

# Intro Cross-Cult Studies

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Last Updated: Mon, 12/29/2025

**Course prefix:** ML

**Course number:** 2500

**Section:** A

**CRN (you may add up to five):**

33164 34952

**Instructor First Name:** Juan

**Instructor Last Name:** Rodriguez

**Semester:** Spring

**Academic year:** 2026

**Course description:**

In this course we will study the representation of Soccer National Teams (Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Spain), as well as World Cup's Global Heroes (Pele, Maradona, Messi, Vini Jr., and others) in sport documentary films available in Netflix. We will examine how the quest of the heroes of these films relates to national and global dilemmas, such as class, race, gender dynamics, politics, social challenges, economic development, mental health, migration, etc.

## CALENDAR SPRING 2026

### UNIT 1: SOCCER, NATION(ALISM), AND GLOBALIZATION

#### Week 1

1/13 (T) Introduction to class

1/15 (TH) Origins of *Fútbol* in Latin America: The First World Cup in Uruguay

- Movie: *Becoming Champions* (Episode 1) Uruguay: Half David, Half Goliath. 50 mins. (Netflix, 2019)
- Reading: “Sport, film, and national culture” by Sean Crosson
- Reading: “The Uruguayan Football Museum” by Scott Crawford

## **Week 2**

1/20 (T) Origins of *Fútbol* in Latin America: The First World Cup in Uruguay

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano
- Class discussion: How has soccer become an important part of Uruguay's national culture? How do sport films help us explore the links between soccer and nation in Latin America?

1/22 (TH) Brazil: King of Football

- Movie: *Becoming Champions* (Episode 4) Brazil: King of Football. 49 mins. (Netflix, 2019)
- Reading: Selections from *The Sport Film* by Bruce Babington

## **Week 3**

1/27 (T) Brazil: King of Football

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano
- Class discussion: How does soccer produce meaning in Brazilian national culture? How do sport films represent victory and defeat and the sport spectacle?

1/29 (TH) Argentina and the Political History of a Football Nation

- Movie: Becoming Champions (Episode 6) Argentina: The Hand of Faith? 62 mins. (Netflix, 2019)
- Reading: “Why Win a World Cup? Thirty-six Years of Football and Nation(alisms) in Argentina” by Pablo Alabarces, Juan Branz, and José Garriga Zucal

## **Week 4**

### 2/3 (T) Argentina and the Political History of a Football Nation

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano
- Class discussion: How can the political history of a country influence the meanings of the Football Nation? How do sport films explore political history and its meanings inside and outside the soccer field?

### 2/5 (TH) FIFA's Power and Corruption: Havelange and the Globalization of Football

- Movie: FIFA Uncovered (Episode 1). 56 mins. (Netflix, 2022)
- Reading: “Joao Havelange: A Businessman for World Soccer” by Philippe Vonnard and Nicola Sbetti
- Reading: “The ‘invention’ of FIFA’s history: Joao Havelange’s election to FIFA’s presidency as a historic event” by Luiz Guilherme Burlamaqui

## **Week 5**

### 2/10 (T) FIFA's Power and Corruption: Havelange and the Globalization of Football

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano
- Class discussion: Who was Havelange, a hero or a villain in the history of FIFA? What was the influence of Havelange in the Globalization of Football? What strategies do sport history documentaries use to represent complex and intertwined processes such as the commercialization and globalization of football? How do sport history documentaries generate drama by exploring stories of power and corruption?

2/12 (TH) The Two Escobars in Medellín: the Local, National and Global Dimensions of Narco-soccer

- Movie: The Two Escobars. (ESPN/Netflix 2010)
- Reading: Selection of news about Pablo Escobar's links to soccer
- Reading: "The Rise and Fall of Narco-Soccer" by Sarah Krupp
- Reading: "Escobar's Global Branding" by Aldona Pobutsky
- Reading: "Knowing Sports: The Logic of Contemporary Sport Documentary" by Joshua Malitsky

## **Week 6**

2/17 (T) The Two Escobars in Medellín: the Local, National and Global Dimensions of Narco-soccer

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano
- Class discussion: Who was Pablo Escobar? What does he symbolize in Colombian Soccer? Who was Andrés Escobar? What does he symbolize in Colombian Soccer? How can you describe the networks of Narco-Soccer? What was the impact of the Medellín narco-wars in Colombian soccer locally, nationally and globally?

2/19 (TH) Complete and Submit Essay 1

## **UNIT 2: NATIONAL AND TRANSNATIONAL SOCCER HEROES**

## **Week 7**

2/24 (T) Presenting the Final Project: Writing a pitch for a show based on the World Cup 2026 in Atlanta

- Reading: “The Station Soccer Social Innovation” by Alberto Fuentes and Linda Duong

2/26 (TH) Pelé and the Dilemmas of a National Icon

- Movie: Pelé. 108 mins. (Netflix 2021)
- Reading: “Chap 2: When it Was Good to Be Brazilian: Tropical Modernity Affirmed, 1958-1970,” from *The Country of Football: Soccer and the Making of Modern Brazil* by Roger Kittleson
- Reading: “Playing the Hard Line: Football Under the Dictatorship, 1964-1986” from *Futebol Nation: The Story of Brazil Through Soccer* by David Goldblatt
- Reading; Selections from Pelé (reviews of film)

## **Week 8**

3/3 (T) Pelé and the Dilemmas of a National Icon

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano

3/5 (TH) Maradona: Rise, Fall, and Redemption

- Movie: Diego Maradona. 130 mins. (HBO 2019)
- Reading: “Introduction: The Cultural Significance of Maradona” by Pablo Brecia and Mariano Paz
- Reading: “Maradona and Cinema: Biopic, Documentary, Art Film” by Mariano Paz
- Reading: “Asif Kapadia” by Kathy A. McDonald

