

The Race for Number One: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of a Division IA Football Playoff

The Ohio State University
School of Physical Activity and Educational Services
Freshman Seminar Syllabus (2 credits)

Instructors:	Dr. Chad Seifried Dr. Melvin Adelman	Call Number:	
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Course Rationale:

Historically, the nature of public discourse surfaces as a significant topic and recent discussion about the pairings for several Bowl Championship Series (BCS) games represents one example for us to study public discourse. The BCS often provokes passionate arguments about the appropriateness of the current postseason format for Division IA college football. Several scholars and popular writers suggest the current system serves to oppress low and mid-major conference so they cannot enjoy the “spoils” provided by the holiday season. On the other hand, numerous others promote the bowl tradition as important characteristic of Americana and mutually beneficial (i.e. socially and financially) to host communities and participating institutions. Still, several fans, coaches, and higher education administrators support a college football playoff. However, resistance to change remains strong. The purpose of this course is to provide an overview of the problems, advantages, and other issues concerning the various methods offered or selected for the Division IA College Football National Championship Title Game. Additionally, this course seeks to examine public discourse through the BCS. Specifically, we will analyze how the BCS issue is presented to the masses, the consistency of the dialogue, the different types of sources utilized to enrich the public discourse, and how people extract information from those sources. Finally, this course seeks to introduce how researchers utilize the library databases to conduct research and provides input to students on how to work within a group setting.

Course Objectives:

1. To acquire specific information and understanding about public discourse and how people narratives presented by various sources alter or shape peoples’ opinions.
2. To recognize a continued struggle to find better solutions to any public issue is important.
3. To understand how the University Libraries Database Site can be accessed and utilized for engaging in scholarly research expected of college students.
4. To learn how to conduct group work and realize the benefits it provides.
5. To appreciate the subtleties of creating and making proposal presentations and convincing the audience your product is best.
6. To recognize the multiplicity of problems and issues facing a Division IA intercollegiate football championship.

7. To acquire knowledge of the historical and contextual background of Division IA football, its' various bowl games, and ranking systems.

Course Policies:

A. Students with Disabilities: This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request. If you have a disability, please remember that you are responsible for making your needs known to me and seeking assistance in a timely manner. I will do my best to assist you in completing the course successfully.

B. Attendance: I expect you to attend class regularly, be on time, stay for the whole class, listen attentively, and show, through your behavior, you respect the fact others in the class are here to learn. Your presence is indicative of your professional attitude and is necessary to derive maximal benefits from the class. If you need to miss a class, arrangements should be made with me prior to the class. Any work missed during absences may not be made up, unless it falls under a university allowed absence. You are responsible for obtaining class notes and hand-outs on the days absent.

Excused Absences

There are three situations, which constitute an “excused absence” from the class meeting time. They are: 1) students who participate in a documented University sanctioned event, 2) students who have a documented death in the family, and 3) students who are observing a religious holiday. In accordance to Faculty Rule 3335-7-15, students who will be participating in University sanctioned events must provide the instructor with a copy of the scheduled events and those classes which will be missed. This documentation must be on University letterhead, signed by the coach/supervisor, and given to the instructor within the first two weeks of the quarter. Students who will be observing a religious holiday must provide date/event written notification to the instructor within the first two weeks of the quarter.

C. Academic Misconduct: Students are expected to do their own original work within the confines of the course objectives and evaluation procedures. Any deviation from these expectations is considered academic misconduct and Faculty Rule 3335-31-02 will be enforced. The Ohio State University’s Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: “Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process.” Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University’s Code of Student Conduct is never considered an “excuse” for academic misconduct, so it is strongly recommended that students review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

D. Assignments: I expect you to put effort into your work for the class and be truthful in your presentation of your work, that is, no plagiarism, cheating, or the like. Please see me if you have any questions about academic misconduct. Please note all assignments are due on time. For my part as the instructor of this course, I will (a) listen to your questions, comments, or concerns, (b) address issues that arise in regard to course assignments, (c) provide you with interesting material to work on, (d) return papers to you in a timely manner, and (e) generally do what is necessary so you can accomplish the objectives established for the course.

E. Materials and Presentation Methods: Power point lectures and out of class assignments can be obtained through the instructor.

F. Technology: Additional means of communication between the instructor and students are available through the use of email, you are responsible for any email sent to your OSU account, this will include but is not limited to schedule updates, articles, and forms needed for class.

G. Diversity: The curriculum and experience is designed, implemented, and evaluated in a manner that promotes the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help *all* students learn.

