepts, and content presented in the course lectures and in the assigned readings. **Students will choose two field studies about which they write their journal entries. Journal must be submitted before the start of next class!** The template for the journal entries can be found in Moodle. Each entry should contain:

- **Photograph/photographs** from the field study illustrating a learning moment
- **Reflection and analysis: structured and proofread description of key personal learning points**
- Reflection on the field study with demonstrated connections to content covered in course readings and instructor's lectures. Each entry should be **400 words in total** (+-10% is acceptable)
- Reference to **at least three course readings or relevant online sources**
- **Proper attribution and citation of all sources (course lectures, readings, or online sources), including bibliography at the bottom of the essay**

**Journal must be submitted before the start of next class!**

**Sport and politics (Short Podcast) (20%):** During the semester, you will deliver a short podcast session on the relation of sport and politics. In your podcast, you will present one historical event when politics were involved in the world of sports. To demonstrate a clear connection to historical and sociological frameworks presented, you should reference at **least three academic readings in your podcast**. Please write down your sources and upload a paper with a bibliography to Canvas. **The podcast should be 5 to 7 minutes long. You can use any podcast apps. Upload your podcast to Canvas.** Podcasts must be comprehensive and well-structured with a proper **introduction** and **ending**. **Quality of speech will be also evaluated.** Try to **be creative in your podcast. Add intro music, jingles or concrete sounds** to make podcast engaging, entertaining yet instructive. Don't forget to give your **podcast a title and a brand image**. You can use e.g. Canva for the podcast logo. Be prepared for a class discussion during the follow-up class.

**Sport and gender (Short Podcast) (20%):** In your second assignment, you will prepare the second short podcast on "How to tackle gender inequalities in professional sports". Think about various instances of gender inequalities in sport. Select an instance you would like to research and analyze and present in a podcast your ideas on how to surpass the inequalities and make sports more equal. To demonstrate a clear connection to historical and sociological frameworks presented, you should reference at **least three academic readings in your podcast**. Please write down your sources and upload a paper with a bibliography to Canvas. **The podcast should**

be 5 to 7 minutes long. You can use any podcast apps. Upload your podcast to Canvas. Podcasts must be comprehensive and well-structured with a proper **introduction** and **ending**. **Quality of speech will also be evaluated**. Try to **be creative in your podcast**. Add intro music, **jingles or concrete sounds** to make podcast engaging, entertaining yet instructive. **Please, use the same podcast format and name as you did for the first assignment** (Sports and Politics). The goal is also to be consistent. **However, tweaks to make your podcast better are possible**. Be prepared for a class discussion during the follow-up class.

**Final Podcast (40%):** Students will form teams to prepare a podcast discussion. Each team will choose one of the topics covered during the semester. One student will assume the role of an interviewer, remaining students will be positioned as topic experts. **Teams must use academic literature connected to the topic in their podcast**. The podcast should employ **the course topics enriched by the findings from individual academic research in relevant sources** (eg. required literature) **and from individual experience and expertise connected to the undertaken field studies**. The podcast should **be appropriately structured** (e.g., introduction, main body, conclusions) and should **be based on academic literature combined with own reasoning and analysis**. Students are expected to present original arguments based on a combination of good-quality sources. Additionally, **each podcast should include a comparison with their home city/country**, with the aim of highlighting the key differences or interesting similarities. **The podcast should be around 20-30 minutes long**. The choice of topic must be previously discussed with and approved by the course lecturer.

## Grading Policy:

### Mandatory Completion Policy

Note that all mandatory assignments and exams must be completed to the best of your ability in order for your final grade to be issued. Failure to complete a mandatory assignment or exam may result in a failing grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A+	97-100	Excellent Work
A	93-97	Outstanding Work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

#### **AEP Academic Integrity Policy**

Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are not tolerated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the development of knowledge and learning is encouraged at many stages of the learning process. While we value technology for educational purposes, we also value originality and the retainment of knowledge, and thus using AI for assignments and examinations, even if rephrased, is strictly prohibited and considered an academic integrity violation, unless the instructor explicitly allows for it in the context of evaluated work

#### **AEP Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy**

The AEP program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristics, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

#### **AEP Diversity Policy**

AEP is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community that values diversity in all its forms. We believe that one of the most meaningful lessons of studying abroad is learning to navigate and appreciate differences with curiosity and an open mind. While engaging across differences can sometimes be challenging or uncomfortable, these moments are essential for growth and learning. We recognize that every member of our community, even with the best intentions, may occasionally make missteps. Our commitment is to provide a supportive environment where respectful and honest dialogue helps us learn from these experiences, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive and broaden their perspective.

