

*The primary task of a useful teacher is to teach his students to recognize inconvenient facts—
I mean the facts that are inconvenient for their party opinions (Max Weber)*

SOCCER AND GLOBAL POLITICS

**Kirk Bowman • INTA 4803 • INSTRUCTIONAL CENTER 109 • MWF 12:05 – 12:55
OFFICE HOURS MW 1:00 TO 2:00 AND BY APPOINTMENT
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In October, 2008 a terrible kidnapping took place outside of the city of São Paulo, Brazil. A 21-year old took his former girlfriend hostage, eventually murdering her. The event was played out for over 100 hours live on national television, yet some of the most dominant discourses were not about violence but about soccer. Indeed, the president of the Palmeiras Soccer Club rushed to the kidnapping site to try to negotiate the release of the hostage, only to have his good intentions crushed by fans that started chanting team songs, forcing his negotiations with the kidnapper to halt. After the episode ended in tragedy, the director of the SWAT team that botched the hostage rescue attempt lamented that the week was horrible, but it would end much better if only Palmeires would win the following Sunday.

Many traditional scholars would analyze this story as an example of mass hysteria resulting from Latin American identity formation. The explosion of research on identity in the region has largely ignored sport since it has been viewed as an end, not as a cause. Instead, many scholars have focused on Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which points to print culture as a critical factor in national identity construction, or Tilly, Centeno, and Weber who argue that national wars against foreign enemies make states and national identity. For Latin Americanists, both sets of arguments are unconvincing, yet rarely have other causal factors been established as part of a systematic explanation of identity formation for South America.

Soccer is both the global game, uniting continents and nations, and a source of intense local identity and fracturing of national identity, resulting in street battles and violence in many cities. The pulling of identity towards a larger identity in Italy, Africa, and Brazil and the use of soccer to weaken national identity and favor local ideas of nationalism and citizenship is what makes soccer a fascinating and enduring element in international and comparative politics. This course will use readings, lectures, film, and a research project to explore soccer and politics. The students are expected to do the readings before class, to participate in class discussions, and to gain an understanding of the political dimensions of the beautiful game.

Identity is not the only political or social manifestation that can be highlighted through soccer. In fact, soccer is an excellent lens to examine and understand a great many of the key features of global politics, such as: Inequality, elections, gender representation, war, ethnic and religious divisions, global human trafficking, human rights, processes of globalization, dictatorship, corruption, diplomacy, propaganda, secession, institutions, imperialism/colonialism, fascism, racism, democracy, state recognition, and more.

This class will provide an orientation to soccer and politics: the beautiful game. Books, newspaper readings, lectures, discussion, library assignments, and film will be the vehicles to spread the understanding.

BOOKS: This course is reading intensive, and will include sections from the following books.

Bloomfield, Steve. 2010. *Africa United: Soccer, Passion, Politics, and the First World Cup in Africa*. Harper.

Markovits, Andrei and Lars Rensmann. 2010. *Gaming the World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture*. Princeton.

Foer, Franklin. 2004. *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization*, Harper Collins, New York.

ARTICLES:

Gaffney, Chris. *Soccer and Society*, 2009. "Stadiums and Society in 21st Century Buenos Aires"

Maranhão, Tiago. *Soccer and Society*, 2007. "Apollonians and Dionysians: The Role of Football in Gilberto Freyre's Vision of Brazilian People."

Schedule of readings, exams, and other items.

1/7	Introduction	2/15	TBA	3/27	TBA
1/9	Film in class	2/18	Africa 1, paper intro due	3/29	TBA
1/11	Gaming Ch. 1	2/20	Africa 2	4/1	Foer 1
1/14	via email	2/22	Africa 3	4/3	Foer 2
1/16	Gaming Ch. 2	2/25	Africa 4	4/5	Foer 3
1/18	via email	2/27	Africa 5	4/8	Foer 4
1/21	No Class MLK Holiday	3/1	Africa 6	4/10	Foer 5
1/23	Gaming Ch. 3	3/4	Africa 7	4/12	Foer 6
1/25	via email	3/6	Africa 8	4/15	Foer 7
1/28	Gaming Ch. 4	3/8	Africa 9	4/17	Foer 8
1/30	via email	3/11	Africa 10	4/19	Foer 9
2/1	Gaming Ch. 5	3/13	Midterm Exam	4/22	TBA
2/4	Gaming Ch. 6 and concl.	3/15	Gaffney Article	4/24	TBA
2/6	TBA	3/18	Spring Break	4/26	Conclusion: papers due
2/8	TBA	3/20	Spring Break	4/29	final exam: 11:30 am
2/11	TBA	3/22	Spring Break		
2/13	TBA	3/25	Maranhão Article		

Grading:

Quizzes: 20% (12 short quizzes over semester, 10 will count towards grade. From assigned readings. Random days)

Midterm: 30%

Final: 30%

10 page research paper: 20%. This will focus on soccer and one political variable presented above, and either one or two countries or cases.

Professor reserves the right to make necessary changes to syllabus.