

# MS107

# Media, Sport and Culture

Module Coordinator Nic Groombridge [groomn@smuc.ac.uk](mailto:groomn@smuc.ac.uk)

Nic has a blog for his students covering crime, sport and media (and sometimes combinations thereof) at <http://genicus.wordpress.com/>. Examples will be used from it and you might want to check in a couple of times a week (and even comment/debate)



This module guide is available on [ST MARY'S ONLINE](#) where you will find lecture notes and other resources such as journal articles and websites.

## Module Aims

- To examine the impact the media has had on sporting cultures since the development of the popular press in the late nineteenth century.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the wider socio-economic and political factors shaping 'media sports culture' today.
- To focus on the role of the media and sport in the formation of culture and identity.
- To critically apply theories of popular culture to sport and the media.

## Learning Outcomes

*By the end of the module, students should be able to:*

- Understand the main ways in which the media, (specifically the press, broadcasting, advertising industry and the internet) has shaped sporting culture/s since the late nineteenth century.
- Understand the wider socio-economic and political factors shaping 'media sports culture' today.
- Critically explain the roles of the media and sport in the formation of culture and identity.
- Critically apply theories of popular culture to sport and the media.

**Assessment:** 1500 word essay (50%) and 90 minute exam (50%)

The essay is due in on 18 March 2010.

The essay titles are:

1. Why is women's sport consistently marginalised in the media? What could be done to enhance its profile?
2. Why have rugby and soccer only recently become popular in the Republic of Ireland?
3. With specific reference to Benedict Anderson's concept of the 'imagined community', critically evaluate the ways in which sport and the media contributed to creation of the modern nation.
4. 'Sport is war minus the shooting' (George Orwell, 1950) Discuss the contention that modern sport encourages violent nationalism and xenophobia.

5. With specific reference to theories of popular culture, critically evaluate the role the mass media has played in the development of football, either (a) before WWII or (b) since 1966.

## **Module Content**

The function of sport in the media and popular culture has become firmly established as a topic for academic debate. This is reflected in the rapid growth of research investigating not only sport as a symbol of national identity, but also how regional, ethnic, class and gender distinctions are (re) defined by mediated sporting cultures.

On this module, students utilise theories of popular culture to interrogate the historical role of sport and the media in shaping identity, patterns of human behaviour and consumption. It begins by outlining and evaluating the evolution of national sporting cultures (mainly, but not exclusively in the British Isles). For example, this will include exploring the significance of English public schools codifying the international rules of football, rugby and cricket; how the national media promoted specific sporting cultures; the relationship between religion, sport and sectarianism in Scotland and Ireland and how the mainstream media represent ethnic minorities in British sport.

We also intend to develop a comparative understanding of the complex relationship between media, sport and society by exploring the Tour de France, North American sporting cultures, the development of the Olympics, and the FIFA World Cup. Case studies may include: the relationship between Fascism, propaganda and football in Italy, Germany and Spain; civil rights and sport in the USA, the representation of women in international sport, sport in mainstream cinema and sporting sub-cultures. Students will also have an opportunity to engage with recent media-sport debates on 'celebrity' culture, gambling, and the commodification of sport. For instance, the Tiger Woods 'affair'.

Learning and teaching methods include lectures and seminars. There may also be some guest lectures – and the timetable set below may have to be rejigged. The lectures will contain many hyperlinks. Only some of those will be referred to during the lecture period. You can follow them up in your own time as the notes/slides will be put on St Mary's online. The seminars are your chance to discuss some of these things. You will be directed to e-resources for all of these and should read them in the week before. As a fast moving area new issues will constantly be arising so some time in either lecture or seminar will be given to discussing them each week.

## **Bibliography**

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### **The Module in brief**

Week 1	20 Jan	Introduction to Course
Week 2	27 Jan	Intro to Popular Cultural Analysis and Sociology of Sport
Week 3	3 Feb	Combined history of sport and media
Week 4	10 Feb	Case Studies: the Tour de France
Week 5	17 Feb	Case Studies: Irish Sport and Nationalism
Week 6	24 Feb	Race and ethnicity
Week 7	3 Mar	Case Studies: the Olympics, internationalism and globalisation
Week 8	10 Mar	Fan Culture – not just hooliganism or Hillsborough – and celebrity
Week 9	17 Mar	Gender, Sport and Media (women) <b>Hand in Essay</b>
Week 10	24 Mar screen)	Gender, Sport and Media (masculinities, particularly on
EASTER		
Week 11	14 Apr	New Sport New Media
Week 12	21 Apr	Sports Journalism (practice and Theory)
Week 13	28 Apr	Conclusion

### **Module in greater detail and e-reading**

Many books are mentioned above in the bibliography and more are available in the library. There is a selection of journals and serious journalism about sport. You are encouraged to use all of these. However, as part of our commitment to blended learning a selection of e-resources are used throughout. You should be able to obtain these both in college and outside via the Learning Resource pages on the website and may need to talk to them about this.

