

UCUG1808 (L01) - Sport in Society: Cultures, Media and Politics

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The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou)

UG Course Syllabus

[Course Title] Sport in Society: Cultures, Media and Politics

[Course Code] UCUG 1808

[No. of Credits] 3

[Any pre-/co-requisites] NO

[Section] L01

[Course Time] Lecture 9:00-10:50/Tutorial 11:00-11:50

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Venue: W4-202

Course Description

The course Sport in Society: Cultures, Media and Politics examines the complex and interconnected relationships between sport and key cultural, social, and political dimensions of contemporary society. Sport is approached not merely as a physical activity, but as a powerful cultural institution that both reflects and shapes social values, identities, and power relations. By analyzing sport as a social phenomenon, students gain critical insights into broader societal issues and transformations.

As an introductory course within the Pillar of General Education at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou), this course integrates theory, case studies, and practical examples through lectures, seminars, tutorials, and enrichment activities. It adopts a sociological perspective to explore how sport operates within and across social structures. Core themes include gender, race, social class, health, media, politics, and the economy, all of which serve as key lenses for understanding sport's role in shaping contemporary social life.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

ILO#1: Develop knowledge of fundamental sociological concepts and theories associated with the study of sport.;

ILO#2: Apply sociological theories learnt to analyze phenomena and problems in modern sports;

ILO#3: Identify the risks, ethics and social responsibilities associated with sports;

ILO#4: Develop knowledge of how class, race, gender, politics, media and globalization process shape modern sport and how sport help to understand and resolve issues attached to these topics.;

ILO#5: Demonstrate reflective and interpretive abilities as well as critical thinking skills in discussing social issues.

Weekly schedule & Weekly ILOs

Week	Date	Topics	Weekly ILOs	Tutorial Activity
1	Jan.28, 2026	Why study Sport in Society?	ILO#1&3	Course Orientation
2	Feb.4, 2026	Guest: Dody Chen-Digitalization of sport: the emergence of e-game	ILO#1-5	N/A
3	Feb. 25, 2026	Homo Ludens: Play, Games, and sport	ILO#1-4	Project discussion (theme & content)& Team formation
4	Mar.4, 2026	From ritual to record: Understanding modern Sport	ILO#1-4	Workshop: Sports movies I
5	Mar.11, 2026	Race in Sport	ILO#1-5	Workshop: Sports movies II / Quiz I
6	Mar.18, 2026	Globalization, Sport and Politics	ILO#1-5	Workshop: Sports movies III
7	Mar.25, 2026	Guest lecture: Emanuel Leite Junior-From Intercontinental Rivalry to Eurocentric Hegemony: The History of Global Club Competitions	ILO#1-5	Project proposal discussion

8	Apr.1, 2026	Sport Mega-events, Marketing and Business	ILO#1-5	Workshop: Research methods in sports social sciences
9	Apr.8, 2026	Guest lecture: Carlos Pulleiro Mendez- More Than a Game! How to measure and explain the relationship between sport performance and national power	ILO#1-5	N/A
10	Apr.15, 2026	Sport, Celebrity Studies and Fandom Culture	ILO#1-5	Project proposal
11	Apr.22, 2025	Gender and Sports	ILO#1-5	Quiz II / Q&A session and group work
12	Apr.29, 2026	Leisure, Outdoor Sports and Extreme Sports	ILO#1-5	Data analysis, report refinement, and Q&A
13	May.6, 2026	Group Presentation	ILO#1-5	Final group presentations

Group Project-based Learning Remarks

This course adopts a group project-based learning approach to encourage students to apply sociological theories and concepts to real-world contexts. Students will work in groups of five to six to investigate a cultural or social group that may be unfamiliar to them. The selected group may be defined by ethnicity, religion, social position, lifestyle, or other cultural characteristics within contemporary society. Through this project, students will examine how sport intersects with culture, communication, identity, media, and everyday social life, in direct relation to the core themes of the course.