H. Statement of Student Rights: “Any student with a documented disability who may require special accommodations should self-identify to the instructor as early in the quarter as possible to receive effective and timely accommodations.” Students with a disability should work through the Office of Disability Services to secure appropriate accommodations (292-3307).

Course Evaluation:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Class Participation	40
College Proposal Paper	30
Proposal Presentation	20
Peer Evaluation	10
Total	100

Students must achieve a score of 70% or better to earn a Satisfactory (S) mark for this course. Those individuals scoring below 70% will received an Unsatisfactory (U) grade.

Class Participation: (40 points)

You are expected to make a quality, consistent, and balanced contribution to class discussions. This is especially important when discussing the in-class, written, and reading assignments provided/listed within this text. Both quantity and quality of your contributions are important. I expect you to summarize, interrelate, and apply the topics of discussion during each class period. In-class assignments may be given throughout the quarter. Any work missed during absences may not be made up. You are responsible for obtaining class notes and handouts on days absent.

Division IA Football Playoff Group Paper: (30 points)

For this assignment, I expect you to complete a playoff proposal for crowning the National Champion of Division IA college football or defend the current Bowl Championship Series (**Due Beginning of Class the 9th Week**). The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and be at least 15 pages. A cover page and headings must appear to distinctively mark each section. Pages must be numbered and references should be cited using A.P.A. (American Psychological Association, 5th Edition) style. The following serves as a guide for your preparation of the paper and areas you will be evaluated on:

- a. Overview/Statement of the Problem (**What Does the Public Discourse Reveal?**)
- b. Analysis of Current Bowl Championship Series
- c. Description of Your Proposal (**Provide support for your proposal via library databases**)
- d. Financial Comparisons/Revenues of Playoff Proposal(s) vs. Current Bowl System
- e. Calendar of Events (From the start of the season until its conclusion)
- f. Grammar, sentence structure, spelling, A.P.A Style, etc...

Overall, the paper should present your reaction to a playoff (e.g. Do you agree or disagree with the creation of a playoff? What are the possible Pros/Cons? How would the NCAA and its institutions (i.e. bowl communities) be impacted? Etc...). Furthermore, I expect you to create a playoff (e.g. plus one system, final four, elite eight, sweet sixteen, and plus sixteen) which you feel best fits the fans, participants, and other important groups (i.e. television, NCAA, sponsors, etc...) or defend the current system. Further information provided by the instructor in the form of a handout will reveal the evaluation criteria to help guide the writer(s).

Proposal Presentation: (20 points)

Each group will make a 20-minute presentation of their event/program during the last week of class. Each group should prepare appropriate slides (e.g., power point/overheads) and a handout briefly summarizing their proposal to facilitate a concise and cogent class presentation.

Event/Program Peer Project Evaluation: (10 points)

I expect you to contribute to all aspects of the project and presentation. Peer evaluations will be completed to assess each student's contribution to the project and presentation. You can earn a total of 10 points for your contribution. The scores assigned by your peers will be summed and the average will become your grade. If you disagree with your score, then you may discuss this situation with me. The evaluation must be turned in to me on **last day of classes Week 10.**

Tentative Schedule

Week 1	Introduction to Course and Getting to Know Each Other
Week 2	Introduction to Public Discourse and Overview of BCS <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bowl Coalition, Alliance, Championship Series• Disputed champions and the various ratings systems
Week 3	Bowls, Americana, Commercialization of Sport <ul style="list-style-type: none">• History/tradition of bowls• Television's influence/impact: finances and marketing
Week 4	College Playoffs Discussion (Intro. to Competing Proposals: 4, 8, 16, etc...)
Week 5	College Playoffs Discussion (Analysis of Competing Proposals) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Computer Ratings, Human Polls, and Playoff
Week 6	Searching with the Library Databases and Proposal Evaluation Handout
Week 7	Introduction to Conduct Group Work/Proposal and Presentation Practice Time
Week 8	Legal Issues: Anti-trust Concerns and Group Preparation for Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anti-competitive and pro-competitive effects
Week 9-10	Proposal Presentations

Schedule Subject to Change

Reading: Articles and Group Paper Resource List

Billingsley, R. (2004). Discussion. *The American Statistician*, 58 (3), 190.

Carlin, B. P. & Stern, H. S. (1999). Designing a College Football Playoff System. *CHANCE: New Directions for Statistics and Computing*, 12 (3), 21-26.

Coley, W. (2004). Discussion. *The American Statistician*, 58 (3), 191-192.

Dunnivant, K. (2003, November 27). Behind the revolt in college football. *Business Week Online*. Also available on Business Source Premier.