Week 1 Introduction to Course

In this week the intentions of the module are set out using both this module guide and that week's newspapers and some magazines.

## Week 2 Intro to Popular Cultural Analysis and Sociology of Sport

The lecture draws on cultural studies and sociology to show the significance of modern sport in society.

For the seminar you should have read either [Those Absent From the Stadium are Always Right Accelerated Culture, Sport Media, and Theory at the Speed of Light](#) (Steve Redhead, 2007) or [Sport and the media: the emergence of a major research field](#) (Bernstein and Blain, 2002) and be ready to discuss them.

## Week 3 Combined history of sport and media

Whilst last week concentrated on sociology and culture this week concentrates on history, specifically the conjoined history of media and sport. If you look at the essay question you will see it is based upon this week but you will need to choose a sport and country. The lecture will tend to concentrate on the UK and football but other examples will be used.

[Baran](#) claims, 'The history of sports on U.S. television is the history of sports on *network* television'. For the seminar you should have read this and try to relate it to UK examples. [Here](#) Helland usefully adds Norway to the mix.

## Week 4 Case Studies: the [Tour de France](#)

Using a bicycle to travel round France [Robb](#) argues that modern France is a recent invention and that the Tour has played, and continues to play, a part in making and confirming to the French their existence. Dauncey and Hare have edited this [volume](#) on the Tour. The lecture examines the social, cultural, economic and political significance of the Tour with some explanation of some of the complexities of the race itself should you want to watch it later in the Summer.

This [article](#) by Reed examines the impact of the Tour on French provincial towns and you should compare it with [this](#) by Bull and Lovell on the impact on Canterbury when it hosted a stage. In the seminar the issue of media coverage of drugs in sport will also be considered. It is a source of concern for the organisers and the French that the Tour has become so associated with 'doping'.

## Week 5 Case Studies: Irish Sport and Nationalism

It is far from simple, but various Gaelic sports such as hurling and Gaelic football can be seen to be important in maintaining an Irish identity (sometimes against a British identity suggested by football or rugby or even abroad as in this [transcript](#) of an Australian Radio

programme about the issue). Or see [Bairner](#) on nationalism more generally. The lecture examines these issues.

Daragh is giving this lecture and recommends these additional resources.

- A. Smith & D. Porter, (eds) (2004). *Sport and National Identity in the Post-war World*. (2004)
- Aidan Arrowsmith, 'Plastic paddies vs. master racers', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 460-479 (2004).
- Alan Bairner (ed), *Sport and the Irish: Histories, Identities, Issues* (2005)
- Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism and Globalisation* (2001)
- David Hannigan, *The Garrison Game*, (1998).
- M. Holmes, 'Symbols of national identity and sport: the case of the Irish football team', *Irish Political Studies*, vol 4, pp. 81-98 (1994).
- Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland* (1999)
- John Horne, *Sport in Consumer Culture*, 2006
- Nick Hornby (ed), *My Favourite Year* (1993).
- R. Boyle and R. Haynes, *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture* (2000)
- David Hassan, 'Rugby Union, Irish Nationalism and National Identity in Northern Ireland', *Football Studies*, vol 6. no.1, 2003.

In the seminar various national identities from the importance of [Kabbadi](#) to Sikhs to the [meaning](#) of Baseball to both Americans' and Cubans' or Cricket to Caribbeans, as per [CLR James](#). You should have looked at one of these or come up with your own sport/identity. We will also do some work on the essay.

Week 6          Race and ethnicity

In examining nationalism in the last two weeks issues of class have also arisen. Some mention has also been made of issues of 'race' and ethnicity. Here this is given fuller attention. From the Williams sisters to 'our' ongoing feud with Germany in football (see [Crolley et al](#) on how European papers portray other countries). For instance, is soccer 'un-Australian' (see [Hallinan et al](#))?

In the seminar [Armstrong's](#) contention that Afro-American sports consumers have different motivations for sports consumption is considered. This newspaper article by [Evans](#) looks at the case of [Michael Vick](#) an NFL star. Both these will be discussed.

Week 7          Case Studies: the Olympics, internationalism and globalization

John [Nauright](#) argues that sport has assumed a greater role within the globalisation process and in the regeneration of national, regional and local identities in the

postcolonial and global age. With much of global culture displayed by the media, events, particularly significant sporting ones such as the Olympic Games or the soccer World Cup, have become highly sought after commodities as developed countries, and increasingly some leading developing countries, move towards event-driven economies. You might want to think about the recent Beijing Olympics and the forthcoming football World Cup in South Africa. Whilst most popular sports pre-date media coverage some have become 'media events'. [Rivenburgh](#) argues that even the Olympics may have difficulty maintaining this. The lecture will concentrate on globalization and touch on the work of Mark McCormack's IMG and Transworld Sport.

In the seminar, using the work of Nauright and Rivenburgh and others, we will discuss the extent to which media events such as the World Cup, Olympics or even the World's Strongest Man are international or global.

Week 8          Fan Culture – not just hooliganism – and celebrity

[Cere's study](#) of women football fans in Italy shows it not just men who might be called 'hooligans' and [Frosdick and Newton](#) examine the issue for the UK. Media coverage ranges from papers to TV/radio and internet but the genre of hooligan memoirs and films remains popular (for instance see [Redhead](#) on the [Football Factory](#)). A famous example of media coverage of 'hooliganism' was that of the Hillsborough Disaster.

[Hughes et al](#) examine how scandals can upset corporate sponsors and media. In the seminar we might try to think of UK versions (allegations of rape against various soccer stars? Price of strawberries at Wimbledon?).

Week 9          Gender, Sport and Media (women) **Hand in Essay**

A glance at any 'sports' media reveals very little interest in women's sport save the journalistic ones of novelty – women bodybuilders, for instance - and titillation – [Sports Illustrated swimsuit issue](#). This lecture looks at media's representation of women. If women are 'suited' to sport which sports do the media suggest, if any, that women participate in? This lecture will be given by Janine Van Someren from sport science.

In the seminar we will look at [Weardon and Creedon's](#) analysis of adverts shown during Women's NBA matches. Some of you may know the episode of *Family Guy* that stirred up some [controversy](#).

Week 10        Gender, Sport and Media (masculinities)

Whilst many sports – sometimes even sport itself – are seen as unsuitable for women to play so some are seen as not appropriate for men to play, watch or consume. For instance see the work of Brendan Tagg on New Zealand Mens' Netball. This lecture looks at the

sociology of masculinities briefly to build on the insights of feminism about women's oppression to see if men are constrained by the gender order too. Muscled women may be accused of being lesbian and muscled men of being gay yet they are also a signifier of straight masculinity. Can we square this circle, and what of the media? Moreover, do presumptions of black hyper-masculinity also affect media coverage? The viewing habits of boys as seen by [Dunbar and Hunt](#) will also be considered.

In the seminar we look at the work of [Mason](#) on the 'to-be-looked-at-ness' of male body builders and relationship between white male managers and male athletes (at the time of writing Paul Ince has been sacked by Blackburn Rovers) by [Knoppers and Anthonissen](#).

## **EASTER**

Week 11      New Sport New Media (NB 15 April will be the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the Hillsborough Disaster so some coverage)

In 2002 [Boyle and Haynes](#) argued that, 'new media are helping to change the sporting landscape as the internet, digital television and mobile telephony change the way the fan interacts with sport.' Some seven years on have there been further development or just an expansion of the potential they foresaw?

In the seminar we shall look at some websites but you should also look at some in advance, starting with the [BBC](#) and [Sky](#).

Week 12      Sports Journalism (practice and Theory)

Sports journalism is sometimes looked down on by 'real' journalists. The jibe is that they are 'fans with typewriters'. Many books on sport and media contain a chapter on sports journalism. [Andrews's book](#) is dedicated to it.

For the seminar you should find a number of examples on line or in print of current sports journalism to discuss or biographies of sports journalists. Obviously blogs represent a more journalistic route into these thoughts. An example is [here](#) or the website of the [Sports Journalists' Association](#).

Week 13      Conclusion

There is no lecture but we will review the module and look forward to the exam.