The project requires sustained engagement beyond the classroom. Groups will collect and analyze qualitative materials such as interviews, photographs, videos, and observational notes. Each group is expected to maintain a shared online folder documenting the full research process, including the project proposal, presentation slides, tutorial reflections, workshop outputs, and the final report with individual reflections. Tutorials, project workshops, and office-hour consultations will provide structured guidance throughout the semester.

Assessment will reflect both group outcomes and individual contributions, including participation in discussions and oral presentations. The primary aim of the project is to foster collaborative learning, deepen students' sociological understanding of sport as a social institution, and promote intercultural awareness through direct engagement. Students are expected to approach their chosen communities with respect, reflexivity, and ethical sensitivity.

This project is designed to be intellectually challenging and practically rewarding, offering students an opportunity to connect theory with lived social experience and to critically reflect on sport's role in shaping culture, identity, and power relations.

Assessment and Grading

This course utilizes criterion-referenced assessment to ensure fairness and transparency. A diversified evaluation approach will be adopted to comprehensively evaluate individual and group contributions.

Assessment Tools	Weighting (%)	ILOs Assessed	Remarks	Assessment Schedule
In-class test	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Quiz (Multiple choice, 30 questions)	Week 1-13
Course participation	20	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Active participation in structured group discussions and collaborative exercises.	Week 1-13
Project proposal	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Final project proposal (presentation and report)	Week 9
Self-reflection paper	10	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	The reflection paper should be completed individually.	Week 13 (Within one week after the final presentation)
Presentation	20	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	2-3 times in-class presentations (normally 5-6 members each group) presentation or individual. Students will work collaboratively to develop a deeper insight into a chosen	Week 1-13

sport phenomenon and make contributions to solve the problems.

Final Project presentation	15	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Group submission of final research findings, with both PPT slides and a written report.	Week 13
Final report	15	1, 2, 3, 4, 5		Week 13 (Within one week after the final presentation)

Grading Rubrics

The clear grading criteria are outlined below. Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be provided, helping students understand how their work will be assessed. These standards clearly specify the evaluation criteria, ensuring that students are fully aware of the expectations and requirements for each assessment.

Presentation (100 Points)

Content Delivery (50 Points)

Group (30 Points)

- Excellent (24-30): Presentation is exceptionally well-organized, with a clear logical flow and comprehensive coverage of all key points. Content is presented in a way that demonstrates deep understanding and excellent preparation.
- Good (21-23): Presentation is well-organized and covers most key points with good clarity and logical flow. Content shows a solid understanding of the topic.
- Satisfactory (15-20) : Presentation is somewhat organized but may miss some key points or have minor logical gaps. Content is adequate but could be more comprehensive.
- Needs Improvement (9-14) : Presentation is poorly organized with significant gaps in content coverage. Logical flow is unclear and may confuse the audience.
- Unsatisfactory (0-8) : Presentation is highly disorganized with major omissions in content. Logical flow is severely lacking, making it difficult to follow.

Individual (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20) : Individual delivery is exceptionally confident, clear, and highly engaging. Speaker demonstrates excellent command of the material, maintains strong eye contact, uses effective gestures, and speaks at a well-paced rhythm.
- Good (13-15) : Individual delivery is clear and engaging. Speaker shows good understanding of the material, maintains adequate eye contact, and uses some gestures effectively.
- Satisfactory (9-12) : Individual delivery is adequate but may lack confidence or engagement. Speaker may need to improve eye contact, pacing, or use of gestures.
- Needs Improvement (5-8) : Individual delivery is unclear or lacks engagement. Speaker may struggle with eye contact, pacing, volume, or clarity of speech.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4) : Individual delivery is very unclear and lacks engagement. Speaker has significant issues with delivery, making it difficult to understand the content.

