



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

European Football and Nationalism - 54641

Last update 12-03-2025

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: European Studies

Academic year: 2025

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Oded Steinberg

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Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Oded Steinberg

Course/Module description:

It is almost becoming a truism to declare that football (soccer) is one of the world's new religions. It influences culture, society, economics as well as the political and national spheres. As some say, football at least since 1945 (and until the War in Ukraine) replaced wars. Like the nation, football moves people into action, and the superstars of the game are celebrated as national heroes. In another similarity to nationalism, football embodies an emotional experience, urging people, who in most cases do not know each other, to support real and imagined entities. In this course, we will delve into the complicated relationship between football and nationalism. The focus will be on Europe, which is, without a doubt, the continent of football, attracting players from all over the world to its five leading leagues, forming a whole transnational and global engagement and rivalries between different cultures and societies. The course will hold a theoretical and a study case approach. We will begin by overviewing theories of nationalism and speak on the history of football. From there, we will follow different European cases through historical and theoretical approaches such as the national football rivalry between England and Britain or between Greece and Turkey. We will, naturally also engage with specific football leagues studying the clashes between Glasgow Rangers and Celtic (Scotland), Lazio and Roma (Italy) or Partisan and Red Star Belgrade (Serbia). Although football is historically associated as a very 'manly' sport, the rise in the popularity of women's football is one of the most fascinating and promising developments of recent years. The 'explosion' of women's football, thus, will be another theme of the class, especially considering the very successful UEFA Women's Euro of 2022. We will also look outside of Europe, into the relations between European Colonialism and football and how this is still influencing Africa, the Middle East etc. We will mainly aim to answer core questions such as how nationalism is shaping football and vice versa. What are the differences and similarities between football and nationalism? And how do national histories influence football?

Course/Module aims:

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Get to know the complex relationship between football and nationalism in Europe
- Be proficient in prominent case studies of European football and nationalism
- Understand how the main theories of nationalism are relevant to the study of football in Europe

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:

Course/Module Content:

1. The history of the 'Beautiful Game'
2. Theories of Nationalism and Football
3. National and Club Rivalries
4. Colonialism and French Football: Speaker Dr. Itamar Dubinsky
5. British Isles: Religious Wars and the Old Firm
6. Italy: South and North
7. German Football: Speaker Prof. Moshe Zimmerman
8. Jews and European Football: Ajax, Bayern Munich
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9. The emancipation of European Women's Football
10. Identities of the Balkan
11. Football Autonomies of Spain
12. European Football in Israel/Palestine

Required Reading:

- Kitching, Gavin. 'The origins of football: History, ideology and the making of 'The People's Game'. *History Workshop Journal*, 79:1, 127-153.
- Ismer, S. 'Embodying the nation: Football, emotions and the construction of collective identity'. *Nationalities Papers*, 39:4, (2011). 547-565.
- Regina Weber (2021) Banal Europeanism? Europeanisation of football and the enhabitation of a Europeanised football fandom, *Sport in Society*, 24:11, 1893-1909,
- Dmowski, Seweryn. 'Geographical typology of European football rivalries', *Soccer & Society*, 14:3, (2013), 331-343.
- Marks, John. *The French national team and national identity: 'Cette France d'un "bleu métis"'*, *Culture, Sport Society*, 1:2 (1998), 41-57.
- Hassan, David, and Ken McCue. 'Football, racism and the Irish', *Race, ethnicity and football: Persisting debates and emergent issues* (2011): 50-63.
- Joseph M. Bradley *British colonialism, Ireland and the 'old firm': postcolonial*

identities and contemporary Scottish football and society, Postcolonial Studies, (2021)

- *Christos Kassimeris, 'Fascism, separatism and the ultras: discrimination in Italian football', Soccer & Society, 12:5 (2011): 677-688*
- *Kuper, Simon. Ajax, the Dutch, the war: Football in Europe during the second world war. Hachette UK, 2011.*
- *Markwart Herzog, 'FC Bayern Munich as a "victim" of National Socialism? Construction and critique of a "heroic myth"', Sport in History, 41:1 (2021) 131-152.*

- *Goig, Ramón Llopis. 'Identity, nation-state and football in Spain. the evolution of nationalist feelings in Spanish Football', Soccer & Society 9:1 (2008): 56-63.*
- *Shobe, Hunter. 'Place, identity and football: Catalonia, catalanisme and football club Barcelona, 1899-1975', National identities 10: 3 (2008): 329-343*
- *Vicente Rodríguez Ortega. 'Soccer, nationalism and the media in contemporary Spanish society: La Roja, Real Madrid & FC Barcelona', Soccer & Society, 17:4, (2016): 628-643*

Additional Reading Material:

Grading Scheme:

- Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 60 %*
- Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture/ Seminar / Pro-seminar / Research proposal 15 %*
- Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 15 %*
- Attendance / Participation in Field Excursion 10 %*

Additional information: