

Fall 2022

HC221H

# Philosophy of Sport

4 Cr. (CRN 11140)

M, W 10:00 - 11:20 am @ CHA 202

**Instructor:** Dr. Peg Brand Weiser

**Office Hours at Peet's Coffee/Cafe in the Jaqua Center:** M, W 1:30-2:30 & by app't

**Email:** [pweiser@uoregon.edu](mailto:pweiser@uoregon.edu) **Publications:** <https://uoregon.academia.edu/PegWeiser>

**CANVAS info:** <https://canvas.uoregon.edu/courses/205418>



## Description of Course

We will study sport—professional, intercollegiate, and amateur/post-amateur—throughout history as well as current, controversial topics such as the nature of games (esports), the (medical) ethics of athletic competition (health issues during a pandemic, CTE diagnoses of NFL players), the banning of Russian athletes while Ukraine is under attack), athletes' well-being (mental health issues, PEDs, laws affecting changing transgender and intersex athletic association rules; UO Sport and Wellness Initiative), fan behavior and sportsmanship, beauty (the aesthetics of athletic bodies), issues of social justice and political activism including fairness, gender equity (Title IX “celebrates” 50 years after becoming law in 1972), racial discrimination (low numbers of Black NFL coaches), the commercialization and marketing of sports, NILS, and the role of highly visible sport administrations, particularly the NCAA, IOC, IAAF, NFL, NBA, WNBA, NWSL. All films and assigned readings are posted on Canvas (no textbook to purchase) or as links from the syllabus. There will be 5 Weekly Written Reports of 250 words (each is 1 page double-spaced) due before 5 Monday classes, 1 Research Paper (approximately 5 pages double-spaced not counting sources) and includes an *approved* outside philosophical source (see Bibliography, p. 4 of the syllabus), and a 5 minute In-Class Presentation on your Research Paper (in the final weeks of the term).

**Course Communications** Instructor will post announcements on Canvas and via university email.

## Expected Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to identify and discuss interesting and challenging philosophical issues in sport; recognize different roles of persons who make up and critique the world of athletics; appreciate the competition of athletes as a form of human skill, talent, well-being, and beauty; demonstrate critical thinking skills, separating fact from opinion; write clear, concise, informed and persuasive prose grounded in logic; express and argue informed, sound judgments on issues in sport.

## Course Objectives

Arts and Letters courses—such as HC 221H: Arts & Letters Inquiry—introduce fields such as literature, philosophy, language, religion, and the visual and performing arts. Students study the arts and letters in the honors college in order to develop an understanding for the complexities and depth of artistic and humanistic interpretations of the world around us. Students will learn to critically and creatively think, read, listen, write, and speak about historical, contemporary, and future issues in culture and society.

This is a unique opportunity to study the subdiscipline within philosophy known as “the philosophy of sport” at a time when awareness of the role of athletics and sport beyond (mere) entertainment is growing. Far from being “pure”, sport is now expected to include athletes with political awareness who engage in, for example, issues of social justice such as Black Lives Matter protests, advocate for their own student-athlete well-being and NILs, and assume responsibility for growing gender awareness, pay equity, and safe working environments free of sexual harassment/violence/rape. Having just lived through the controversial continuation of international athletic competition during a serious and deadly pandemic, we now confront the banning of athletes from Russia for their country’s recent invasion of Ukraine and a reticence to participate in world games in Qatar. We will study why we enjoy sports, idolize and emulate athletes, and criticize sports by PHILOSOPHICALLY analyzing current issues.

This course fulfills the [Arts and Letters \(A & L\) Area of Inquiry requirement](#) by locating specific philosophical course content within the broader contexts of (1) philosophical study (history, metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, medical ethics, social/ political philosophy, aesthetics, feminist philosophy, philosophy of race, etc.), and (2) an “open inquiry from a variety of perspectives,” i.e., the inter- and multidisciplinary nature of the study of sport.

**Current Classroom Behavior Policy** To foster a positive learning environment, students and instructors have a shared responsibility. We want a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where all of us feel comfortable with each other and where we can challenge ourselves to succeed. To that end, our focus is on the tasks at hand and not on extraneous activities (e.g., texting, chatting, reading a newspaper or your computer or phone screen, making phone calls, web surfing, etc.). [Student Conduct Code can be found at the Office of the Dean of Students.](#)

**Academic Integrity** Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and discuss freely the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the [UO guidelines for Academic Integrity](#) and at all costs, AVOID PLAGIARISM: for guidelines on plagiarism and [Chicago Style citing of sources](#) see <https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism>

[Nondiscrimination and Anti-harassment Policy](#) See the bottom of nearly every UO webpage:

UO prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression in all programs, activities and employment practices as required by **Title IX**, other applicable laws, and policies. Retaliation is prohibited by UO policy. Questions may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator, Nicole Commissiong, Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity, or to the Office for Civil Rights. See "[Title IX Applies to Everyone at the UO.](#)" Contact information, related policies, and complaint procedures are listed on the [statement of non-discrimination](#).