Time Management (10 Points) - Group

- Excellent (8-10) : Presentation is perfectly paced and stays within the allotted time, with smooth transitions between sections.
- Good (6-7) : Presentation has minor timing deviations but stays close to the allotted time, with only slight adjustments needed.
- Satisfactory (4-5) : Presentation is somewhat rushed or overextended in parts but still within a reasonable time frame.
- Needs Improvement (2-3) : Presentation has noticeable timing issues, such as spending too much time on some sections and rushing others.
- Unsatisfactory (0-1) : Presentation has significant timing issues that severely impact the overall quality and coherence of the presentation.

Visual Aids (20 Points) - Group

- Excellent (16-20) : Visual aids are exceptionally high-quality, professional, and highly relevant. They significantly enhance the presentation and are easy to understand.
- Good (13-15) : Visual aids are effective and contribute positively to the presentation. They are mostly relevant and well-designed.
- Satisfactory (9-12) : Visual aids are of average quality or have limited relevance. They may need some improvement in design or clarity.

- Needs Improvement (5-8) : Visual aids are minimal or poorly designed. They may distract from the presentation or lack clarity.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4) : Visual aids are lacking or completely irrelevant to the presentation.

Response to Questions (20 Points)

Group (10 Points)

- Excellent (8-10) : Group collectively provides exceptionally clear, concise, and thorough responses to all questions. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the topic and can address even challenging follow-up questions.
- Good (6-7) : Group provides clear and informative answers to most questions. They show a good understanding of the topic and can handle most questions effectively.
- Satisfactory (4-5) : Group provides adequate responses but may lack depth or clarity in some answers.
- Needs Improvement (2-3) : Group provides unclear or incomplete answers to several questions. They may struggle with understanding the topic or addressing follow-up questions.
- Unsatisfactory (0-1) : Group provides unsatisfactory responses, showing limited understanding of the topic and inability to address most questions.

Individual (10 Points)

- Excellent (8-10) : Individual provides exceptionally clear, concise, and thorough responses to questions. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the topic and can address challenging follow-up questions effectively.
- Good (6-7) : Individual provides clear and informative answers. They show a good understanding of the topic and can handle most questions.
- Satisfactory (4-5) : Individual provides adequate responses but may lack depth or clarity in some answers.
- Needs Improvement (2-3) : Individual provides unclear or incomplete answers to several questions. They may struggle with understanding the topic or addressing follow-up questions.
- Unsatisfactory (0-1) : Individual provides unsatisfactory responses, showing limited understanding of the topic and inability to address most questions.

***Story telling (100 Points)**

Delivery (50 Points)

Excellent (40-50): Presentation/story is exceptionally well-organized, with a clear logical flow.

Good (30-39): Presentation/story is well-organized and with good clarity and logical flow.

Satisfactory (20-29) : Presentation/story is somewhat organized but may miss some key points or have minor logical gaps. Content is adequate but could be more comprehensive.

Needs Improvement (10-19) : Presentation/story is poorly organized with significant gaps in content coverage. Logical flow is unclear and may confuse the audience.

Unsatisfactory (0-9) : Presentation/story is highly disorganized with major omissions in content. Logical flow is severely lacking, making it difficult to follow.

Depth of Content (50 Points)

Excellent(40-50): Comprehensive details, demonstrating deep understanding.

Good (30-39): Thorough details for most sections.

Satisfactory (20-29): Adequate details, showing satisfactory understanding.

Needs Improvement (10-19): Superficial content, lacking depth.

Unsatisfactory (0-9): Insufficient details, reflecting poor understanding.

Project Report (100 Points)

Clarity and Coherence (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): Exceptionally clear, with seamless logical flow.
- Good (13-15): Mostly clear, with minor lapses in coherence.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Understandable, but some sections lack logical flow.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Lacks clarity, affecting overall coherence.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): Consistently unclear and poorly structured.

