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PoliSci 101-6-21 Freshman Seminar
Fall Quarter, 2011
Office Hours: By appointment

Sports, Politics, and Public Opinion

Course Description

Sports and politics have become increasingly intertwined over the last 40 years. Local, state, and federal governments as well as other governing bodies (e.g., the NCAA) regulate who can participate (e.g., eligibility, equality) and what standards players must meet (e.g., drug testing, academic performance). These organizations also oversee economic (e.g., stadiums) and symbolic (e.g., mascots) issues. Ideally, governing policies would be responsive to the wishes of their constituents (e.g. players, owners, voters). But are they? How would we know? How do we gauge their opinions? Alternatively, how do sports affect public opinion? Do citizens prefer politicians who engage in sports? Do media portrayals of sport affect what citizens think about race and/or gender? These are examples of the questions we will consider in this class. This involves learning the science of public opinion polling and then applying this knowledge to study opinions about public policies relevant to sports.

The focus is on what individuals think about sports and how sports affect their behaviors. The class thus does not explore technical aspects of legal rules governing sports. It is also necessary, due to limited time, to be selective in topics and thus the class excludes some obviously important areas (e.g., labor relations, the Olympics).

Assignments and Grades

The class meets in Scott Hall 319 on Wednesdays from 9:45am-11:50am. Students are expected to attend all classes, to complete assigned readings and assignments on time, and to actively participate.

Students will be involved in three formal activities, as follows.

1. *Class Projects*. There are two class projects, which will comprise a total of 15% of each student's grade (with most of it coming from the first project described below).
 - a. As we will discuss, a major source of the public's opinions come from media sources. One source of growing relevance – not only for sport fans but also for recruits – is university athletic websites. In designing these ties, universities need to determine how to best present themselves. There is likely variance in the amount of academic (e.g., do they refer to the team members as “student athletes”), admissions, community, and sports information on these sites. Also, the sites likely vary in which sports they emphasize. To explore whether these and/or other variations exist, we will – as a class – design a content analysis framework. Each student will then be assigned at least one website from a Big 10 school or a comparison school (e.g., an Ivy League School, an SEC school, a Division III school). Each student will carefully analyze the site and write an approximately 3-4 page paper explaining what he or she finds. Due November 16th.

- b. Each week, starting the third week of class, students need to come to class with at least three possible survey questions that would be interesting to use in a survey of citizens. The student should be prepared to defend/justify the questions. We will spend some time in many classes selecting the possible questions and later in the quarter, we will implement a survey of citizens using Mechanical Turk.
2. *Research Paper*. Each student will produce a research paper, focused on some aspect of one of the topics we cover in class. This will involve choosing a topic near the start of the quarter, identifying relevant literature (at least a dozen sources) and reviewing it, collecting *or* acquiring data, analyzing the data (in a very basic manner), and writing a paper describing the results. The papers should be approximately 15 pages (excluding bibliography and tables/graphs). Students will be asked to provide reports to the class throughout the quarter. This will comprise a total of 55% of each student's grade. It is due, in the Professor's box, by 12:00pm on Monday, December 5th.

In the course of writing the paper, two Ph.D. students will be available for questions and help with obtaining data, if needed.

3. *Research Exercise*. Students also will choose a topic covered in the class that is different from the focus of their research papers. The student will research some background on the given topic, write an approximately two page outline highlighting key elements, and generate discussion questions, the last two of which will need to be distributed to the class two days prior to the meeting. The student also will write an approximately two page reaction paper to the assigned readings (due on the day of the class) and will lead part of the class discussion on topic. This will comprise a total of 15% of each student's grade.

The remaining 15% of each student's grade will be based on attendance and the quality of participation. There also are a few small assignments that form part of the participation grade. If a student misses a class, it is the *student's* responsibility to provide written documentation of a legitimate excuse (see course policies); otherwise, it will be counted as an unexcused absence. Also, if a student misses class (excused or unexcused), it is the *student's* responsibility to learn about any missed assignments, discussion, and so on. The student should do this by talking to other students *prior* to contacting the Professor. Participation involves taking part in class activities, discussing class readings in an informed way, and discussing ongoing campaign events. While the quantity of the contribution to class discussion is not definitive, some regular participation is expected. Also surprise quizzes based on readings are possible and will affect participation grades.

A table with due dates appears at the end of the syllabus.

Readings

All readings can be found on-line or will be available from the Professor.

Students are expected to read all of the assigned readings before each class. Surprise quizzes on the readings are possible (and will become part of the students' participation grade). If a student

misses a class without a legitimate excuse, he or she will receive a 0 on any quizzes. It also will be necessary for students to include direct references to the readings in their assignments.

Course Policies

- It is the student's responsibility to obtain an assignment if he or she is absent during the class in which the assignment is distributed or discussed. Assignments are due at the *start* of the class period on the days they are due. Make-up in-class assignments and/or late papers will be permitted *only* if the student presents written documentation of legitimate circumstances that prevented the student from completing the assignment on time. This documentation must be provided in a timely manner (i.e., within a week); failure to provide such documentation will result in the student receiving a 0 on the assignment in question. Legitimate circumstances include religious holidays, illness (verified by a note from a health care provider), serious family emergencies, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, and participation in group activities sponsored by the University. *Note* this means late assignments are *not* acceptable (even for partial credit; a score of 0 will be assigned for late assignments absent a legitimate excuse).
- Assignments are *not* accepted via e-mail. Unless otherwise explained, an assignment must be turned in as a hard copy at the *start* of the class in which it is due. Assignments must be *stapled* at this time or they will not be accepted.
- Grading will be done by the professor or a teaching assistant. If a student wishes to appeal an assigned grade, he or she must submit a *written* statement to the professor explaining why the grade should be changed. This must be done within one week after the assignment is returned to the student.
- Incompletes will be granted only in the case of documented illness, and if the student and professor complete the required form.
- Some work will be done in teams. Working with others invariably leads to some disagreement. Students should approach their partners/team with an open and flexible mind. If there are *major* problems, students should notify the professor.
- Finally, students are expected to type each written assignment. The assignments should be proofread; spelling, grammar, and writing style will make up part of a student's grade. Also, students are expected to make reference to the *academic literature* when appropriate including journal articles and books.

Course Outline

September 21 Public Goods and Government

- *Assignment:* We will identify approximately five attitudes in class (e.g., attitude towards sports, particular teams, etc). Each student will develop a measure for each concept, and implement a survey with at least 20 respondents. The student should write a brief paper describing the measure and results and be ready to discuss it on 9/28.
- *Readings (to be read by 9/21):*
 - United States Department of Agriculture, *Dairy Production Stabilization Act of 1983*. This can be found at (search for the Act on the site):
<http://ams.usda.gov/dairy/dairyrp.htm>
 - Review the following websites <http://www.beef.org>,
<http://beefitswhatsfordinner.com>, <http://porkboard.org>, <http://otherwhitemeat.com>,
<http://www.whymilk.com>
 - “Opinion and Policy: A Global View,” by James A. Stimson, Michael B. MacKuen, Robert S. Erikson, *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 27: 29-35, 1994.
 - “In Athletics, Ambitions Compete with Costs,” by Libby Sander and Andrea Fuller, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 26, 2011.
 - “Accountability on the Quad,” by C. Thomas McMillen, *New York Times*, September 1, 2011, A23.
- *Class activity:* We will participate in a simulation to explore the nature of public goods.

September 28 Studying Public Opinion

- *Assignment:* Starting on 10/5, students need to bring at least three possible survey questions to class. The student should justify the question. See description of the class survey earlier in the syllabus.
- *Assignment:* One paragraph description of research topic, and identification of five sources (on the topic) not listed on the syllabus. Set up meetings with graduate students for advice on project. Due 10/5.
- *Readings:*
 - *The Voter’s Guide to Election Polls*, by Michael W. Traugott and Paul J. Lavrakas, Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc., 2008, chapters 1, 5, 6.
 - “Experiments,” by James N. Druckman, In Samuel J. Best and Benjamin Radcliff, eds., *Polling America: An Encyclopedia of Public Opinion*, Volume 2. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.
 - “An Anatomy of Survey-Based Experiments,” by Martin Gilens, In Jeff Manza, Fay Lomax Cook, and Benjamin I. Page, *Navigating Public Opinion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

October 5 College Sports

Note: October 7th is the last day to change grade status for a class to P-N.

- *Assignment:* Identify at least 12 total sources on the research topic and provide a list with a paragraph on each. Due 10/12.
- *Readings:*
 - “From Kickoff to Commencement: The Positive Role of Intercollegiate Athletics in Higher Education,” by Franklin G. Mixon Jr., and Len J. Treviño, *Economics of Education Review* 24: 97-102, 2005.
 - “Prestige, Charitable Deductions and Other Determinants of Alumni Giving: Evidence from Highly Selective Liberal Arts College,” by Jessica Holmes, *Economics of Education Review* 28: 18-28, 2009.
 - “Quality Perception and the Championship Effect: Do Collegiate Sports Influence Academic Rankings,” by Steven R. Cox, and Dianne M. Roden, *Research in Higher Education Journal*: 1-11, 2010.
 - “The Impact of College Sports Success on the Quantity and Quality of Student Applications,” by Devin G. Pope, and Jaren C. Pope, *Southern Economic Journal*, 2011.
 - “Group Takes Aim at BCS,” by Luke Ken-Dineen, *USA Today*, August 10, 2011,
 - “Student-Athlete Equation Could Be a Win-Win,” by Jonathan Mahler, *New York Times*, August 10, 2011, B1.
 - “The NCAA and The Right of Publicity,” by Julia Brighton, *Hastings Communications and Entertainment Law Journal* 33: 275, 2011.
 - “Need-based Grants Helping Some Players,” by Randy Peterson, *USA Today*, August 29, 2011.
 - “Perceptions of Purple: Counterfactual and Hindsight Judgment at Northwestern Wildcats Football Games,” by Neal J. Roese, and Sameep D. Maniar, *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 23: 1245-1253, 1997.
 - *Gaming the World*, by Andrei S. Markovits, and Lars Rensmann, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010, Chapter 6.

October 12 Gender

- *Assignment:* An approximately three to four page literature review of the research topic. Identification of data source. Due 10/19.
- *Readings:*
 - See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Title_IX
 - See: <http://www.aauw.org/act/laf/library/athleticStatistics.cfm>
 - “Suit Filed Arguing Title IX Uses Quotas,” by Katie Thomas, *New York Times*, July 21, 2011, B11.
 - “Biased Voices of Sports: Racial and Gender Stereotyping in College Basketball Announcing,” by Susan Tyler Eastman, and Andrew c. Billings, *The Howard Journal of Communications* 12: 183-201, 2001.

- “Female and Male Sport Fans: A Comparison of Sport Consumption Motives,” by Jeffrey D. James, and Lynn L. Ridinger, *Journal of Sport Behavior* 25: 260-278, 2002.
- “Gender Bias in the 1996 Olympic Games: A Comparative Analysis,” by Catriona T. Higgs, Karen H. Weiller, and Scott B. Martin, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 27: 52-64, 2003.

October 19 Race

- *Assignment:* For those collecting their own data, complete the survey to be used; for those using secondary data, identify the data source. Due 10/26.
- *Assignment:* Each student should peruse various university athletic department websites and identify/justify at least ten items that would be interested to code (for the class project described earlier in the syllabus). Due 10/26.
- *Readings:*
 - “The Politics of Race and Support: Resistance and Domination in the 1968 African American Olympic Protest Movement,” by Douglas Hartmann, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19: 548-566, 1996.
 - “An Exploratory Study of Black Male College Athlete’s Perceptions on Race and Athlete Activism,” by Kwame Agyemang, John N. Singer, and Joshua De Lorme, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45: 419-435, 2010.
 - “Skill in Black and White: Negotiating Media Images of Race in a Sporting Context,” by Daniel Buffington, and Todd Fraley, *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 32: 292-310.
 - “At All-Star Game, Politics and Passion Are Also in Play,” by George Vecsey, *New York Times*, July 11, 2011, D2.
 - “Is It Wrong to Note 100m Winners are Always Black?,” by Mathew Syed, *BBC News Magazine*, August 26, 2011.
 - “Keeping Score When it Counts,” by Richard E. Lapchik, 2011. See http://www.tidesport.org/Grad%20Rates/2011_Mens_Bball_FINAL.pdf
 - See <http://losingtowin.wfu.edu/presentations/> and read the presentations.

October 26 Drugs

Note: October 28th is the last day to drop a class.

- *Assignment:* All data must be obtained. Due 11/2.
- *Readings:*
 - “*Sports Illustrated*, the ‘War on Drugs,’ and the Anabolic Steroid Control Act of 1990,” by Bryan E. Denham, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 21: 260-273, 1997.
 - “*Sports Illustrated*, the Mainstream Press, and the Enactment of Drug Policy in Major League Baseball: A Study of Agenda Building Theory,” by Bryan E. Denham, *Journalism* 5: 51- 68, 2004.

- “Clemens and Armstrong Aren’t Worth Pursuing,” by Jonathan Mahler, *New York Times*, July 2, 2011, B9.
- “NCAA Study of Substance Use and Abuse Habits of College Student-Athletes,” by Gray A. Green, Frank D. Uryasz, Todd A. Petr, and Corey D. Bray, *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine* 11: 51-56, 2001.
- “Substance Use Among College Athletes: A Comparison on Sport/Team Affiliation,” by Jason A. Ford, *Journal of American College Health* 55: 367-373, 2007.
- See <http://sportsanddrugs.procon.org/view.answers.php?questionID=001227>
- See <http://sports.espn.go.com/espn/news/story?id=3267634>
- *Class activity:* We will construct the athletic website coding framework.

November 2 Mascots

- *Assignment:* Analyze data and write 3 to 4 page description. Due 11/9.
- *Readings:*
 - “Native American Team Names and Mascots: Disparaging and Insensitive Or Just a Part of the Game?,” by Kristine A. Brown, *Sports Law Journal* 115: 115-130, 2002.
 - “The Indian Wars,” by S.L. Price, *Sports Illustrated*, March 4, 2002.
 - “Of Polls and Race Prejudice: Sports Illustrated’s Errant ‘Indian Wars’,” by C. Richard King, Ellen J. Staurowsky, Lawrence Baca, Laurel R. Davis, and Cornel Pewewardy, *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26: 381-402, 2002.
 - “Of Warrior Chiefs and Indian Princesses: The Psychological Consequences of American Indian Mascots,” by Stepanie A. Fryberg, Hazel Rose Markus, Daphna Oyserman, and Joseph M. Stone, *Basic and Applied Social Psychology* 20: 208-218, 2008.
- *Class activity:* We will spend some time coding athletic websites.

November 9 Sports and Politicians

Note: We may spend some time discussing winter quarter courses (registration begins November 14th)

- *Assignment:* Website paper due 11/16.
- *Assignment:* Complete a draft of the entire research paper. Due 11/23.
- *Readings:*
 - *Celebrity Politics*, by Darrell M. West and John Orman, Prentice Hall, 2002, Chapter 6.
 - “Political Football: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and the Gridiron Reform Movement,” by John S. Watterson, *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 25: 555-564, 1995.

- “The Games President’s Play: Sports and the Presidency,” by Nina C. Ayoub, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 27, 2006.
 - “Presidents and Sports: How Does Obama Stack Up?,” by Erik Spanberg, *The Christian Science Monitor* January 16, 2009.
 - “Golf’s Approval Ratings Concerns Politicians,” by Juliet Macur, *New York Times*, June 16, 2011, B12.
 - “Irrelevant Events Affect Voters’ Evaluations of Government Performance,” by Andrew J. Healy, Neil Malhotra, and Cecilia Hyunjung Mo, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107: 12804-12809, 2010.
- *Class activity*: We will finalize our class survey.

November 16 Stadiums

- *Readings*:
 - “Testing the Limits of Elite Influence on Public Opinion: An Examination of Sports Facility Referendums,” by David M. Paul, and Clyde Brown, *Political Research Quarterly* 54: 871-888, 2001.
 - “The Dynamics of Elite Endorsements in Professional Sports Facility Referendums,” by David M. Paul, and Clyde Brown, *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 6: 272-299, 2006.
 - “Proximity Benefits and Voting on Stadium and Arena Subsidies,” by Dennis Coates, and Brad R. Humphreys, *Journal of Urban Economics* 59: 285-299, 2006.

November 23 Catch-Up, Wrap-up, and Project Reports

December 5 Final Paper Due

Due Date	Assignment
Several Weeks, starting on October 5 th	Survey Questions
Assigned Week	Research Exercise
September 28 th	Survey
October 5 th	Research Topic and Five Sources
October 12 th	Twelve Sources for Research Paper
October 19 th	Literature Review for Research Paper
October 26 th	Data Identified
October 26 th	Website Coding Suggestions
November 2 nd	Data Collected
November 9 th	Data Analysis
November 16 th	Website Analysis Paper
November 23 rd	Draft of Research Paper
December 5 th	Final Research Paper