

PHI 245 – Philosophy of Sport – Fall 2025 – **TENTATIVE** Syllabus

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Office Hours

Mon and Wed from 6:45-7:45pm in Bowne Hall room 103 or by appointment. Email me for appointments. **In emergency circumstances** you can contact me via phone, I will answer if I am awake and available. If I do not pick up, leave a message and I will get back to you.

Overview

This is an introduction to philosophical issues relating to sports and society. We will focus especially on questions about ethics in sport and how sports practices impact other societal commitments. Questions to be discussed include: What is a game? What is a sport? What if anything is good about sports? What is cheating? Should sporting organizations forbid the use of performance-enhancing drugs? Should there be separate competitions for men and women? Are student-athletes exploited by universities? What level of violence is morally acceptable in sports and in video games?

Assessment

Your final grade will be comprised of the following parts:

- 10 Reading Responses (10%)
- Participation (30%)
- Midterm Exam (30%)
- Final Exam (30%)

A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	84-86%
B-	80-83%
C+	77-79%
C	74-76%
C-	70-73%
D	60-69%
F	59% or less

General Class Breakdown/Answers to Common Questions

This class will be taught completely in person. There will be no online classes or recordings of classes or zooming in. This is not a hybrid class. Laptops/phones may not be used during class. Only those who have an accommodation letter from the Center for Disability Resources will be allowed to use their laptops. Otherwise, I will not allow any electronics in the class. I will post the slides on Blackboard after we cover the material in class. If we fall behind on material, the slides will be posted only after we cover the material in class. You should use the slides to study for the two exams that will make up the bulk of your grade. The exams will be made up of multiple-choice questions. Most of the class time will consist of conversation between us, so be prepared to participate. Put up your hand to ask questions at any time, don't talk over each other. All readings will be posted on Blackboard in PDF format. You must submit Reading Responses by midnight the night before we're scheduled to cover the material. So, plan to do the reading before each class.

Participation

This is a high participation class with a heavy emphasis on discussion. Participation is worth 30% of your total grade. During class I will have a sheet with your names on it that I will use to mark off discussion contributions. You will earn one checkmark per class that you speak in. It does not matter what you say or how many times you speak in a single class. You just needed to contribute to the conversation one time per class to get a checkmark for that class and, no, you cannot get more than one check per class. No, you cannot make all of this up in the last two weeks of the semester. Each checkmark will be worth 1.5%, so you will only need to speak in 20 different classes to get the full 30%.

You are expected to attend every class unless you have some emergency. If you need to miss a class, please send me an email explaining why. Send me this email before class. If you have a legitimate excuse, you can submit participation via email up to 5 times (not more) for participation credit. If you are a student athlete who must miss class because of an athletic obligation you can submit via email, and I won't count it as one of your 5 times.

I expect everyone in the class to contribute to the class discussion. I will call out students who have not participated in the class or students who are not paying attention. So, expect to be called on every class.

Do not talk while another student is talking or while I am talking. Do not make snide or jeering comments after another student has given their thoughts. I consider this rude and disruptive to the learning of the whole class. Put up your hand and you can speak. If you fail to do so, you will receive two warnings, then I will speak to you after class. If you still keep talking while others are speaking or making comments under your breath etc., I will start docking your participation points **per interruption**. I will be moving students around to avoid having to impose these harsh penalties. **I reserve the right to move any student to a different seat at any time for any reason.**

In my class, there will be no censorship of your ideas or favoring of any view over any other. It is not my place to try to indoctrinate you in my personal beliefs. So, everyone is welcome to contribute their ideas as long as you provide reasons for your beliefs. Everyone's ideas are going to be challenged in this class, including mine, be prepared for that. **That being said, try to keep contemporary politics out of the discussion and no sports rivalries are to be brought up.** You can still have whatever opinion you want, just generalize your examples, there is no need to drop names or take direct digs at others.

We will be discussing some potentially disturbing material in the class, and we'll be talking about morality. When talking about morality we may end up talking about some awful things. I understand that some people may have sensitivities to certain topics, but in this class discussion of some disturbing things is unavoidable since those are the subjects we're covering.

Exams

There are two exams that will make up the bulk of your grade. The Midterm and the Final Exam are each worth 30%. Both exams will be available online under Exams on Blackboard. Each exam will be open book; it will cover approximately 11 readings and will consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. So, each question will be worth 1% of your overall grade. The exams will be available for 24 hours. You can start the exam anytime within that 24-hour period. Once you start the exam, you must finish it in one sitting. You will have 80 minutes to finish each exam.

I think the format of the exams is quite easy (open book, multiple choice, 80 minutes to do 30 questions, etc.). However, the questions will be quite hard. So, before each exam there will either be a class where we will try to catch-up on any remaining materials and do exam prep or I will have a day of extended office hours to help you study. **Exam prep will consist of you bringing me questions or topics that you want to go over again, and as a class we will review that material before the exam.**

There will be no make-ups for missed exams unless there is a serious emergency. If there is a serious emergency, it is your responsibility to inform me in a timely manner to avoid penalties. You can reach me by email jsdosanj@syr.edu or phone 315-944-0039.

A side note, if you're having a tough time or some things are going on in your life that make it difficult for you to do the exam, CONTACT ME. I *might* be willing to grant you an extension. But **you must contact me before the deadline and before you start the exam – not after.**

Reading Responses

There are 22 readings. You owe me 10 Reading Responses on 10 **different** readings throughout the semester. You can choose which readings to post a response on. No, you may not do more than one response on the same reading. No, you cannot make up all your missed reading responses at the end of the semester. These are worth 10% of your total grade, so 1% each.

What is a reading response? It consists of three requirements:

1. Briefly explain ONE of the authors main arguments or claims from the reading.
2. Clearly state whether you agree or disagree.
3. Explain why you agree or disagree.

You will earn 1% for each satisfactory response submitted, as long as it demonstrates that you have read and thought about the material, and you fulfil the three requirements listed above.

If you procrastinate and do not submit anything until late in the semester, please understand **there will be no make-ups for missed Reading Responses.**

You can submit responses through Blackboard on the Discussion board. There will be a different forum and thread for each reading. This forum thread will disappear from Blackboard after the due date. So, it will not even be possible for you to submit them late.

Reading Responses are to be submitted no later than 11:59pm ET the day before the reading is scheduled (see the reading schedule below). If the reading is covered on two days, then it is due before the first class. **If we fall behind in covering the readings in class, the due dates of the Reading Responses will not change.** Whatever the due date is on the syllabus will be the due date regardless of whether we're about to cover the material in class or not.

Bonus Points, Make-ups, and Rounding Grades

If you submit more than 10 Reading Responses, each additional reading response past the 10th will give you a bonus 0.25% towards your overall grade. There are 22 readings total so that means you can get 0.25% for the 12 extra readings for a total of 3% bonus points. **This is your only chance to earn bonus points in my class.** There will be no other bonus points or assignments or make ups of any kind. Grades will be rounded up if you're at 0.75%, if you're at 0.5%, you stay at whatever letter grade you are at. Don't email me asking for arbitrary grade increases, answer will always be, no.

Class Schedule

All readings will be available on Blackboard under Readings.

Mon Aug 25	No Reading - Class Introduction, Syllabus, Expectations
Wed Aug 27	No Reading - Thought Experiments, Basic Arguments, & Logical Fallacies
Mon Sep 01	Labor Day – No Class
Tue Sep 02	Reading Resp Due: <i>What Is a Game?</i>
Wed Sep 03	Class 1: Bernard Suits - What Is a Game?
Sun Sep 07	Reading Resp Due: <i>Tricky Triad: Games, Play, and Sport</i>
Mon Sep 08	Class 2: Bernard Suits - Tricky Triad: Games, Play, and Sport
Tue Sep 09	Reading Resp Due: <i>Games and the Good</i>
Wed Sep 10	Class 3: Thomas Hurka - Games and the Good
Sun Sep 14	Reading Resp Due: <i>Sporting Supererogation and Why It Matters</i>
Mon Sep 15	Class 4: Alfred Archer - Sporting Supererogation and Why It Matters
Tue Sep 16	Reading Resp Due: <i>The Ethics of Strategic Fouling</i>
Wed Sep 17	Class 5: Robert Simon - The Ethics of Strategic Fouling
Sun Sep 21	Reading Resp Due: <i>On Sporting Integrity</i>
Mon Sep 22	Class 6: Alfred Archer - On Sporting Integrity
Tue Sep 23	Reading Resp Due: <i>Good Competition and Drug-Enhanced Performance</i>
Wed Sep 24	Class 7: Robert Simon - Good Competition and Drug-Enhanced Performance
Sun Sep 28	Reading Resp Due: <i>Why Athletic Doping Should Be Banned</i>
Mon Sep 29	Class 8: Eric Chwang - Why Athletic Doping Should Be Banned
Tue Sep 30	Reading Resp Due: <i>The Case for Perfection</i>
Wed Oct 01	Class 9: W.M. Brown - The Case for Perfection
Sun Oct 05	Reading Resp Due: <i>Why We Should Allow PEDs in Sport</i>
Mon Oct 06	Class 10: Savulescu, Foddy, & Clayton - Why We Should Allow PEDs in Sport
Tue Oct 07	Reading Resp Due: <i>Convention and Competence</i>
Wed Oct 08	Class 11: Silvers & Wasserman - Convention and Competence
Mon Oct 13	Columbus Day – No Class (Extended Office Hours Mon & Tues)
Wed Oct 15	Catch-up and Midterm Exam Prep
<u>Mon Oct 20</u>	<u>Midterm Exam Online: Due by 8:00pm EST</u>

Tue Oct 21	Reading Resp Due: <i>A Moral Critique of Mixed Martial Arts</i>
Wed Oct 22	Class 12: Nicholas Dixon - A Moral Critique of Mixed Martial Arts
Sun Oct 26	Reading Resp Due: <i>On the Alleged Intrinsic Immorality of MMA</i>
Mon Oct 27	Class 13: Steven Weimer - On the Alleged Intrinsic Immorality of MMA
Tue Oct 28	Reading Resp Due: <i>Should Intercollegiate Football Programs be Eliminated?</i>
Wed Oct 29	Class 14: A. Corlett - Should Intercollegiate Football Programs be Eliminated?
Sun Nov 02	Reading Resp Due: <i>Should Kids Play (American) Football?</i>
Mon Nov 03	Class 15: Patrick Findler - Should Kids Play (American) Football?
Tue Nov 04	Reading Resp Due: <i>Ethics, Brain Injuries, and Sports</i>
Wed Nov 05	Class 16: Frias & McNamee - Ethics, Brain Injuries, and Sports
Sun Nov 09	Reading Resp Due: <i>Sex Equality in Sports</i>
Mon Nov 10	Class 17: Jane English - Sex Equality in Sports
Tue Nov 11	Reading Resp Due: <i>Against Sexual Discrimination in Sports</i>
Wed Nov 12	Class 18: Torbjorn Tannsjo - Against Sexual Discrimination in Sports
Sun Nov 16	Reading Resp Due: <i>The Exploitation of Student Athletes</i>
Mon Nov 17	Class 19: Alan Wertheimer - The Exploitation of Student Athletes
Tue Nov 18	Reading Resp Due: <i>Should Student-Athletes be Paid?</i>
Wed Nov 19	Class 20: Phillip Zema - Should Student-Athletes be Paid?
Mon Nov 24	Thanksgiving Break – No Class
Wed Nov 26	Thanksgiving Break – No Class
Sun Nov 30	Reading Resp Due: <i>Locating the Wrongness in Ultraviolent Videogames</i>
Mon Dec 01	Class 21: D. Waddington - Locating the Wrongness in Ultraviolent Videogames
Tue Dec 02	Reading Resp Due: <i>Defending the Morality of Violent Video Games</i>
Wed Dec 03	Class 22: Marcus Schulzke - Defending the Morality of Violent Video Games
Mon Dec 08	Catch-up and Final Exam Prep
<u>Fri Dec 12</u>	<u>Final Exam Online: Due by 8:00pm ET</u>

Academic Integrity

As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting

your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full [Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy](#) can be viewed by visiting the [Syracuse University Policies website](#).

Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online.

Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. **Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.**

Zero Tolerance for Artificial Intelligence Use

All generative-AI tools are prohibited in this course because their use inhibits achievement of the course learning objectives. This policy applies to all stages of project and writing processes including researching, brainstorming, outlining, organizing, and polishing. Do not use Generative-AI tools to create any content (i.e., images and video, audio, text, code, etc.). If you have any questions about a feature and whether it is considered Generative-AI, ask your instructor.

Disabilities

There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process. If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit Center for Disability Resources. Please call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu for more detailed information. The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

Religious Observances

Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students should have an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors no later than the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes and by the submission deadline for flexibility formatted classes. Student deadlines are posted in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.