Hales, M. (2003). The Antitrust Issues of NCAA College Football Within the Bowl Championship Series. Available at:

http://www.geocities.com/byulawguy/The_Antitrust_Issues_of_NCAA_College_Football_Within_the_Bowl_Championship_Series.htm

Harville, D. (2004). Discussion. *The American Statistician*, 58 (3), 187-189.

Harville, D. (2003). The Selection or Seeding of College Basketball or Football Teams for Postseason Competition. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 98, 17-27.

Layden, T. (2004, November 29). The BSC mess. *Sports Illustrated*, 101, 21 (52-55). Also available on Academic Search Alumni Edition.

Massey, K. (2004). Discussion. *The American Statistician*, 58 (3), 185-187.

Rothman, D. (2002). My contribution to the BCS: yes, Virginia, there is a social welfare function in college football. ASA Proceedings of the Joint Statistical Meetings, 2990-3002. Available at: <http://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/Proceedings/y2002/Files/JSM2002-000156.pdf>

Mease, D. (2004). Discussion. *The American Statistician*, 58 (3), 192-194.

Sandbrook, J (2004). Division I-A Postseason Football History and Status. Available at: <http://www.knightfdn.org/default.asp?story=/athletics/reports/2004%5Fsandbrook/index.html>

Stern, H.S. (2004) Statistics and the college football championship. *The American Statistician*, 58 (3), 179-185.

Stern, H.S. (1995). Who's Number 1 in College Football? And How Might We Decide? *CHANCE: New Directions for Statistics and Computing*, 8 (3), 7-14.

Young, C.E. (2004, January 9). College football could have a real champion. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, B16.

Website List

http://www.andersonsports.com/football/ACF_frnk.html

<http://www.collegeplayoffs.com/>

<http://www.colleyrankings.com/>

<http://www.cfr.com/html/searchof.htm>

<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/bcspoll.asp>
<http://www.mratings.com/>
<http://www.usatoday.com/sports/sagarin.htm>
<http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/football/usatpoll.htm>
<http://www.sportsfansofamerica.com/index-main.htm>
<http://prwolfe.bol.ucla.edu/cfootball/ratings.htm>

Instructor Biographies

Dr. Chad S. Seifried (seifried.5@osu.edu) taught sport studies and management courses at The Ohio State University since joining the institution as a doctoral student in 2002. Currently, Dr. Seifried teaches or supervises the following undergraduate and graduate classes: a) EDU PAES 245 Sport and Recreation Leadership; b) 545 Programming in Sport and Recreation; c) 607 Legal Aspects of Sport and Physical Activity; d) 835 Problems in Interscholastic and Intercollegiate Athletics; e) 837 Event and Facility Management for Sport Managers; and f) 889/989 Practicum and Internships in Sport Management. Dr. Seifried's interests embrace: 1) the study of indoor and outdoor sport facilities—specifically the evolution of sport facilities, perceptions and satisfaction of sport facilities, and the discovery of comparisons or other drawn meanings about sport facilities; 2) the study of ethical/moral issues in sport such as the decision-making process, sportsmanship vs. gamesmanship, and meaningfulness of sport terms; and 3) the identification of factors associated with student-athlete choice of institution and the development of strategies to better recruit student-athletes. Recently, Dr. Seifried also accepted invitations and/or completed presentations at national conferences such as The Drake Conference (Indianapolis, IN), The 9th International Conference on Sport and Entertainment Business (Columbia, SC), and the North American Association of Sport Management (Atlanta, GA; Kansas City MO). Finally, Dr. Seifried also published articles in the *Journal of Contemporary Athletics*, *the Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *Scholastic Coach* and *Athletic Director*, and *Strategies*.

Dr. Melvin L. Adelman (adelman.1@osu.edu) taught sport studies courses at The Ohio State University since 1984. The author of *A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820-70* (1986), is currently working on a history of the All-American Football Conference and professional football in post World War II America. Dr. Adelman also published articles in the *Journal of Sport History*, *the Journal of Social History*, *Canadian History of Sport* and currently serves as editor of the *Journal of Sport History*. Additionally, his doctoral students have and currently teach at a variety of institutions including, the University of Iowa; University of Georgia; California State University-Sacramento; State University of New York at Cortland; University of Houston; Clark-Atlanta University, and The Ohio State University. Dr. Adelman's wide array of undergraduate and graduate classes and seminars on the history of sport include these courses most recently: a) EDU PAES 410 History of Leisure and Physical Activities in Western Society; b) 839 Professional Sport in 20th-Century America; c) 711 American Sport History; d) 925.20 Sport and Exercise Sciences; and e) 626.03 Sport and Popular Culture – Baseball.