### [Attendance and Engagement/Class Participation Policy](#)

Attendance in this class is required; points are recorded to enable you to learn and perform to your best abilities. As stated in UO policy, no written documentation is necessary for missing class except for (1) religious or (2) accessibility reasons\* or (3) official UO athletic or other campus activities. Attendance and engagement—also known as participation in class discussion—in 18 classes this term (class is cancelled Wed. Nov. 23, the day before Thanksgiving) is 2 points each class = 36 points total. There is no extra credit and there is no way to make up for missed class time since it takes place in-person with classmates. In other words, "lack of engagement" impacts your grade in this class. Late assignments can be turned in but lose 1 point for every day past the stated deadline. That said, illness and emergencies arise. Please note:

- Students are actively encouraged to stay at home if they feel sick (flu) or have symptoms of COVID-19. Your instructor will work with you to utilize a mutually-agreed upon success strategy that enables you to engage.
- Students are responsible for communicating with their instructor via the means of communication established by the instructor, e.g., via Canvas or email ([pweiser@uoregon.edu](mailto:pweiser@uoregon.edu)). For more info and resources:

-Dean of Students "[Emergency Academic Notification](#)" process provides student assistance in notifying instructors and enlisting their help with courses.

-[Withdrawal and Grade Change dates and processes](#) –See this [advising page](#) on options for students

-[Incomplete](#) – If an unexpected situation happens toward the end of the term, an Incomplete may be appropriate. See the *new rules* at <https://provost.uoregon.edu/grades-incompletes-policy>

-[Student Petitions](#) – student petition options after the term if unable to make changes during the term due to their situation.

\*[Accessibility and Accommodations](#) *The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation or contact the Accessible Education Center: [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).*

[Notification of Objectionable Materials](#) This course may contain material of a mature nature, which may include explicit language, depictions of nudity, sexual situations, and/or violence. The instructor will attempt to provide advance notice when such materials will be used but it is not always possible. Students are not automatically excused from interacting with such materials, but they are encouraged to speak with the instructor to voice concerns and to provide feedback.

## Assignments and Examinations:

- Attendance (2 point for each class x 18 classes = 36 points). Students are expected to attend all classes and to participate based on their knowledge of weekly assignments and by thinking creatively and engaging in class discussion. There is no makeup or extra credit available for absences. **36**
- **5 Weekly Written Reports of 250 words each** (5pts. each x 5 = 25 points). Questions are assigned on syllabus; writing is individual, i.e., completed outside of class after you have done the reading and/or watched the film. Reports are due on Canvas by the start of class on assigned Mondays. **25**
- **1 Research Paper; it can be a revised and improved version of one of your previous reports, 1250 words/ 5 pages, with the inclusion of one approved, outside philosophical source—due on Mon., Nov. 21** **25**
- Individual 5 min. In-Class Presentation on your written Research Paper: why you chose the philosophical topic you chose, what you learned from an outside philosophical source, future implications **14**

**Total            100 points**

## Schedule/Due Dates

**5 Written Reports** are due on Canvas before class on assigned Mondays. Reports will be no less than 250 words (double-spaced, **docx format**). Questions are on the syllabus for each week's reading assignment and/or assigned film. Your written report tests your understanding of the readings and/or films *before we discuss them in class*. Please treat it like a "book report" with 80% summarizing the material you've read/watched in light of the weekly Topic question, and only 20% opinion. Each Report is worth 5 points for a total of 25 points. You are asked to think critically and write clearly and logically in answer to the assigned question. These reports are individual, substantive, and scholarly. Be sure to raise your own questions in class when we discuss together. Philosophy is difficult to read; try reading at least twice.

**1 Written Research Paper** of 1250 words (5 pages double-spaced, **docx format, Chicago Humanities Style**) due on Canvas before class, Mon., Nov. 21. You are welcome to use more than one source but at least one source must be an acceptable work of philosophical scholarship. To spend less time on the internet and more time writing, it is easiest to choose from this recommended list (if in doubt, ask):

**Bibliography/Approved Philosophical Outside Sources—see also weekly suggestions on the syllabus**

[Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

[Sports, Ethics and Philosophy](#)

[Journal of the Philosophy of Sport](#)

[Journal of Intercollegiate Sport](#)

See the short Harvard University **PDF** entitled, "A Brief Guide to Writing the Philosophy Paper" posted on Canvas. Utilize **Chicago Style of citing sources**. Feel free to ask questions if you need help.