## Weekly Schedule

### Week 1

*CEE Introductory Lecture Series*

AEP Introductory Lecture Series

### Week 2

*When It's About More Than "Just" Sports*

Introductory lecture which will describe main topics that will be presented in the semester. In this very first lecture will try to show, that sports are not just a game but a serious topic within the humanities.

### Week 3

*Czechoslovak Sport during Communism (1945-1989)*

In this lecture, we will examine what sport looked like in Czechoslovakia during the communist era. How did the regime influence society and its sporting culture? Why did sport become a political tool? And what exactly was the Spartakiáda? These are just some of the questions we will discuss in class. As part of the session, we will also visit the Strahov Stadium.

Readings:

- Waic, pp. 12-40
- Numerato, pp. 704-712

### Week 4

*The (in)separable Pair: Sport and Politics*

It is often said that politics has no place in sports. However, we frequently witness situations where politics enters the realm of sports. Politics seems to be an integral part of sports at all levels, not just at the elite level. This lesson will focus on the ambivalent relationship between sports and politics.

Readings:

- Brannagan, Giulianotti, pp.703-719
- Soares, pp. 47-61

### Week 5

*"Money, money, money..." Sports industry, globalization and media*

Today's world of elite sports is unimaginable without money and financing. This lesson will focus on the increasing commercialization of professional sports. We will also look at the globalization

processes in modern sports. Additionally, we will examine the influence of media in the world of sports. **The first short podcast is due this day.**

Readings:

- Whannel, pp. 205-218
- Giulianotti, Numerato, pp. 229-240

## Week 6

### *Local Czech Sporting Event*

Class Description

Readings:

- None

## Week 7

### *Are Olympic Games Sustainable? Sport Mega-Events and Environment*

Sport mega-events play a crucial role in world of sports and in the whole society. Olympic games or FIFA World Cups are viewed by billions of people around the world. But there are not without controversy. In this lecture we will discuss positives and negatives of these events with an emphasis on environmental sustainability.

Readings:

- Horne, Manzenreiter pp. 1-24

## Week 8

### *Differences between Sports in US, Czechia and Europe*

From mass media, it might seem that sports have a similar form in Europe and the USA. However, there are numerous differences in both professional and semi-professional sports. In this section, we will explore the most significant distinctions, including the organization of sports competitions, methods of funding elite sports, and game formats. In this lecture, we will also visit the Sports Card Museum.

Readings:

- Ahonen, pp. 469-483
- Backman, Carlsson, pp. 505-522

## Week 9

### *The Czechs and the Outdoors. Hike to Divoká Šárka*

During this class we will visit the national preserve Divoká Šárka.

Readings:

- Martin, Turcova, Neuman, pp. 297-306
- Turcova, pp. 321-337
- Kvasnicka, pp. 53-63

## Week 10

*Is sport egalitarian? Social Inequalities, Gender and Psychology in Sports*

Sports are often portrayed as egalitarian, where performance, perseverance, and training are key. However, numerous studies reveal that factors such as an athlete's background, social class, place of birth, and even gender play an equally important role. This section will focus on the connections between social inequalities and sports. We will also address sports psychology, which is closely related to these topics. **The second short podcast is due this day.**

Readings:

- Fialova, pp. 102-117
- Pfister, pp. 234-248

## Week 11

*Kdo Neskáče Není Čech! Sports and Fandom*

Nowadays sport can't be imagined without fans. They play a key role in sports industry: it's them who fills the stadiums, who buys merch and for who the show is made. But it is not just about business. Fanship can create new and very strong identities, stronger than the everyday life. During this class we will visit the Czech Hockey Hall of Fame (Síň slávy Českého hokeje)

Readings:

- Barrer, pp. 223-238
- Cenek, J. and Smolik, pp. 138-153

## Week 12

*Slavia Praha Stadium tour*

In this lecture, we will visit the Fortuna Arena - the biggest soccer arena in Czechia and a home arena of Slavia Praha soccer team. During this field study we will get to the inner parts of the stadium, to VIP sectors and also to the pitch. Our guide will also talk about the history of the Slavia Praha which goes to end of 19. century.

