

PHI245 Fall 24 Syllabus

Instructor Information

Name: Bertram Probyn (please call me 'Bertie')

Email Address: bnprobyn@syr.edu

Office Hours: 11:30am -12:30pm Tuesdays and Thursday in Pages Café, Bird Library. If you can't make either of these times and would like to meet to talk about something related to the course, please email me to arrange an alternative time to meet.

Email Policy: I intend to answer all emails sent to me relating to course matters within 24 hours. If I have not answered your email after 24 hours, please send me a follow-up email to remind me of your message.

Class Meeting Time

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:30-10:50am, Shaffer Art Building Room 203

Course Description

In this class we will explore answers to philosophical questions related to sport. This class is divided into two units. In unit 1, we will explore the answers to philosophical questions *about sport itself*. These include: what exactly is a sport? Should we value sport? If we should value sport, then why should we do so? In unit 2, we will look at philosophical questions that *arise as a result of contemporary sporting practices*. These include: is it permissible for athletes to take performance-enhancing drugs? Is it permissible for people to use advanced medical technologies such as gene editing to create more athletic humans? Should we participate in popular risky or dangerous sports like MMA?

We will explore these questions both by looking at what contemporary writers have to say about these matters and by coming up with our own arguments to support our answers to these questions. By using these methods to answer the questions we discuss in this class, students will develop their own philosophical and critical thinking skills.

Course Assessment

This course will be assessed by a mixture of participation, in-class presentations and exams. Here's some information about the assessment methods:

Exams – 60% of overall grade

There will be two exams for this class – one exam on Thursday 10th October covering material from unit 1 of the course and one exam on Tuesday 10th December covering material from unit 2 of the course. The exams are non-cumulative and there is no final during finals week. These exams will consist of 10 short-answer questions on the material we have covered in the preceding unit as well as 3 essay questions. For each exam, students should answer **either** 10 short-answer questions **or** 1 essay question **but not both**. All students are, however, required to answer both styles of question(s) across the two exams. So, if you answer the short-answer questions on the unit 1 exam, you must answer an essay question on the unit 2 exam and *vice versa*. Each exam is worth 30% of your overall grade for the class.

The exams will be one class session in length. You are expected to spend the entire class session answering the exam questions. Anyone who leaves early runs a significant risk of not answering the questions in sufficient detail required to get a passing grade for the exam.

In-class presentations – 30% of overall grade

Each student is to give a 15-minute presentation to the rest of the class. Your presentation should take the form of an argument: in your presentation, you will present an argument for a certain view that is connected to the topics that we are covering in this class. In addition to presenting your argument, you should also include in your presentation a section on how a reasonable person may object to one or more of the premises in your argument.

I will assign the topic of your presentation, as well as the presentation date on **Wednesday September 4** (I chose this day because it's the day after the add deadline for the class). The class sessions during which the presentations will take place are listed in the course schedule below. Please feel free to express a preference for a presentation topic before I assign them, but please note that I may not be able to accommodate your preference.

I will provide an example of what I expect from your presentations prior to any student presentations being given. More details on in-class presentations will be forthcoming in the first two weeks of class.

Participation and attendance – 10% of overall grade

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate actively in class discussions. Students will be graded on such attendance and participation. If you need to miss class for a valid reason (e.g. health-related reason or a family emergency) please either contact your academic advisor and ask them to get in touch with me or get in touch with the Orange SUccess team. **I will only accept as valid those excuses that are sent to me either by Orange SUccess or your academic advisor.** If you email me without a corroborating email from either your academic advisor or Orange SUccess, your absence from class will not be authorised and you will not receive the attendance and participation credit for that class.

N.B. You will receive an automatic 0 for attendance and participation for the whole course if you do not attend all of the in-class presentations without a valid reason.

Students who miss 3 classes without a valid reason throughout the semester will only be able to get a maximum of 90/100 for their participation and attendance grade. Students who miss 4 classes without a valid reason throughout the semester will only be able to get a maximum of 80/100 for their participation and attendance grade. Students who miss 5 classes without a valid reason throughout the semester will only be able to get a maximum of 70/100 for their participation and attendance grade. Students who miss more than 5 classes without a valid reason throughout the semester will only be able to get a maximum of 60/100 for their participation and attendance grade.

For each graded assignment, you will receive a number grade between 0-100. The grading scale is as follows:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69
F	0-59

Final grades will be an average of all of your numeric grades for all assignments for the course rounded up to the nearest whole number.

Course Readings and Handouts

Where available, course readings will be available on Blackboard no later than one week before the class for which they are required. If a reading can't be uploaded to Blackboard and you are having trouble accessing a reading, please email me and I will help you access a copy.

Classroom handouts are the intellectual property of the course instructor and should not be shared without permission. Sharing these handouts without the permission of the course instructor is a violation of the student code of conduct.

