

ECON 4970: Sports Economics (Syllabus)

Professor: Dr. Brent Norwood

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Class: Farzaneh 146, MWF 10:30-11:20am

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 1:00-2:00

Course Description:

This class covers the various applications of economic theory to the topic of sports. Being interested in sports should help you do well in this class. However, an interest in sports is neither required nor sufficient for doing well in this class. **We are focusing on the field of *economics*, not just sports.** The fact that the world of sports provides so many clear opportunities to apply and test economic ideas is the reason this class is being offered – not so that sports fan can take a class where they have advantages over others less interested in sports. Having said all that, if you find sports to be truly boring, you may not like this class – as activities and outcomes within the arena of sports are the clear focus of our efforts.

We will use class discussions, textbook readings, journal articles, and other commonly available material on the internet (sports leagues websites for example). Class participation is critical to doing well in this course, and in scoring well in this course. If you do not plan on attending regularly, I would honestly recommend finding another class.

Course Objectives & Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Interpret, construct and analyze economic models that apply to various settings in sports.
2. Understand the incentives that influence and motivate the various participants involved in sports (e.g., players, fans, owners, city officials, and so on),
3. Think critically about how economic issues related to both efficiency and equity apply to the field of sports.
4. Understand how classic demographic factors including race, gender, geography (i.e. urban/rural), nationality, age, and even political affiliation relate to the field of sports.
5. Identify the relationships between various national/state/local governments and sports leagues, and understand why they are important.
6. Apply the economic concepts we cover to current issues in sports. Unfortunately, this course has a distinct bias towards American Sports activities, mostly because of the distribution of OU's student body as well as mine own areas of expertise – but hopefully connections to broader global sports (i.e., Soccer (Football) Olympics, sports in developing countries, etc) will be given some attention.
7. All of these objectives will be tested through a combination of engaged class discussions, graded quizzes/exams, and a semester-long data driven research paper/project.

Textbook and Instructional Materials:

Required:

- Leeds & Von Allmen “The Economics of Sports”. **ANY edition is fine.** I will use the 6th edition – the most recent – in some of our discussions, but the material is largely consistent over editions. ***The 5th edition (used) was available for \$10 on eBay/Amazon when I last checked.***
- **All supplemental documents will available for free through the course website or the internet.**

Expectations, participation & classroom contribution:

30% of your grade will be based on the extent to which you actively contribute to class. Consistently strong/solid engagement inside and outside the classroom will easily lead to a high score for this component of the grade. Consistently weak performances, or consistently missing class, will certainly lead to a poor/failing score on this component. Good attendance is a component of scoring well, but will not automatically result in full points. Having said this, please DO NOT come to class if you are ill, contagious, or if for any other reason you cannot benefit from the discussions of the day or positively impact your classmates. It is possible to score extremely well (perfect essentially) on this component even if you miss a few classes due to illness/conflicts.

We will have 5 discussion days. These are days you will read an article that the class picks out and we discuss it in class through the eyes of an economists. You will need to read the article BEFORE class and fill out the reading review of the article and bring it and submit it at the start of class. At the start of the semester, I will present 33 journal articles that center around sports and economics. This list can extend to any other article any student finds that is not already on the list. As a class we independently read each selected article/paper and then come to class ready to discuss that weeks selected topic/paper/article. For each paper you will need to fill out a Paper Review that you will turn in the day we have the discussion. (Peer review template can be found on Canvas)

As stated, my list is not final, if there is/are topics that you would like to discuss we can add them to the list throughout the semester to be covered.

You can expect me to:

- Challenge you to think critically about the connections between economics and sports
- Encourage you to give your best in this class and beyond
- Respect you and your needs, both inside and outside of the classroom
- Encourage and enforce a culture where students also give that respect to one another
- Be available during office hours and by email

Tentative outline of Topics/Timelines:

Each Section will be paired with supplemental readings that I bring into class at the beginning of the section/unit. Discussion of those readings, including the student-led presentations of the pieces, will occur towards the end of each unit.

Please refer to the class calendar that is posted on Canvas for a detailed outline of what we will cover and what days we will have discussion days and exams.

There is NO FINAL EXAM- Points normally going to a final will go to your class project and presentation.

Special Guest Speakers – We will have a Wednesday with guest speakers.

One cool aspect of this class is that I am going to be able to bring in various folks connected to the World of Sports – particularly to the arena of Intercollegiate Sports – in the hopes that their personal stories/examples can enhance your learning of the core material we are covering. So far I have a handful of these guest speakers lined up. Due to the ongoing fluid nature of this aspect of the course – I am not entirely certain how many of these guest speakers we will have. **The guest speaker sessions attendance IS required and will negatively affect your participation grade part of the class. They are taking time out so we should respect that and be engaged in the session.**

Semester long research/analysis project:

You will write a research paper worth 30% of your final grade on a topic related to Sports Economics of your choice. You can write about something we covered in class – but your analysis/research must clearly GO BEYOND what we covered in class. Material we covered in class can certainly be a part of the foundation – but you are primarily going to be graded based on your ability to provide specific empirical/statistical evidence regarding your topic. **Ideally, you**

will use data and provide some sort of regression results – but this is not required. It is required that you provide empirical evidence of some sort – such that your paper “tells a story” using statistics.

You will have to have a partner due to the large class size; no single projects are allowed.

- By **February 17th**, you should have your topic and group cleared by me personally. If we have not talked about your topic look forward at the upcoming chapters to get an idea.
- By **March 10th**, you will turn in a brief literature review of your topic and provide me with evidence that you have obtained the data you will use to develop your ‘story’ (i.e., whether you will be running regressions or not). You will need to turn in a HARD copy to me on or before this day so I can review over Spring Break.
- By **April 7th**, you will have obtained any data you plan to use to show your empirical evidence of interest and show evidence of that to me.
- Tentatively by **April 23rd**, the final projects will be due and the student in-class presentations of your work will take place during the final three weeks. I will randomize the order of the presentations.
- ***ALL OF THE ACTUAL PAPERS ARE DUE TO ME via hard copy by APRIL 28TH, EVEN IF YOU HAVE ONE OF THE LATER PRESENTATION SLOTS.***

Final Grade Calculation & Total Points System:

As you can see, the **course will have 3 scoring sections:**

1. Class Participation- 30%
2. Research Project- 30%
3. Exams- 40%

All the exams will be curved using a simple system that brings the highest score to a 100% and adds the same amount to each other score.

The scores earned on the paper will have specific components that measure how well each student achieves the goals laid out for the project.

There is no extra credit for this class. The fact that 30% of the grade can essentially be turned into a high/strong A simply through full/consistent engagement, and that exams are curved, is generous enough.

NO GRADES WILL BE ADJUSTED on the basis of being “close”. Earn 449.99 points and your final grade is a B, end of discussion. I always root for the student to earn the higher grade – particularly those I get to know over the term. However, I can’t possibly let my hopes affect the way I implement an impartial grading system.

Accommodation Policy Statement & Make-Up Policy

The University of Oklahoma is committed to making its course and activities as accessible as possible. For accommodations on the basis of disability, pregnancy, unexpected serious illness, personal/family issues or other similar concern, please contact me and we can try to meet your needs. The DRC is available for any student meeting their criteria and needing to take exams in a different setting.

Missed Exams can be made up within 1 week following the normal exam time. Missed assignments that are to be presented in-class can be presented/discussed in class – including the term long research paper – are expected to be presented in class to earn the credit associated with those activities. If illness or personal conflicts make presenting on a particular date difficult/impossible, the instructor will work with the student to find a reasonable and mutually agreeable alternative presentation opportunity.

Other Course Policies

Civility & Student Support of Classmates: This course will occasionally cover controversial material that related to “hot-button” type social issues. All students are expected to act at all times with respect towards others. As such, any comments that are deemed by the instructor to be inappropriate and/or disruptive will be asked to leave for that class period. In the instructor’s 14 plus years of teaching, and roughly 4,000 students, this has not yet happened, but I reserve the right to do so if needed.

Syllabus: As the course develops, the instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus if necessary.

Academic Integrity and Student Conduct

Academic integrity means honesty and responsibility in scholarship. Academic assignments exist to help students learn; grades exist to show how fully this goal is attained. OU's Honor code clearly lays out these expectations. DO NOT violate this code. Everyone will wish it had not happened, including you.

Academic misconduct is any act which improperly affects the evaluation of a student's academic performance or achievement. Misconduct occurs when the student either knows or reasonably should know that the act constitutes misconduct. Academic misconduct includes: cheating and using unauthorized materials on examinations and other assignments; improper collaboration, etc. All students can review the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html.

Religious Observances & other excused absences

It is the policy of the University to excuse the absences of students that result from religious observances and to reschedule any needed examinations or class-work that fell on those dates, without any penalty. I of course honor this policy, and highlight that I also give the same accommodation to unexpected illnesses, other University excused absences, and to other qualifying special circumstances.

Students with Disabilities

All students deserve adequate opportunities to engage with the course and to demonstrate their mastery of the material. Student who desire testing accommodation through the DRC should contact the OU Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 405-325-3852 or go to their website at <http://www.ou.edu/drc/home.html>

Title IX Resources & Reporting Requirement

For any concerns regarding gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence or other violent acts, stalking, mental health concerns, or any other serious issue relating to student health/well being, the University provides a variety of resources. To learn more or to report an incident, please contact the Sexual Misconduct office at 405-325-2215 (8-5 M-F) or smo@ou.edu. Incidents can also be reported confidentially to OU advocates at 405-615-0013 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Please be advised that your instructor is required to report any incidents they are made aware of. Inquiries regarding any of OU's non-discrimination policies may be directed to: Bobby J. Mason, University Equal Opportunity Officer and Title IX coordinator, at 405-325-3546 or bjm@ou.edu. For more information please consult <http://www.ou.edu/eoo.html>

Adjustments for Pregnancy/Childbirth related issues

Should you need modification or adjustments to this course based on pregnancy-related or childbirth-related issues, please contact the instructor as well as the DRC as soon as possible. Also, see <http://www.ou.edu/eoo/faqs/pregnancy-faqs.html> for answers to any related questions.