## **Week 9**

3/10 (T) Maradona: Rise, Fall, and Redemption

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano

3/12 (TH) Vini Jr. and the Persistence of Racism in Sports and Society

- Movie: Vini Jr. 106 mins. (Netflix, 2025)
- Reading: “An Overview of Human Rights Violations Against Racial Discrimination: Case Study of Racism Against Vinicius Jr.” by Yordan Gunawan, Kevin Syahru, Ichwan Rizki
- Reading: “Vini Jr. Law” by CN Noticias Financieras

## **Week 10**

3/17 (T) Vini Jr. and the Persistence of Racism

- Reading: selections from *Soccer in Sun and Shadow* by Eduardo Galeano

3/19 (TH) Complete and Submit Essay 2

## **Week 11**

3/24: Spring Break

3/26: Spring Break

## **UNIT 3: SOCCER CHAMPS AND THE TEAM AS COLLECTIVE HERO**

## **Week 12**

3/3 (T) Working on Final Project: The Pitch

4/2 (TH) World Cup 2022: Masculinity and National Identity

- Movie: Captains of the World (Episode 2): Where is Messi? (44 mins.), (Episode 5) Mindgames (56 mins.) and (Episode 6) The Greatest (42 mins.) (Netflix, 2023)
- Reading: “Figurations of South American Masculinities in the Global North: Diego Armando Maradona and Lionel Messi” by Alejandro Gasel
- Reading: “Lionel Messi as a Global Icon” by Nahuel Iván Faedo and Montse Corrius

## **Week 13**

4/7 (T) Men Soccer World Cup 2022: Masculinity and National Identity

4/9 (TH) Women Soccer World Cup 2023: Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and National Identity

- Movie: It's All Over: The Kiss That Changed Spanish Football. 95 mins. (Netflix, 2024)
- Reading: “#SeAcabó: how a mass-mediated ‘social drama’ made visible and confronted (subjective and objective) violence in women’s football in Spain” by Itoiz Rodrigo-Jusue et. al.
- Reading: Select any reading from below
  - “Introduction” by Catherine Fowler and Sabrina Moro
  - “Women’s football sexism and media representation” Eleanor Crabbill
  - “Productive rage in the viralization of #SeAcabó” by Diana Fernandez Romero and Sonia Nuñez Puente
  - “Feminist Digital Activism in Spain” by Sonia Nuñez Puente
  - “The problem is the system” by Barbara Zecchi
  - “Understanding the non-consensual kiss as abusive” by Catherine Fowler

## **Week 14**

4/14 (T) Women Soccer World Cup 2023: Gender Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and National Identity

4/18 (TH) Students complete and submit video comment on Soccer and Gender. Students visit StationSoccer and work on final pitches

## **Week 15**

4/21 (T) Teams work on final pitches with the professor

4/23 (TH) Teams revise final pitches independently

## **Week 16**

4/28 (T): Final review of pitches with the professor

### **Course learning outcomes:**

- Apply ideas associated with sport documentaries (narrative arcs, the quest of the hero, winning and losing, physical spectacle) to the analysis of sport documentaries focusing on soccer
- Analyze through readings and writing the impact of soccer in Latin American history, geography, politics and economics, as well as the impact of Latin American soccer in national, local and global networks
- Investigate and analyze the representation of ethnic, racial, class, regional and gender identities in sport documentaries focusing on soccer
- Work in a global context grounded upon a theoretically informed and comparative understanding of languages, media, cultures, and technologies

### **Required course materials:**

**MOVIES:**

All movies, except Maradona, are available in Netflix (subscription streaming service). Students are responsible for getting access to the films via this subscription platform. The film Maradona is available for streaming using the GT Library services. The film is also available via the HBO-MAX streaming service.

**READINGS:**

All readings for the class are available in pdf at the course Canvas site.

**Grading policy:****EVALUATION:**

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION	15 POINTS
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ESSAY 1 (500-800 WORDS)	24
POINTS	

ESSAY 2 (500-800 WORDS)	24
POINTS	

VIDEO COMMENT (2-3 MINUTES)	16
POINTS	

FINAL PROJECT (2-3 MINUTES ORAL OR VIDEO PITCH)	21 POINTS
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**TOTAL:**

100 POINTS

No late assignments will be accepted, unless the professor have granted the student with extra time to complete the assignment due to special accommodations, medical emergencies or other excused absences.

**Attendance policy:**

- Unexcused absences are not welcome and will affect your final grade.
- Attendance and participation are equivalent to 15 points of the grade. Every time you come to class, you will accumulate 1 point for your final grade. And every time you

have an unexcused absence, you will lose 1 point. See the evaluation section in the syllabus.

- To have an absence excused, you need to (1) get my approval beforehand or (2) bring in a note documenting a medical or comparable emergency ***the class directly following your absence.***
- Example of excused absences: medical emergency; official GT activities, professional activities or religious activities (please inform professor before)
- Two tardies of more than 5 minutes equate to an absence.
- Not having the assignment ready in class equates to an absence.

**Academic honesty/integrity statement:**

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

**Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):**

**Arts, Humanities & Ethics (Humanities)**

The Learning Outcomes for the Arts, Humanities & Ethics Core IMPACTS area:

Students will effectively analyze and interpret the meaning, cultural significance, and ethical implications of literary/philosophical texts in English or other languages or of works in the visual/performing arts.