Course Description

Today and historically, intercollegiate sports have been an integral part of life at many colleges and universities. The popularity of big-time college sports, coupled with the increasing funds that flow into athletic programs has created full-scale commercial entertainment with large monetary payouts (Duderstadt, 2000). For example, the total revenue received by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) for the fiscal year ending in 2014 was $922 million (NCAA, 2014). In many regards, the high stakes investment and commercial interests in college sports are evident.

The urgency to secure corporate sponsors (generate-revenue) and produce winning seasons has made the reality of maintaining a healthy balance between commercial college sports and American higher education almost impossible. There is evidence to suggest that intercollegiate athletics are inconsistent with the core values, practices, and mission of higher education (Bowen & Levin, 2003; Comeaux, 2007; Gerdy, 2006; Sack, 2001). A report from the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics (2010) showed compelling evidence that the current business model of intercollegiate sport is unsustainable and that financial reform is necessary. In order to restore the balance between athletics and academics, the Knight Commission (2010) made the following recommendations: (1) greater transparency, including better measures to compare spending on athletics to spending on academics; (2) rewards for specific practices that make academic values a priority; and (3) treatment of college athletes first and foremost not as professionals but as students. In addition to excessive athletic spending, the lack of intervention strategies among stakeholders in the affairs of intercollegiate athletics to enhance the learning and personal development of athletes exacerbates existing concerns.
Critical movements in American higher education serve as context for this discussion of intercollegiate athletics. As scholars, researchers, and community leaders continue to question all other aspects of university life, from access to equity, undergraduate education to graduate and professional education, from research to teaching, it is also relevant and necessary to explore peripheral activities such as intercollegiate athletics (Comeaux, 2015).

This 10-week course offers a sociological perspective on intercollegiate athletics in American higher education. Students are introduced to college athletics as an organization, including its structure and function; the interrelationships between college athletics to larger political and economic dynamics of society; how issues of race, class, gender, and culture influence students’ subsequent educational experiences and outcomes; and the roles of faculty, students, coaches, and administrators and the various challenges that have emerged. Academic reform initiatives designed to improve the current and future trajectory of intercollegiate athletics generally and athletes specifically are considered.

**Course Objectives**

- Students will explore various approaches universities take to intercollegiate athletics and the extent to which each approach is consistent with the overall educational mission of American higher education
- Students will examine the organizational structure and functions of the NCAA, including the rule-making process and principles of conduct
- Students will take an in depth look at contemporary issues such as one-year renewal and multi-year scholarship policy, athletes’ rights, Title IX compliance, conference realignment, escalating cost associated with intercollegiate athletics, and the athlete experience with a particular emphasis on race, gender, and intersectionality
- Students will explore numerous reform initiatives that have been introduced, debated, and in some cases enacted to improve the conditions of intercollegiate athletics generally and to strengthen the learning and personal development trajectories for athletes specifically

**Required Readings** (To be purchased and read by all students)


Assigned scholarly articles (access via Blackboard)

**Course Structure**
This course assumes that each member of the class is a valuable resource. The instructor, TAs, and students are both teachers and learners, who collectively make this course meaningful. We are equally responsible to contribute to the pool of knowledge.

An underlying assumption in this course is that learning is not a mere transmission of knowledge. Instead, it is a process of constructing meaningful experiences within a political community of learners. Meaningfulness is personal and depends on the amount of participation and willingness to take a risk. Therefore, there is a degree of ambiguity in this course as students discover personal connections to the curriculum.

**Expectations of students**
Students are expected to:
- keep up with weekly readings and assignments
- log into the course daily or every other day at a minimum
- complete assignments and complete course exam on time
- actively participate in discussion forums – respectfully and positively
- adhere to standards of academic honesty

**Communication with Instructor and TAs**
Communication takes place in the weekly Q & A forums. These forums serve as “office hours” where the instructor and TAs monitor questions and answers posted by students. Before asking questions, please review the course syllabus first. If your question is personal (grades, absence, etc.), please email the instructor directly.

**Course Requirements**

*Class Participation (Student Engagement)*
All students are expected to attend class regularly and enter fully in class discussion. As such, students should be prepared to actively participate in both class discussion forums, by critically analyzing, posing questions, and/or making observations about the assigned readings and lecture materials.

*Online Discussion Forum (8)*
Each week students will be required to respond to question(s) posed in the discussion area. There is a maximum of three points that can be earned for each online discussion forum with the exception of week 10 (4 points max). The TA (and in some cases the instructor) will serve as moderator of the discussion forum. Students are required to post their response and, in turn, respond substantively to two of their peers. To answer the question adequately, you will need to: (1) demonstrate depth in your analysis through examples and elaboration; (2) provide critical analysis and reflection rather than just an expression of personal opinion; and (3) explicitly integrate (through quotes and direct references) ideas and concepts from the assigned text to support your response. Respond to at least **two** of your colleagues' postings in one or more of the following ways:
• Ask a probing question
• Share an insight from having read your colleague's posting
• Offer and support an opinion
• Validate an idea with your own experience
• Make a suggestion
• Expand on your colleague's posting

Critical Reflection Exercise
Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings each week— and be prepared to comment critically. Rather than providing mere summaries of course readings, students will be asked to analyze and synthesize information from the assigned readings while reflecting on their own lived experiences using personal examples, situations they observe in organizations and within their communities, and current events. Students will submit a two page, double-spaced critical reflection of the assigned readings (See due dates below). There is a maximum of two points that can be earned for each critical reflection paper.

Twitter Response
Students will need a Twitter account to discuss the course materials with one another. This assignment will require students to use Twitter as a way to communicate with the class about content that has been read and discussed. Each Tuesday all students are required to tweet a statement, question, something from the day’s course which the student has found to be thought-provoking, insightful or problematic. The statement does not mean one has to agree with the content, but generate a conversation around a given topic. Before Thursday of that week, you must reply to at least one other student in the class (by using the @ reply feature, e.g., by composing a tweet that says, “@smith: My perspective is very different. Today’s readings provide evidence that...”
-All tweets must include the following hashtag:  #educ50
- You must reply to your TA in all tweets using the @ reply feature: @TA handle

*Student might consider setting up a separate account just for this class. Students should make sure that their Twitter account is not set to “private” so that tweets are searchable by others in the class. Please email your username to your TA.

Exam
There will be one exam covering assigned readings, lecture materials, and online class discussions. The exam will be administered and proctored online through ProctorU for a fee- approx. $9.00 per online exam. Students will need a webcam and microphone for online exam. Please contact the instructor as soon as you enroll to make these arrangements.

There will also be a campus exam for students who prefer to come to the UCR campus (no fee).

**There are no makeup exams. Students should not take this class if unable to complete exam on the scheduled date.
**Final Paper**
The final paper should contain approximately 2,500-3,000 words (not including references, tables, figures, or appendices), double-spaced, typewritten, following the American Psychological Association (6th edition) guidelines for paper style. Students are required to include a minimum of 15 scholarly sources (not including the assigned textbook). NO Wikipedia sources are allowed. Information about APA style is available at www.docstyles.com/apastudy.htm

See due dates below for your topic outline, annotated bibliographic review, and final product. As well, examples of final paper topics are below.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Socio-Historical Context: Continuities and Changes in College Athletics (lecture podcast)</td>
<td>-Twitter Responses #1</td>
<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 1; and Making the Connection, Read chapter 1</td>
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<td>-Thurs: Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 2-4</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>College Athletics as an Organization: Business as Usual? (lecture podcast)</td>
<td>-Twitter Responses #2 - Critical Reflection #1 Due -Discussion forum #1</td>
<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 9 &amp; 10</td>
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<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 12</td>
<td>-<strong>Thurs:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 2-4</td>
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<td>-<strong>Thurs:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 12</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Dual Role as Student and Athlete: Inherent Contradiction? (lecture podcast)</td>
<td>-Twitter Responses #3 - Critical Reflection #2 Due -Discussion forum #2 -Topic Outline for Final Due</td>
<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 6; and Making the Connection, Read chapter 2</td>
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<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 12</td>
<td>-<strong>Thurs:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 7</td>
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<td>-<strong>Thurs:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 12</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>College Athlete Engagement, Campus Climate, and Academic Achievement (lecture podcast)</td>
<td>-Twitter Responses #4 - Critical Reflection #3 Due -Discussion forum #3</td>
<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 8</td>
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<td>-<strong>Thurs:</strong> Making the Connection, Read chapters 3 &amp; 4</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Significance of Race/Ethnicity in College Athletics (lecture podcast)</td>
<td>-Twitter Responses #5 - Critical Reflection #4 Due -Discussion forum #4 -Annotated Bibliographic Review for Final Paper Due</td>
<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 13 &amp; 14</td>
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<td>-<strong>Tues:</strong> Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 15 &amp; 16; and Making the Connection, Read chapter 5</td>
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| Week 6 | Gender Equity in College Athletics (lecture podcast) | -Twitter Responses #6  
- Critical Reflection #5 Due  
- Discussion forum #5 | - **Tues:** Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 17 & 18  
- **Thurs:** Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 19 & 20 |
| Week 7 | NCAA and Member Institution Policy Concerns (lecture podcast) | -Twitter Responses #7  
- Discussion forum #6 | - **Tues:** Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 21 & 23  
- **Thurs:** Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapters 24 & 25 |
| Week 8 | Academic & Financial Reform: Expectations in the 21st Century (lecture podcast) | *** Exam (Thursday) | - **Tues:** Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 11, 26, & 27  
- **Thurs:** no required readings |
| Week 9 | Career Transition: Life after Intercollegiate Sports (lecture podcast) | -Twitter Responses #8  
- Critical Reflection #6 Due  
- Discussion forum #7 | - **Tues:** Intro to Intercollegiate Athletics, Read chapter 28; and Making the Connection, Read chapters 6 & 7  
- **Thurs:** no required readings |
| Week 10 | Open Topics (lecture podcast) | --Discussion forum #8 | - **Tues:** Making the Connection, Read chapters 8-10 |
| Finals Week | | -Final Paper due (specific date & time TBD) | |

**NOTE:** Instructor reserves the right to change schedule. Students will be notified of schedule changes.

**Course Requirements/Grading:**

To encourage thoughtful reflection of course materials and commitment to course objectives, you will be assessed on your ability to master course requirements. Specifically, you are required to do each of the following:

1.) Discussion Forum (8)- 25%
2.) Critical Reflection Exercise (6) - 12%
3.) Twitter Responses (8)- 8%
4.) Exam (1)- 30%
5.) Final Paper (1)– 25%
Grading Scale:

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<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86% - 89%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>76% - 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83% - 85%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73% - 75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70% - 72%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>63% - 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70% - 72%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 62%</td>
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Academic Conduct
UCR expects honesty and integrity from all members of its community. All acts of cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarism, forgery of signature, or falsification of data will be dealt with appropriately. Students found guilty of any offence against academic honesty and integrity are subject to a failing grade in the course by the instructor.

Academic Accommodations
Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation for any sort of disability should contact me to discuss your specific needs. As well, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Administrative Office (125 Costo Hall) at (951) 827-3861 or via e-mail at specserv@ucr.

UCR Academic Resource Center
The Academic Resource Center (ARC) is the central resource for academic support at UCR. All students are strongly encouraged to visit the ARC, which is staffed by professional and student employees who are well trained to provide academic support and dedicated to fostering academic excellence. Resources provided by the ARC include Tutoring, Supplemental Instruction, Study Skills Workshops, as well as several peer mentoring programs. Staff work with all students, at all skill levels, in all stages of their undergraduate careers. Participating in these services is most useful to students when used pro-actively for academic enrichment. Visit arc.ucr.edu or call 951-827-3721 for more information about hours, location and the schedule of services. For more information about the Academic Resource Center, feel free to contact the Interim Director, Rena M. Burton (rena.burton@ucr.edu).

Online Class Issues

1. Technical Requirements
You must have the following to take this class:
   - A computer with Internet Access that you can use approximately 3-6 hours online per week (additional offline computer time estimated: 1-3 hours).
   - Office Suite. You will need to have access to a word processor (e.g., Word), presentation software (e.g., PowerPoint), and spreadsheet (e.g., Excel).
   - Internet browser (e.g., Internet Explorer, Firefox)
   - Real Player (http://www.real.com)
Examples of Topics for Final Paper

- Should high school football players have to wait three years after they graduate before being allowed to enter the NFL?
- Do you think men’s non-revenue sports should be cut to achieve gender equity? This topic of course requires a solid understanding of Title IX, its history and objectives.
- Should college athletes be able to receive money from product endorsements as a professional athlete and still be able to participate as an “amateur” in a different collegiate sport?
- Do you support the NBA rule that keeps athletes from playing in the NBA until their high school class has been out of school for one year?
- Should college athletes who are seriously injured be allowed to receive workers compensation? In other words, should they be treated as employees for workers compensation purposes?
- Discuss the major arguments in the 1984 Oklahoma and Georgia verses the NCAA antitrust case. Do you think the Supreme Court was correct in ruling that the football schools should have a right to sell football broadcast rights to the highest bidder?
- Would you support a proposal to make freshman athletes ineligible for varsity competition if they are special admits?
- Should there be a playoff system in Division IA football? How would such a system work? Would it be compatible with the academic needs of athletes?
- What is the unrelated business income tax? Should big-time collegiate sport have to pay such a tax on its revenues? Fully explain the tax law involved here and why it should or should not apply to big-time collegiate sports.
- Should the NCAA be able to use the likenesses of former college athletes in licensed product sales without the athletes sharing in the revenues?
- Do you think that big-time college athletes deserve greater financial compensation than current NCAA rules allow? More specifically, do you think it is a violation of anti-trust law for the NCAA to cap athletic scholarships below the full cost of a college education?
- Does the use of male basketball players in practice by women’s basketball teams deny some women on the team an opportunity to take full advantage of playing college sport?
- Do you think that revenue sports in the FBS have achieved the NCAA’s goal of maintaining athletes as an integral part of the student body and maintaining a clear line of demarcation between collegiate sport and professional sport?
Recommended Readings


Lapchick, R. (2001). *Smashing barriers: Race and sport in the new millennium.* Lanham, MD:


