

# PHIL 223: Sports Ethics

Fall 2014

T\*TH 10:00 am - 11:15 am

Location: TBA

## Instructor Information:

Dr. Shawn E. Klein

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Office: SCAR 119

Office Hours: MWF 11-11:50 am; T\*TH 11:30 -12:30pm, and by appointment.

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/rcphil>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Rockford-College-Philosophy-Department/120214339280>

Moodle: <http://moodle.rockford.edu>

## Course Description:

A study of moral issues in sports, including the relative fairness of performance enhancing drugs and techniques, cheating and deception, ethical issues in the economics of sports, and the nature of sportsmanship. Other topics may include ethical issues in youth sports and the role of violence in sport. PRQ: None. Credits: 3.00

## Course Objectives:

At the end of the semester, the student should be able to:

1. Understand the philosophical terms used.
2. Identify and explain the ethical positions of the different issues discussed.
3. Develop and defend one's own ethical beliefs regarding these issues.

## Readings & Other Requirements:

- *The Philosophical Athlete* by Heather Reid. Carolina Academic Press.  
<http://www.amazon.com/dp/0890894051/>
- All other assigned readings available through Moodle.
- Regular access to the internet and email is required

## Grading and Evaluation:

Final grades are based on a 400-point system consisting of the following:

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Participation                          | 50      |
| Reading Summaries                      | 100     |
| News Postings                          | 50      |
| Exam 1                                 | 50      |
| Exam 2                                 | 50      |
| <i>The Philosophical Athlete</i> Essay | 100     |
| Total:                                 | 400 pts |

The grading scale is as follows:

|           |            |    |
|-----------|------------|----|
| 374 – 400 | 94 – 100 % | A  |
| 358 – 373 | 90 - 93 %  | A- |
| 346 – 357 | 87 - 89 %  | B+ |
| 334 – 345 | 84 – 86 %  | B  |
| 318 – 333 | 80 - 83 %  | B- |
| 306 – 317 | 77 - 79 %  | C+ |
| 294 – 305 | 74 – 76 %  | C  |
| 278 – 293 | 70 - 73 %  | C- |
| 238 – 277 | 60 – 69 %  | D  |
| 0 – 237   | 0 – 59 %   | F  |

### **Class Participation:**

Class participation is an essential part of the philosophical process and classroom learning. Class participation includes actively taking part in class and group discussions, student presentations, and other in-class assignments.

Attendance as such is not required, but students are expected to attend every class. If students miss a class, for whatever reason, it is *their* responsibility to find out what work was missed. Students should get class notes from another student before meeting with me about a missed class.

Any in-class work missed due to any absence, for whatever reason, cannot be made up.

### **Reading Summary**

At the start of select classes, students will write a five bullet list summary for a reading assignment that is chosen by the instructor. The five summary points should identify the main ideas, concepts, or arguments of the reading.

Since students will not be able to look at the reading assignment and will only get five minutes to write up the summary points, it is recommended that students prepare their summaries before class. Students will not be allowed to access these or any other materials during the writing of the summaries in class.

Each bullet list summary is worth up to 10 points; the semester total is 100 pts. See Grading Appendix for more on how these are graded.

### **News Postings**

Students will need to post to the appropriate forum on Moodle a unique current news item (no older than three months) that represents or relates to one of the main points in the readings for that week. As part of the posting, students will need to write up a brief explanation of how the story connects to the reading. These will be graded by relevance and cogency of explanation. Each posting is worth up to 5 pts; the semester total is 50 pts.

The first student to post about the particular event will earn the points. What needs to be unique is the event, not just the particular write-up (So, posting about the same event but

from a different source will not count). This also means that you must read the other postings from students to make sure that your posting is unique.

The deadline for posting is each Thursday at 11 pm, but since you need to be unique, it is better to post earlier.

See Grading Appendix for more on how these are graded.

### ***The Philosophical Athlete Essay***

See attached addendum for assignment details.

### **Exams**

There will be two in-class essay exams. Exam questions will be chosen from a list of questions provided prior to the exam. See Grading Appendix for Exam Essay Grading Rubric.

Each of the exams will cover an instructor designated selection of material. Unless explicitly declared otherwise, students should expect any material covered in any reading, lecture, or discussion to be fair game for an exam question.

### **Academic Misconduct:**

Plagiarism and cheating of any kind will not be tolerated under *any* circumstances. Students are expected to adhere, completely, to the Rockford University Academic Honor Code. Please see the Student Code section of the Student Handbook (available from the Rockford University website: <http://www.rockford.edu/?page=StudentHandbook>) for a full explanation of plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.

If you are unsure if a situation falls under academic dishonesty or not, consult the instructor prior to doing the work.

If you turn in a plagiarized paper, exam, or any other product of academic misconduct, this will result, at instructor's discretion, in a failing grade for the *entire* course, appropriate university authorities will be notified, and disciplinary procedures will be initiated.

### **Classroom Behavior:**

It is expected that all students will behave in a polite, respectable manner at all times, and that they will always be tolerant and civil towards their fellow students and instructor. Any other behavior at any time will not be tolerated. The instructor reserves the right to remove a student if they fail to follow this policy.

### **Dropping/Withdrawal:**

It is part of a student's academic responsibility to decide whether or not to drop or withdraw from a course once enrolled. If you find this course does not meet your needs or that you need to withdraw for some other reason, you must take the appropriate actions to drop or withdraw from the course. If you need to withdraw but are unable to come to campus, please contact me via telephone or email. *Instructor will not drop any students for non-attendance.*

**Electronic Devices:**

All cell-phones, pagers, and other electronic devices must be turned off or silent during class times. *Texting or messaging of any kind is not permitted during class.* See the instructor if there is a reason that you need such a device on. The instructor reserves the right to remove a student if they fail to follow this policy.

It is permissible to use a laptop or tablet to take notes. This privilege will be suspended if the device is used for a purpose unrelated to classroom activities.

You must get instructor approval for recording of classroom activities.

**Electronic Communication:**

All communication to the instructor must include the student's name and course title. It also must be written in Standard English (no text speak!). Anything else may be ignored.

**Statement of Accommodation:**

If you believe you are eligible to receive any type of academic accommodation, through such federal laws as the ADA, please contact the Lang Center for Health, Wellness, Counseling and Disabilities Services, 815-226-4083. The Lang staff manages disability services for Rockford University.

**Grading Appeals:**

A student who questions the justice of a final grade must first seek an explanation from the course instructor. If dissatisfied with the explanation offered, the student may appeal the grade. Additional information regarding grade appeals can be found on page 55 of the 2014 – 2015 Academic Catalog.

**Course Schedule:**

Attached to this syllabus is the schedule for this course. Keep in mind that the schedule is tentative and open to change at the instructor's discretion.

**Addendums:**

- Information on being a philosophy major
- *The Philosophical Athlete* Essay
- Grading Appendix: Reading Summary and News Posting
- Grading Appendix: Exam Essay Grading
- Course Schedule

## Majoring in Philosophy: Graduate School and Career Benefits

Socrates famously said “The unexamined life is not worth living.” We might update that to say “The *examined* life will make you a living.” Majoring in philosophy prepares you not just for a life of rational reflection, but for your career and professional life.

### *Graduate School Information:*

- LSAT (Law School Admission Test) is required for most laws schools.
  - Philosophy majors consistently score well, second only to physics/math majors, with an average score of 157.4 on the test, 5.2 points higher than the overall (weighted) mean.
- GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test) is required for most graduate business programs, including MBAs.
  - Philosophy majors scored the fourth highest overall on the GMAT with a mean score of 580, trailing only the majors from physics, mathematics, and engineering.
- GRE (Graduate Record Exam) is required for many graduate programs.
  - According to the Educational Testing Service (ETS), philosophy majors rank first on the Verbal Reasoning and the Analytical Writing sections of the exam.

### *Careers and Professions:*

- Law
- Business/Management: from entrepreneurs and executives to marketing and public relations
- Government Service
- Clergy
- Publishing and Writing
- Medicine
- Journalism

### *A Few Notable Philosophy Majors:*

- Stephen Breyer and David Souter, Supreme Court Justices,
- Phil Jackson, NBA coach,
- Steve Martin, actor, author and comedian,
- Carl Icahn, billionaire financier,
- Carly Fiorina, former CEO, Hewlett Packard,
- Stone Philips, broadcaster
- Rudi Giuliani, former mayor of New York.

For more information, check out [www.whoneedsphilosophy.com](http://www.whoneedsphilosophy.com)

# ***The Philosophical Athlete Essay***

Assignment:

Using Reid's *The Philosophical Athlete*, relevant course readings, and external research, compose an essay in response to one of the following questions:

1. How can sport give one a greater ability to understand better him or herself, his or her values?
2. What is and ought to be the role of risk, danger, or violence in sport?
3. What is meant by athletic success? And what can this understanding of success teach us about success more generally?
4. What is meant by fairness in sport? And what can this understanding of fairness teach us about fairness more generally?

Requirements for each essay:

- Due Date: Thursday, December 4, 2014, 5pm, on Moodle.
- ~1500 words, typed, paginated, and double-spaced.
- Have a title page: Name, Date, Word Count, and a descriptive title that indicates your topic.
- Document Name: YOURLASTNAME\_PROJECT.PDF
- Turned in at <http://moodle.rockford.edu/> under the appropriate assignment name.
- Make intelligent use of relevant selections from Reid's book, assigned readings, and class discussions.
- Use at least one external (not assigned) source. This source must be reputable and scholarly. While you can use and reference Wikipedia or other encyclopedias, these do not count towards the required external source.
- Follow MLA, APA, or Chicago format guides for format and references (you will need a works cited or references page).
  - Research and Citation Resources:  
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>
- Failure to comply with any of these requirements may result in a failing grade.
- Reminder: Turning in an essay that is the product of academic misconduct will result in a failing grade for the course.

