

Course: HIS 3538-101 – FIFA World Cup: Soccer & Global History (Selected Topics)
Semester: Spring 2026
Class Location: Anne Belk Hall 240
Class Meeting Times: T Th 3:30-4:45pm
Instructor: Dr. Rwany Sibaja, Associate Professor of History
Email and Office Phone: sibajaro@appstate.edu / 828.262.8476
Office: Anne Belk 249M
Drop-in Office Hours: T Th 2:00-3:15 pm; Th only 4:45-5:30pm (or Zoom by appointment)

A syllabus is a living document. All items in the syllabus (and/or course guides and materials) are subject to change and will be communicated to all students.

About the Course

In HIS 3538, students examine soccer as a field of research. Students will analyze primary and secondary source materials, discuss sports history scholarship, explore multimedia sources, and research a topic that situates *fútbol* (soccer) in world history. This course will meet twice a week in person.

Primary Course Learning Goal

Participants should be able to use their knowledge of the history of soccer to evaluate the degree to which the FIFA World Cup has shaped intercultural relations over time.

Learning Objectives

Participants should be able to...

1. **Articulate** continuities and changes over time. **[Temporal; Context]**
2. **Interpret** the many meanings people have attributed to soccer. **[Context]**
3. Use primary and secondary sources, to **construct** research-based historical arguments by analyzing and synthesizing information through a social, cultural, political, or economic lens. **[Analysis; Interpretation]**
4. Practice public speaking and writing skills by **presenting** digitally-infused work to others, with a nod to understanding soccer from a global perspective *and* providing a unique insight through your research. **[Historical, Digital, and Global Literacy; Respect]**

Texts (Course Books to Rent-available through VitalSource on AsULearn)

1. Bowman, William. *The World Cup as World History*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019.
2. Campomar, Andreas. *Golazo!: The Beautiful Game from the Aztecs to the World Cup: The Complete History of How Soccer Shaped Latin America*. Riverhead Books, 2014.
3. Bolsmann, Chris and George N. Kioussis, eds. *Soccer Frontiers: The Global Game in the United States, 1863-1913*. University of Tennessee Press, 2021.
4. Williams, Jean. *The History of Women's Football*. Pen & Sword History, 2024.

Grading

HIS 3538 follows the standard grading scale used at App State (A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, F).

Grade Descriptors

A/A-	100-94/93-90 — Superior Work
B+ to B-	89-87/86-83/82-80 — Above to Average Work (Some Room for Improvement)
C+ to C-	79-77/76-73/70-72 — Acceptable Work (Room for Improvement)

D+ to D -	69-67/66-63/62-60 — Below Average Work (Significant Room for Improvement)
F	59 or less — Unacceptable Work (Failure)

Assignments

- Engagement (Attendance, Participation) – up to 10 pts.
- Weekly Readings Analysis (10 entries) – up to 30 pts.
- Film/Book Review – select a soccer book or documentary – up to 10 pts.
- Research Project Items (annotated bibliography, research plans, lists of primary & secondary sources, working thesis, first draft of digital product) – up to 20 pts.
- Research Project Presentation – up to 5 pts.
- Final Draft of Research-Based Digital Product – up to 15 pts.
- Final Exam paper – up to 10 pts.

o TOTAL: up to 100 pts.

Description of Assignments [handout and rubrics will be discussed in class]

Engagement. Your engagement matters. It helps to build a shared learning community. Engagement includes regular attendance, but also the quality of contributions you offer to the class conversation. So, engagement implies doing the work (reading, taking notes, completing assignments) so you can offer something of value to the class discussions and activities. [Students are allowed to miss up to three (3) class sessions. Penalties take effect with a fourth absence – *see policies*]

Weekly Readings Analysis. You will submit 10 weeks of readings analysis, from the thirteen possible weeks across 5 units. We will use blog posts for weekly readings-analysis submissions. **You** choose the weeks to complete this assignment, which, of course, means you can take up to three (3) weeks off. You will be assigned a group - follow those readings only! **NOTE:** For longer journal articles and book chapters, try to read for about 30-45 minutes and spend another 10-15 minutes jotting down some notes (quotes, interesting points, “a-ha” moments, etc.). In other words, don’t read word-for-word. Learn how to quickly scan for the topic, argument, evidence or sources, and conclusion. Weekly blog post submissions are due by no later than Mondays at 11:59pm.

Note: This course engages diverse scholarly perspectives to develop critical thinking, analysis, and debate. Inclusion of a reading does not imply endorsement.

Film/Book Review. Students will select either a book or movie focused on soccer. The idea is to analyze how the medium (book or TV) affects research, arguments, selection of sources, and storytelling. A solid book/film review does the following: provides a brief background of the topic, a condensed summary of how well the book/film engages with the topic, an explanation of the authors’/directors’ main argument, particular critiques of the book/film (what worked well, where it fell flat or seemed confusing), and a final assessment of the merits of the book/film for our understanding of sport history (... and maybe who is the book’s/film’s potential audience).

Research Project Items. Your research project will take place across the semester. In the beginning stages, you will submit: an annotated bibliography, major research question and work plan, lists of primary & secondary sources, and a working thesis. These will inform the first draft of your research-based digital project: a key moment, personality, or theme in the history of the World Cup.

Research Project Presentation. You will prepare for a 10 min. presentation of your research (with Q&A segment to follow). The instructor will provide some ideas of what to discuss.

First & Final Drafts of Research-Based Digital Product. You will submit a first draft of your research-based digital project **before** presentations, and use feedback to revise-submit a final version.

Final Exam. The final exam is a chance for you to show off what you’ve learned in HIS 3538 on the history of soccer in world history. The exam asks you to select key course readings, your research project, and any multimedia elements, themes, and discussions that ties the research topic you’ve selected with course learning objectives.

Due Dates

- Engagement (Attendance, Participation) – all semester
- Weekly Readings Analysis – by 11:59pm on Mondays *before* we discuss in class on Tuesdays
- Film/Book Review – by March 10
- Research Project Items (annotated bibliography, research plans, lists of primary & secondary sources, working thesis) – several dates, see course calendar
- Research Project Presentation – March 31 and April 2
- First Draft & Final Draft of Research-Based Digital Product
 - First Draft – by March 20
 - Final Draft – by April 24
- Final Exam paper – on exam day and time: Thursday May 7, 2-4:30pm

Go to the course [Google calendar](#) for all relevant dates.

Course-Specific Policies

Attendance/Absence Policy. Class attendance is one criterion in determining a student's final grade in the course. Students are allowed up to three (3) absences and will receive a notification on the third absence. A fourth absence will lead to an individual conference with the instructor. A fifth absence is the final notice and will require an additional make-up work assignment. Six more or absences is an automatic failure (“F”). If you incur absences due to religious observance, emergency, major health problems, university events, or other issues, contact your instructor as soon as possible (see ASU policies on absences below)

– see [App State policies](#) on absences due to religious observances and holy days

Makeup, Late or Missing Assignments. All assignments can be submitted early; “due by” dates are the final cutoff. You can submit up to four late-work tickets using [this Late Work-Ticket Google Form](#), which extends your deadline by **three (3) days** without penalty. [Exceptions: final project, final exam, presentation]

Submitting Assignments. See the assignment handouts for how and when to submit each assignment. These handouts will be posted on AsULearn and the course website.

Instructions for communicating with the instructor. Use “drop-in” hours to see the instructor in ABH 249M. If you need to meet via Zoom, email ahead of time. Otherwise, feel free to email at sibajaro@appstate.edu – emails will be returned within 24 hours (48 hours on weekends), follow up if you have not heard back yet.

Notification of a Course Modification. Any changes to the course assignments, policies, weekly readings, or grading criteria will be communicated via email, notification on AsULearn, and updated on the course website. Likewise, any university closure and delays will be communicated by App State and the instructor.

Student Conduct in the Classroom. Students are encouraged to bring their personal computing devices to each class, show mutual respect, listen to and respect others’ opinions on the readings and

discussions, and be courteous of everyone's time in class. Because ABH 240 is an Active Learning Classroom, per History Dept. rules, do not bring food to class, and keep drinks covered. All technology adapters can be used in class, but must stay in ABH 240.

(Generative) Artificial Intelligence. Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes for this course (#s3 and 4), all assignments should be prepared by the student first and foremost. Even though AI technologies can offer useful tools to assist you with the writing process, and even in thinking about some of the assigned readings, they also bring a danger of substituting for your own ideas. Above all, AI tools stifle the critical thinking that happens throughout the writing process.

So, my recommendation *and policy* when using AI technologies is to ensure ...

- ➔ they are not used to substitute for your own ideas or the drafting process;
- ➔ you use them after you've had the opportunity to formulate and mature your thoughts on the topic you are writing about;
- ➔ you provide acknowledgment and proper citation (see [Chicago Manual of Style](#)).

Ultimately, I trust you all to follow the Academic Integrity Code and do the challenging work this course will ask of you. (See [Ai.appstate.edu](https://ai.appstate.edu) for a list of AI tools licensed by App State)

University-Specific Policies

App State has official policies covering each of the following categories:

- Academic Integrity Code
- Access & Opportunity
- Attendance and Absences
- Student Engagement with Courses

The full text of these policies can be found at:

<https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources-forms/syllabi-policy-and-statement-information>.

In addition, the Accessibility and Accommodations page on the Academic Affairs website provides more information about digital accessibility, disability-related adjustments and accommodations and pregnancy or religious academic adjustments and accommodations.

Visit: <https://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources-forms/accommodations-students-disabilities>

Food and Housing Insecurity. If you are having difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live, please contact the Dean of Students (<https://deanofstudents.appstate.edu>) for a list of resources and support.

The Mountaineer Food Hub and Free Store is a free resource with pantry and personal care items, located in the Office of Sustainability on the bottom floor of East Hall. There are also other campus pantries in the following locations: Belk Library, College of Education, Garwood Hall, Leon Levine, and College Access and Success in DD Dougherty. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so, so I can assist you with finding the resources you may need. For more information, please visit the Mountaineer Food Hub & Free Store web page at: <https://sustain.appstate.edu/initiatives/food-pantry>