Writing Style and Quality (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): Engaging, professional, error-free writing.
- Good (13-15): Clear and professional, with minimal errors.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Understandable, despite noticeable errors.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Frequent errors, distracting content.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): Riddled with errors, hindering understanding.

Depth of Content (10 Points)

- Excellent (9-10): Comprehensive details, demonstrating deep understanding.

- Good (7-8): Thorough details for most sections.
- Satisfactory (5-6): Adequate details, showing satisfactory understanding.
- Needs Improvement (3-4): Superficial content, lacking depth.
- Unsatisfactory (0-2): Insufficient details, reflecting poor understanding.

Research and Accuracy (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): In-depth research with accurate information.
- Good (13-15): Solid research, with minor inaccuracies.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Adequate research, with some generalities or inaccuracies.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Insufficient research, with noticeable inaccuracies.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): Minimal research, with significant inaccuracies.

Originality and Creativity (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): Highly original and creative.
- Good (13-15): Considerable originality and creativity.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Some original elements and creativity.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Limited originality and creativity.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): Unoriginal and lacking creativity.

Contribution Ranking (10 points – ranking may be in no particular order and ties are allowed)

- 1st Place: 10 points
- 2nd Place: 9 points
- 3rd Place: 8 points
- 4th Place: 7 points
- 5th Place: 6 points
- 6th Place: 5 points

Reflection paper Rubric (100 points)

Depth of Reflection (20 Points)

- Excellent (17-20): Deep, insightful connections with intercultural concepts.
- Good (13-16): Thoughtful reflection, lacks deeper insight.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Basic connections, surface-level reflection.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Weak or unclear connections.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): No meaningful reflection.

Application of Concepts (20 Points)

- Excellent (17-20): Creative, effective application to real-world scenarios.
- Good (13-16): Appropriate applications, lacks depth.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Basic application, lacks creativity.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Limited or shallow application.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): Misunderstood or irrelevant application.

Critical Thinking (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): Deep analysis with evidence-based strategies.
- Good (13-15): Insightful analysis, strategies lack depth.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Basic analysis, limited insight.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Superficial analysis or unclear strategies.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): No meaningful analysis.

Personal Insights (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): Genuine, thoughtful insights with constructive suggestions.
- Good (13-15): Relevant insights, less specific suggestions.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Basic insights, lacking depth.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Minimal, vague insights.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): No insights or suggestions.

Clarity and Organization (20 Points)

- Excellent (16-20): Exceptionally clear, logical, and engaging.
- Good (13-15): Clear and organized, minor errors.
- Satisfactory (9-12): Somewhat clear, organizational issues.
- Needs Improvement (5-8): Frequent errors, lacks clarity.
- Unsatisfactory (0-4): Unclear and disorganized

Final Grade Descriptors

Each assessment score will be based on the average of multiple evaluations. For group-related tasks, the score will be shared equally among all members, while individual assessments will be assigned solely to the student based on their performance. The final score for each student will be the sum of the average scores from all categories, reflecting both group and individual contributions.

Grades	Short Description	Elaboration on subject grading description
A	Excellent Performance	Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of intercultural communication theories and concepts, with exceptional ability to apply them in real-world contexts. Exhibits creativity in analyzing cultural dynamics, strong critical thinking, and exceptional collaboration skills in group work and projects. Goes beyond core requirements to deliver insightful reflections and innovative solutions to intercultural challenges.
B	Good Performance	Shows solid knowledge of intercultural communication principles and competence in applying them to practical scenarios. Demonstrates the ability to analyze cultural differences and evaluate communication strategies

effectively. Displays motivation to engage with course material and contribute meaningfully to group discussions and projects.

C	Satisfactory Performance	Possesses adequate understanding of intercultural communication concepts and the ability to address familiar problems with appropriate solutions. Shows basic analytical and critical thinking skills when examining cultural issues. Participates in group activities and shows consistent effort to meet the learning objectives.
D	Marginal Pass	Demonstrates threshold knowledge of intercultural communication and a limited ability to analyze or apply concepts. Effort is evident but may lack depth or critical insight. Contributions to group work and projects meet minimal expectations, with some potential for improvement in understanding and engagement.
F	Fail	Exhibits insufficient understanding of intercultural communication concepts and lacks the ability to apply them effectively. Fails to demonstrate critical thinking, engagement with course materials, or meaningful participation in group work. Does not meet the basic standards required for achieving the course learning objectives

Course AI Policy

The use of generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and similar technologies, is permitted only under the following conditions:

1. **Explicit Permission:** Students may use generative AI tools for completing assessment tasks if explicitly allowed by the instructor for a specific assignment or activity. In such cases, the instructor will provide detailed guidelines on how these tools can be utilized.
2. **Attribution and Transparency:** If generative AI tools are used, students must clearly disclose their usage in their submissions. This includes specifying: The name(s) of the tool(s) used; The purpose for which the tool was used (e.g., idea generation, drafting text, creating visuals, coding assistance); A brief explanation of how the output was incorporated into the final work.
3. **Academic Integrity:** The use of AI tools must comply with the principles of academic integrity. Misrepresentation of AI-generated content as entirely one's own work, without proper attribution, will be treated as plagiarism or academic misconduct.
4. **Critical Engagement:** Students are expected to critically engage with the output of AI tools, ensuring that their submissions reflect their understanding of the subject matter. Blindly accepting AI-generated content without review or modification is not acceptable.
5. **Restrictions on Unauthorized Use:** Unless explicitly permitted, using AI tools to automate the completion of assessments, bypass academic effort, or create fraudulent content is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary actions.

6. Instructor's Discretion: The course instructor reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of AI tool usage for specific tasks. If unsure about whether the use of an AI tool is permissible, students are required to consult the instructor before proceeding.

*Please note that the course will employ ChatGPT as an auxiliary tool for preliminary review in some homework/report reviews.

Communication and Feedback

Assessment results for individual tasks will be provided on Canvas within two weeks of submission. If students have any questions regarding the feedback or marks, they should consult the instructor within five working days after receiving the feedback.

Required Texts and Supplementary Materials

More details will be available on Canvas to guide your project development.

Recommended Readings:

Malcom, Dominic. 2012. Sport and Sociology. Routledge.

Coakley, J. J., 2021. Sports in society: issues and controversies (13th edition). McGraw Hill.

Craig, P., and Beedie, P., 2010. Sport Sociology (2nd edition). Learning Matters.

Delaney, T., and Madigan, T., 2015. The Sociology of Sports: An Introduction (2nd edition). McFarland & Company.

Giulianotti, R. (ed.), 2015. Routledge Handbook of the Sociology of Sport. Routledge.

Johan Huizinga, 1971. Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture. Beacon Press

Emanuel Leite Junior, Carlos Rodrigues, 2024. China, Football, and Development Socialism and Soft Power. Routledge.

Emilio Fernández-Peña, Andrew C. Billings (ed.), 2025. Social Media in Global Sport Strategies and Practice. Routledge

Nobert Elias & Eric Dunning, 2025. Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process(追寻兴奋：文明化过程中的体育与休闲). 上海人民出版社. 何江穗(译)

Recommended Movies:

1 The Two Escobars 2010 Jeff Zimbalist; Michael Zimbalist


2 A League of Their Own 1992 Penny Marshall

3 Dogtown and Z-Boys 2001 Stacy Peralta

4 Touching the Void 2003 Kevin Macdonald

5	中国女排/夺冠/Leap	2020	Peter Chan
6	Moneyball	2011	Bennett Miller
7	Goal	2005	Danny Cannon
8	Cinderella Man	2005	Ron Howard

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Fri Apr 17, 2026	 Project Proposal Files (https://hkust-gz.instructure.com/courses/2963/assignments/23014)	due by 12pm