**5-minute In-class Presentations** (you may use PowerPoint) Explain why you chose the philosophical topic you chose, what you learned from an outside philosophical source, and present some future implications of your research. Students will sign up for presentation times during Weeks Nine and Ten (Nov. 21, 28 and 30). After your presentation, we will discuss your ideas for 5 minutes or so to share ideas and acknowledge your scholarly and creative work.

**Grading Scale and Policies** Grades will be A, B, C, D, or F as consistent with University grading systems; see <https://registrar.uoregon.edu/current-students/grading-system>. You have the option to switch from graded to Pass/No Pass (P/N) but courses must be taken for a grade to fulfill CHC requirements.

## Scheduled Topics/Activities

**Week/Day One** (Wed., Sep. 28) **Topic: Introductions and the study of philosophy (of sport)**

**What are your preconceptions and interests in sport? What might be philosophical about sport?**

Syllabus distributed in class

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**Week Two** (Oct. 3, 5) **Topic: What is philosophy of sport?**

**Report #1, due before class on Canvas on Mon. Oct. 3: Based on your reading of the 2020 *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* essay by Devine and Frias, what is philosophy of sport and does it overlap or clash with your own preconceptions, interests, and expectations in philosophy of sport?**

**Read:** Devine, [John William and Francisco Javier Lopez Frias, "Philosophy of Sport," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy \(Fall 2020 Edition\), Edward N. Zalta \(ed.\)](#)

**Optional/Approved Outside Source:** Heather L. Reid, "Appendix: Philosophy of Sport as an Academic Subject," in *Introduction to the Philosophy of Sport* (Roman & Littlefield, 2012), 199-204 **PDF**; any SEP reference listed at the end of this week's assigned essay may count as an approved outside source

**Outside Data Source:** [TIDES \(The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport\) Making Waves of Change: Latest Publications/The 2021 Racial and Gender Report Card, Dr. Richard Lapchick \(April 6, 2022\)\(39 p\)](#)

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**Week Three** (Oct. 10, 12) **Topic: According to ancient philosopher Plato (429?-347 BCE), what is the role of virtue—for both men and women—in moral education within ancient sports competition? In your opinion, do we teach moral education in the U.S.?**

**Report #2 due on Canvas on Mon. Oct. 10 before class; read Heather Reid's early 2007 essay on sport and moral education in Plato's Republic. Then read one of her more recent pieces on gender. Write a report that summarizes her views on the ancient philosopher Plato on both men and women, but also add a sentence or two on whether you think that we, now in the U.S., teach moral education.**

**Read:** Heather L. Reid, "Sport and Moral Education in Plato's Republic," in *The Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 34:2 (2007), 160-175. (Published online 2012) **PDF**

**Read: choose one:**

Heather Reid, "Plato on Women in Sport," in *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 47:3 (2020), 344-361 **PDF**

**or**

Heather Reid, "Heroic *Parthenoi* and the Virtues of Independence: A Feminine Philosophical Perspective on the Origins of Women's Sports," in *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 14:4 (2020), 511-524 **PDF**

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**Week Four** (Oct. 17, 19) **Topic: In the film, *Not Just a Game: Power, Politics and American Sports*, examples of (social) justice play a role in the history of sport. How would you, as a novice philosopher of sport define the concept “social justice in sport”?**

**Report #3 due on Canvas on Mon. Oct. 17 before class. Thinking like a philosopher of sport (not just a fan), argue that sport is "not just a game" based not only on examples you learned from the film, but also on a contemporary issue currently under discussion in the world of sports that you can offer.**

**View:** [Not Just a Game](https://www.kanopy.com/en/uoregon) (2010) (1 hr) Accessible via Kanopy through <https://www.kanopy.com/en/uoregon>

**Optional/Approved Outside Source:** [More Than a Game: A History of the African American Experience in Sport](#) by David K. Wiggins (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018); Myles Brand (past NCAA President) on [“Social Justice,” Mondays with Myles podcast \(1/21/2008\)](#) [This <https://www.mylesbrand.com> website contains over 300 items of audio, transcripts, and video; use the link, scroll down to 1//21/2008 for both audio recording and transcript. All=recommended/approved outside sources]

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**Week Five** (Oct. 24, 26) **Topic: What is the image of (beautiful) “women” in sport?**

