

*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

Spring 2021 • Kirk Bowman • INTA 3242 A & HP / 8803 Hybrid Course (**we expect to meet online synchronously through mid-february, and then with greater in person meetings based on vaccinations, available hospital beds, and Covid-19 infection rates**) • Architecture West 258 • W/F 11:00am to 12:15pm • [Kirk.bowman@inta.gatech.edu](mailto:Kirk.bowman@inta.gatech.edu)

OFFICE HOURS Wednesdays 1-2:30 and by appointment, via Bluejeans to start

NO SCREENS OF ANY KIND IN CLASS WHEN WE MEET IN PERSON—phones, tablets, laptops.

PERIOD. Failure to follow this policy will result in asking you to leave class.

INTRO: 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 Palmeiras 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. This course is reading intensive. You must be willing to engage the literature, focusing and turning off distractions. If you do not enjoy reading and are not willing to read before class, please drop the class.

There will be no attendance and no quizzes. Exams will be at least 50% from lectures.

**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the multiple ways in which soccer is a lens to understand social, cultural, economic, and political forces as well as the ways in which soccer acts as an agent for change. There are multiple arenas of political life that can be shaped or explained through soccer. These include, for example:

1. the tensions between cosmopolitanism and tribalism (London vs. Buenos Aires)
2. language vs. blood/land as a source of primal identity in homeland societies (Athletic Bilbao vs. Barcelona).
3. Anarchism and fascism (Carsi vs. Lazio/Real Madrid)
4. Gender equity and social genderizing sport (Japan vs. USA vs. Norway)

5. Government using sport in bread and circus to distract the population (see Italy under Mussolini, Iran and North Korea in World Cups, Brazil and Argentina in 2013.)
6. Democracy vs. electoralism: Fifa, AFA, and more
7. Colonialism and imperialism: FIFA in Africa, baseball in Nicaragua and Cuba vs. soccer in Costa Rica.
8. Religion and Politics: The Maradoniano church, San Lorenzo and the Pope, Atlanta FC, Turkey and Iran rejecting and later embracing soccer.
9. Identity formation in immigrant societies (Garra Charrua in Uruguay and embrace of Brazilian ethnicity)
10. Core, Periphery and Semi-Periphery. Can the US ever enter the core or global soccer powers? The Elk Horn effect. The David Beckham effect? The Dirk Nowitzky effect?
11. Folklore and rationalization. Spain in World Cups and Euro Cups.
12. The allure and failure of Pharaonic projects, megaevents, the allure of modernization theory for development. Why did South Africa build so many stadia that they did not need? Why is there a huge stadium in Leiria Portugal and Cuiabá Brazil? Soccer explains Lukes 3<sup>rd</sup> face of power and Galtung's harmony of interests between global elites at FIFA and elites in their own countries through glamour and construction money.
13. The limitations of facebook, twitter, technology to start a revolution. Al Ahly in Egypt and the truce in Istanbul. What is the relationship between technology, soccer, and politics?
14. Diego Maradona, Argentina, and the Paradox of Plenty.
15. What is a state? What is a citizen? Frank Zappa, Gibraltar, Palestine, UN vs. FIFA and the power of enforcement, CONIFA, Western Sahara vs. Cascadia.
16. Federalism, regionalism, and western expansion—Portland Timbers and Cuiabá American football.
17. Soft Power, small states using soccer to expand power and improve reputation
18. Human trafficking, Cambodia
19. Gendered sports, Women with Balls
20. Booms and busts of commodities, Anzi
21. Malapportionment for entry and hosting, CONMEBOL v Africa. How many votes does England really have? Or China? Or USA?
22. Path Dependency and soccer training in the USA v soccer powers and the future of women
23. Keeping politics out of sports☺ Poppies and flyovers
24. Embracing diversity vs. rejecting, France vs. Italy. Game of our lives podcast.
25. Neoliberalism variances: Entertain and win at all costs, play ugly and win at all costs, plus with style cheap and try to win, gut it out and survive in top league
26. Power of international institutions. FIFA vs. UN (Guatemala etc)
27. Are firms like fraternities? Euphoric hives gone awry? Chelsea human rights NGO president and Syracuse fraternity
28. Technology and soccer—such as Erdogan in Turkey to control the crowd, the tension of VAR
29. Inequality differences of club teams, USA (on team) vs. Europe (between teams), two level games,
30. Post Materialist Values: Union Berlin, Big Lebowski, St. Pauli
31. Antisemitism and cultural appropriation, Atlanta, Palestino, Beitar, Spurs, Chelsea
32. Faces of Power
33. Resistance of the weak (Liverpool fans over prices, Afghan women, Hong Kong v. China and booing the anthem.
34. Strangling out the passion and type one and type two errors. From Hillsborough to the German Rebellion. To flare or not to flare. To stand or not to stand.
35. Civil Society and social capital—Hinchada Unida. Should hooligans be encouraged?
36. Why do some countries become soccer countries and some become baseball or cricket or rugby countries?
37. Human rights and the Carsi
38. Soft Power and diplomacy (mega events vs. sponsoring, Neymar as act of defiance, Man City vs. PSG)
39. Politics and Corruption: Soccergate and FIFA
40. Prospect theory and Pep's strategy
41. Control: Banning football for all and anti-modernization (or just banning women)

42. Funding and constructing stadia for power and influence: The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative and soccer stadia
43. Americanization of soccer: franchises, more scoring, VAR and fairness.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

*Student will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.*

*Cultural and ethical awareness. Students will become more aware of the diversity of cultural and ethical systems in the world. Able to understand and articulate key issues with respect for a range of different variables.*

*Students will demonstrate understanding of soccer as both a lens for understanding political and social concepts and dynamics and as a causal variable for change.*