Readings:

- None

## Week 13

### *Final class review*

In this final lecture we will recap the most important outcomes of this class. **The final podcast is due this day.**

- Readings: None

### Field studies:

- Strahov stadium and Evžen Rošický stadium
- Local Czech sporting event (TBA)
- Hike in nature preserve Divoká Šárka
- Hockey card Museum
- Czech Hockey Hall of Fame
- Slavia Praha Stadium Tour

### Readings:

Ahonen, A. *Strong entrepreneurial focus and internationalization—the way to success for Finnish ice hockey: the case of JYP ice hockey team*. Sport in Society, 23(3), 2020, pp. 469-483.

Backman, J. and Carlsson, B. *Jokerit's move to KHL: an odd momentum in the commercialization of Nordic elite ice hockey*. Sport in Society, 23(3), 2020, pp. 505-522.

Barrer, P. *‘Šatan is God!’: Re-imagining Contemporary Slovak National Identity through Sport*. Sport in Society, 10(2), 2007, pp. 223-238.

Brannagan M. P. & Giulianotti, R. *Soft power and soft disempowerment: Qatar, global sport and football's 2022 World Cup finals*, Leisure Studies, 2015 34:6, 703-719.

Carlsson, B., Backman, J. and Stark, T. *Introduction: the progress of elite ice hockey beyond the NHL*. Sport in Society, 23(3), 2020, pp. 355-360.

Cenek, J. and Smolik, J. *Nationalism and Its Manifestations in Sport: the Case of Football Hooliganism in the Czech Republic*. In Cordell, K., and Jajecznik, K. (eds.), *The Transformation of Nationalism in Central and Eastern Europe*, University of Warsaw, 2015, pp. 138-153.

Crossan, W. *Expanding game, expanding opportunity: the effect of athlete migration on Czech ice hockey from 1993 to 2018*, Sports in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics. Vol. 23 (3), 2019, pp. 377-398.

Fialova, L. *Women and Sport in the Czech Republic*. In Pfister, T. and Hartmann-Tews, I. (eds.) *Sport and Women: Social Issues in International Perspective*. Routledge: London, 2003, pp. 102-117.



Giulianotti, R. and Numerato, D. *Global sport and consumer culture: An introduction*. Journal of consumer culture, 18(2), 2018, pp. 229-240.

Horne, J. and Manzenreiter, W. *An introduction to the sociology of sports mega-events*. The sociological review, 54(2\_suppl), 2006, pp.1-24.

Kvasnicka, T. *Equipment and Changing Outdoor Culture in the Czech Republic*. Anthropology of East Europe Review. Vol 25 (1), 2009, pp. 53-63.

Martin, A., Turcova, I. and Neuman, J. *Turistika activities and games, dramaturgy, and the Czech outdoor experience*. In Humberstone, B., Prince, H. (eds). Routledge International Handbook of Outdoor Studies. London: Routledge, 2016, pp. 297-306.

Numerato, D. *Sports as Resistance: Czech Hockey Protest in Czechoslovakia in 1969*. In Kratzmueller, B. et al. Sport and the Construction of Identities. Vienna: Verlag Turia & Kant, 2007, pp. 704-712.

Pfister, G. *Women in sport–gender relations and future perspectives*. Sport in society, 13(2), 2010, pp. 234-248.

Soares, John. *East beats West: ice hockey and the Cold War*. Sport and the Transformation of Modern Europe, Routledge, 2013, pp. 47-61.

Spacek, O. *Sporting activities and social stratification in the Czech Republic: a temporal perspective*. European Journal for Sport and Society, Vol 13 (4), 2016, pp. 256-273.

Turcova, I. *The Czech approach to outdoor adventure and experiential education: the influence of Jaroslav Foglar's work*. Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning. Vol. 17 (4), 2017, pp. 321-337.

Waic, M. *Sport in Czechoslovakia 1945-1989*. In Waic, M. et. Al. (eds). In the Shadow of Totalitarianism: Sport and the Olympic Movement in the “Visegrad Countries” 1945-1989, Prague: Karolinum Press, 2015, pp. 12-40.

Waic, M. *The Czech Sokol movement: school of the nation*. Sport–Integration–Europe, pp.72-81.

Whannel, G. *Television and the Transformation of Sport*. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 625(1), 2009, pp. 205-218.