**Report #4 due on Canvas on Mon., Oct. 24 before class.**

**View:** [Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete](#) (2002) (30 min.)

**Read:** Cheryl Cooky, La Toya D. Council, Maria A. Meers, Michael A. Messner, and Michela Musto, [“One and Done: The Long Eclipse of Women’s Televised Sports: 1989-2019,”](#) *Communication and Sport* 2021, Vol. 9(3), 347-371

**Read:** Peg Brand Weiser, “Changing Perceptions of Beautiful Bodies: The Athletic Agency Model,” in *Somaesthetics and Sport*, ed. Andrew Edgar and William Morgan (Brill Press, forthcoming) **PDF**

**Optional/Approved:** Heather L. Reid, “Athletic Beauty in Classical Greece: A Philosophical View,” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 39:1 (2012), 1-17; “Examining 50 Years of ‘Beautiful’ in *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue,” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 43:3 (2016), 380-393; Charlene Weaving, “Smoke and Mirrors: A Critique of Women Olympians’ Nude Reflections,” *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 6:2 (2012), 232-250; and Jirasek, Kohe, and Hurych, “Reimagining athletic nudity: the sexualization of sport as a sign of a ‘porno-ization’ of culture,” *Sport in Society* 16:6 (2013), 721-734

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**Week Six** (Oct. 31, Nov. 2) **Topic: Do choices of human sexuality affect equity and equality?**

**Read:** Peg Brand Weiser and Edward B. Weiser, “Misleading Aesthetic Norms of Beauty: Perceptual Sexism in Elite Women’s Sports,” from *Body Aesthetics* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 192-221 **PDF**

**Read:** [“Do transgender athletes have an unfair advantage at the Olympics?”](#) by Steven Petrow ([Washington Post, Aug. 8, 2016](#))

**Read:** [“Beyond fairness: the ethics of inclusion for transgender and intersex athletes,”](#) by John Gleaves and Tim Lehrbach, *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 43:2 (2016), 311-326 **PDF**

**Recommended outside sources:** [“Gender Verification Issues in Women’s Competitive Sports: An Ethical Critique of the IAAF DSD Regulation,”](#) by Mizuho Takemura, *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 14:4 (2020), 449-460

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**Week Seven** (Nov. 7, 9) **Topic: Athlete wellness and fan behavior: How does the well-being of athletes matter? Should there be limits on fans' emotional behavior?**

**Report #5 due on Canvas on Mon., Nov. 7 before class: What should be an athlete's priority: his/her own well-being or the performance and/or competition that fans come to see/watch?**

**Read:** George Tyler, "The Moral Responsibilities of Fandom," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 48:1 (2021), 111-128 **PDF**

**Read:** Megs S. Gendreau, "Why we care about who athletes are: on the peculiar nature of athletic achievement," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 49:2 (2022), 278-291 **PDF**

**Choose one and view:** [Beauty Mark: Body Image and the Race for Perfection](#) (2008) (50 min.) or [League of Denial: The NFL's Concussion Crisis \(2013\) \(1:53:41\)](#) (PBS) or [Bigger, Stronger, Faster: The Side Effects of Being American](#) (1:46:35) (2008)

**Recommended approved/outside source:** [Introduction to the Journal of Somaesthetics: Unhealthy and Dangerous Lifestyles—and the Care of the Self \(6:2\) \(2020\)](#)

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**Week Eight** (Nov. 14, 16) **Topic: Can the NCAA achieve gender equity via [Title IX](#)?**

**View:** "[Sporting Chance: The Lasting Legacy of Title IX](#)" (2012) (7 min. trailer), [NCAA page and interviews](#), and [NCAA info](#)

**Read online:** "NCAA 45 Years of Title IX: The Status of Women in Intercollegiate Athletics" download the 60-page report at <https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/title-ix-45-years> or link to **PDF**

**Read:** Molly Hensley-Clay, "[Colleges cut sports to save money amid the pandemic. Then came the Title IX lawsuits](#)," WAPO (March 25, 2021) and [NBC Sports podcasts "Hardwood HERstory"](#) (June 30, 2022)

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**Week Nine** (Mon., Nov. 21, no class Wed., Nov. 23) **Research Paper due on Canvas by start of class. In-Class Student Presentations.**

**Happy Thanksgiving!**

**Week Ten** (Nov. 28, 30 (last class)) **In-Class Student Presentations. Final class evaluation.**

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**Exam Week** (Dec. 5-9) No final exam

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**Subject to Change Statement** Information contained in the course syllabus may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor of this course.

The University of Oregon is located on [Kalapuya Ilihi, the traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people.](#)