*Students will demonstrate the ability to write a persuasive compelling argument.*

*Students will demonstrate the ability to understand the relationship between technological change and social/political change through soccer and the effect of technology on the game.*

### **BOOKS and READINGS**

This is a reading intensive senior level/graduate course. You must enjoy reading to succeed in this course. There are 2 required books for the first section of the course. The last section will feature PDFs (uploaded to canvas) and other readings on topics and cases that the class wants to explore. We will heavily rely on the class Youtube page for videos at

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLGiYM9UI0QPS5sDEcXErjYXp1IOcOeSMI> (shorturl.at/czBI9)

*Gaming the World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture*

by Andrei S. Markovits (Author), Lars Rensmann (Author)

Available on Amazon

*Fútbol: Why Soccer Matters in Latin America*

Joshua Nadel

Available on Amazon

### **Schedule of Readings, Exams, and Assignments**

1/15 INTRODUCTION: Why is this the most important class you will ever take at GT. Listen to podcast Episode 1 of *American Fiasco* (The romance of soccer: <https://www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/american-fiasco/podcasts/2> )

1/20 INTRO part 2: How Soccer is organized and critical differences between USA soccer and global football and why it matters: (Bowman/Goguilon PDF reading in FILES)

1/22 INTRO part 3: The differences that matter between soccer and other sports and Theories of Identity and Soccer: Reading sent out by professor via PDF—turn in topics or countries for course for updated customized syllabus (Bowman LARR PDF in Files)

1/27 Gaming Chapter 1

1/29 Gaming Chapter 2

2/3 Gaming Chapter 3 (Teams selected for final project)

2/5 Gaming Chapter 4. Updated syllabus out.

2/10 Gaming 5, 6 plus conclusion

#### **2/12 Finish Gaming**

2/17 World Cups, MegaEvents and Harmony of Interests (Reading TBD in Files) (paper topic due, must have met with professor before this date)

2/19 The Old Firm: PDF (Plus Western Sahara vs. Northern Ireland and flooding the voters in Missouri)

2/24 Serbia and Balkans Foer: PDF

2/26 Brazil:PDF Bowman/Arocena Beautiful Game and Appolonians Dionysians Maranhao, Chile and Brazil chapters in Nadel

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x20z6cv>

3/3 Paradox of Plenty topic day: readings are Nadel Intro and Chapter 2

3/5 Midterm

3/10 Special Event, TBD

3/12 Uruguay and Paraguay, Nadel 1 and 3

3/17 Honduras and Mexico: Nadel 5 & 6  
(Literature review due, along with at least 2 cases)

3/19 The Quarrymen and Spanish Soccer:PDF

3/24 Spring Break Day/ no class / no reading

**3/26 FIFA, Corruption, and Malapportionment  
(Reading to come in Files)**

3/31 Positive role of soccer stars:

reading:

[http://archive.wilsonquarterly.com/sites/default/files/articles/WQ\\_VOL13\\_SP\\_1989\\_Article\\_06.pdf](http://archive.wilsonquarterly.com/sites/default/files/articles/WQ_VOL13_SP_1989_Article_06.pdf)

4/02 Firms and Casual Culture: Reading TBD  
**(First full draft of paper due).** Firms, Ultras, and hooligans, (PDF in Files from *1312*, Montague)

4/07 Soccer and Political Protest: Turkey and Egypt: PDF . COPA90 on Algeria

4/09 Three Faces of Power and Gender: Nadel 7. I will send out a small written essay on 3 faces of power.

4/14 Soft Power with Owning and Sponsoring (paper written by student in this class a couple of years ago)

Soft Power PDF in Canvas files. China and Japan.

Also: Football promise from below. Two readings:

<https://thinkingcity.org/2018/12/09/from-struggling-football-club-to-vital-community-hub-the-story-of-cs-lebowski/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/the-gentleman-ultra/2015/nov/18/cs-big-lebowski-fans-football-club-the-dude>

4/16 TBD

4/21 Africa I (case TBA) PAPER DUE, NO EXCEPTIONS: ADVISED TO GET IN EARLY

4/23 Africa II (Case and reading TBA)

5/5 11:20 Final, 9-10:50.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance is strongly encouraged. At least 50% of exam content will come from classes. Professor will NOT share slides or class notes. Do not ask.

### ADAPTS

The professor will work with ADAPTS so that all students have an equal opportunity for success. For information on ADAPTS, see <http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/>

### Honor Code Statement:

*Plagiarizing is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own: use (another's production) without crediting the source."*

*If caught plagiarizing, you will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code.*

*For more information see: <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>*

This is a reading intensive course. If you do not like to read or do not have the time to read a solid hour or two per class meeting, then this is NOT the course for you.

Grading:

Midterm: 30%

Final: 30%

Research Paper: 40%

This is an upper division/graduate class. The major project is an analytical paper of approximately 15 pages on soccer as an agent or as a lens for some important phenomenon or relationship from comparative politics, economics, sociology, or anthropology. What do we mean by analytical vs descriptive? A descriptive paper answer "what." There is no puzzle that you are trying to answer. There is no account for change. An analytical paper can be described with a single sentence. Why? How? What caused? How do we explain? Analytical papers can be reduced to independent and dependent variables. There are usually two cases, either 2 different countries or one country at two different time period. As this class is about soccer & global politics, the paper needs to focus on societal, cultural, economic, or political interactions with elements of the global game. We will have a grading rubric and discussion. You will need to have at least 7 scholarly citations for the paper (with at least 5 academic articles).

You will work in teams of 2 (with possibly one team of 3) with each of you doing a project of one of the paired cases. You will have an individual paper of approximately 15 pages, and a 2-page summary of the team paired cases. They must fit one of two methodological patterns that we will discuss in class.

Professor reserves the right to make necessary changes to syllabus.