Classroom Etiquette

The use of laptops and tablets is permitted during class for class-related purposes. Please do not use phones during class except to take pictures of the board. Use of phones, laptops or tablets for non-class related purposes during class time may result in penalties to your attendance and participation grade.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY STUDENT POLICIES & SERVICES

University Attendance Policy

It is a federal requirement that students who do not attend or cease to attend a class to be reported at the time of determination by the faculty. Faculty should use “ESPR” and “MSPR” in Orange SUccess to alert the Office of the Registrar and the Office of Financial Aid. A grade of NA is posted to any student for whom the Never Attended flag is raised in Orange SUccess. More information regarding Orange SUccess can be found here, at <http://orangesuccess.syr.edu/getting-started-2/>.

Students should also review the University’s religious observance policy and make the required arrangements at the beginning of each semester.

Syracuse University Policies:

Syracuse University has a variety of other policies designed to guarantee that students live and study in a community respectful of their needs and those of fellow students. Some of the most important of these concern:

Diversity and Disability (ensuring that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities in a diverse, inclusive, accessible, bias-free campus community) can be found here, at: <https://www.syracuse.edu/life/accessibilitydiversity/>.

Religious Observances Notification and Policy (steps to follow to request accommodations for the observance of religious holidays) can be found here, at: http://supolicies.syr.edu/studs/religious_observance.htm

Orange SSuccess (tools to access a variety of SU resources, including ways to communicate with advisors and faculty members) can be found here, at: <http://orangesuccess.syr.edu/getting-started-2/>

Disability-Related Accommodations: Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. 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 meet with 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.

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. <https://disabilityresources.syr.edu/>

Academic Integrity Policy:

Syracuse University's Academic Integrity Policy reflects the high value that we, as a university community, place on honesty in academic work. The policy defines our expectations for academic honesty and holds students accountable for the integrity of all work they submit. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university-wide academic integrity expectations. The policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors. Under the policy, students found in violation 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 as described in the Violation and Sanction Classification Rubric. SU students are required to read an online summary of the University's academic integrity expectations and provide an electronic signature agreeing to abide by them twice a year during pre-term check-in on MySlice.

Class Schedule

Week	Date	Topic of Class	Reading
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Week 1	Tuesday 27 th August	Introduction	Class Syllabus
Week 1	Thursday 29 th August	Crash Course: How to succeed in a philosophy class	None
Week 2	Tuesday 3 rd September	What is sport?	David Mitchell <i>Observer</i> Article: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/21/martians-bells-cutlery-david-mitchell-bell-ringing-martian-comedy-golden-globes
Week 2	Thursday 5 th September	What is sport?	Bernard Suits 'What is a game?
Week 3	Tuesday 10 th September	What is sport?	Steffen Borge 'What is sport?'
Week 3	Thursday 12 th September	What is sport?	Leslie Howe 'Not everything is a contest: sport, nature sport and <i>friluftsliv</i> '
Week 4	Tuesday 17 th September	(Why) is sport valuable?	Thomas Hurka 'Games and the good'
Week 4	Thursday 19 th September	(Why) is sport valuable?	(continued from previous class)
Week 5	Tuesday 24 th September	Presentations	N/A
Week 5	Thursday 26 th September	Presentations	N/A
Week 6	Tuesday 1 st October	Presentations	N/A
Week 6	Thursday 3 rd October	Presentations	N/A
Week 7	Tuesday 8 th October	Unit 1 exam review	Unit 1 exam study guide
Week 7	Thursday 10 th October	Unit 1 exam	N/A
Week 8	Tuesday 15 th October	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS	FALL BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 8	Thursday 17 th October	Performance enhancement	Robert Simon, 'Good Competition and Drug-Enhanced Performance'
Week 9	Tuesday 22 nd October	Performance enhancement	Eric Moore and Jo Morrison 'In defense of medically supervised doping'
Week 9	Thursday 24 th October	Performance enhancement	W. M Brown 'The case for perfection'
Week 10	Tuesday 29 th October	Performance enhancement	Eric Chwang 'Why athletic doping should be banned'
Week 10	Thursday 31 st October	Performance Enhancement	(continued from previous class)

Week 11	Tuesday 5 th November	Dangerous Sports	J.S. Russell 'The value of dangerous sport'
Week 11	Thursday 7 th November	Dangerous Sports	Nicholas Dixon, 'A Moral Critique of Mixed Martial Arts'
Week 12	Tuesday 12 th November	Dangerous Sports	Patrick Findler, 'Should Kids Play (American) Football?'
Week 12	Thursday 14 th November	Presentations	N/A
Week 13	Tuesday 19 th November	Presentations	N/A
Week 13	Thursday 21 st November	Presentations	N/A
THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS	THANKSGIVING BREAK – NO CLASS
Week 14	Tuesday 3 rd December	Presentations	N/A
Week 14	Thursday 5 th December	Review for Unit 2 exam	Unit 2 exam study guide
Week 15	Tuesday 10 th December	Unit 2 exam	N/A