## Appendix: Grading Rubric

### *Bullet List Reading Summary Points*

Each Bullet is worth up to two points, for a total of ten per summary.

2 points:

- Point is one of the main ideas, concepts, or arguments of the reading.
- Point is well-written, concise, and clear.

1 point:

- Point made is tangential to the main idea of the reading.
- Point is not as clearly stated as it needs to be.

0 points:

- Point made is too general, too superficial, or unconnected to the reading.
- Point is so unclear or confused that it is almost unintelligible.

General points will be taken off the total score for significant grammar, spelling, or general writing errors.

### *News Posting Grading Ranges:*

5 Points:

- Post employs proper grammar, spelling, and writing mechanics.
- Summary of linked article is accurate and sufficient.
- Discussion of connection to original reading is clear, concise, and well-reasoned. Discussion shows understanding of linked article and original reading.

3-4 Points:

- There are a few grammar, spelling, or writing errors.
- Too little is said about article or original reading.
- Too little is said about the connection between linked article and original reading.
- The clarity or reasoning about the connection between linked article and original is weaker than it needs to be. Discussion shows gaps in understanding of linked article and/or original reading.

1-2 Points:

- There are significant writing, grammar, or spelling errors.
- No (or too little) mention of either article or original reading or what mention there is unclear or inaccurate.
- No (or too little) discussion of connections between article and reading
- Discussion of connection is unclear, inaccurate, or poorly reasoned. Discussion demonstrates a failure to understand the linked article or the original reading.
- Article is not appropriate: opinion piece, advertisement, etc., something other than a news story.

## Exam Essay Grading Rubric

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 10    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Answer provides a thorough and accurate answer to the full question.</li><li>• Answer demonstrates an excellent understanding and knowledge of the ideas or concepts in the question.</li><li>• Answer covers all of the relevant aspects of the question, without including extraneous information.</li><li>• Writing is clear and concise, and error free.</li></ul>   |
| 8 – 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Answer provides, overall, a thorough and accurate answer to the question, though a few aspects of the answer are incomplete or wrong.</li><li>• Answer demonstrates a solid understanding and knowledge of the ideas or concepts in the question.</li><li>• Answer covers most of the relevant aspects of the question, while including little if any extraneous information.</li><li>• Writing lacks some focus or clarity; and contains some minor errors.</li></ul> |
| 5 – 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Answer is not as thorough as it needs to be, while many aspects of the answer are incomplete or wrong.</li><li>• Answer demonstrates some understanding and knowledge of the ideas or concepts in the question.</li><li>• Answer covers many of the relevant aspects of the question, but also includes extraneous information.</li><li>• Writing lacks focus or clarity, with more significant errors.</li></ul>  |
| 2 – 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many parts of the answer are incomplete or wrong; or not answering the question asked.</li><li>• Answer demonstrates poor understanding and knowledge of the ideas or concepts in the question.</li><li>• Answer covers relevant aspects of the question, but also includes too much extraneous information.</li><li>• Writing is weak or unclear, with several more serious spelling or grammar errors.</li></ul>   |
| 0 – 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most of the answer is incomplete or wrong.</li><li>• Answer fails to demonstrate understanding and knowledge of the ideas or concepts in the question.</li><li>• Writing is nearly unintelligible and confused.</li><li>• Serious spelling or grammar mistakes.</li></ul>  |

|   |             | Unit   | Readings  | Notes                              |
|---|-------------|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Week 1:   | 8/21.       | Intro and Admin  |   |                                    |
| Week 2:   | 8/27 8/28   | Philosophy and Sports                                  | Reid, "Socrates at the Ballpark"  |                                    |
| Week 3:   | 9/2 9/4     | How can Sport affect Society?                          | Eig, Jonathan. Excerpt from Opening Day;<br>Leavy, Jane. Excerpt from Sandy Koufax;<br><i>The 16th Man</i> (in class; 9/2)  |                                    |
| Week 4:   | 9/9 9/11    | What is Sportsmanship?                                 | Keating, "Sportsmanship as a Moral Category";<br>Feezell, "Sportsmanship"   |                                    |
| Week 5:   | 9/16 9/18   | Is it ethical to run up the score?                     | Dixon, "On Sportsmanship and 'Running Up the Score';"<br>Feezell, "Sportmanship and Blowouts: Baseball and Beyond"  |                                    |
| Week 6:   | 9/23 9/25   | Is it wrong to foul?                                   | Fraleigh, "Intentional rules violations";<br>Simon, "The ethics of strategic fouling"   |                                    |
| Week 7:   | 9/30 10/2   | Is competition moral?                                  | Kretchmar, "In Defense of Winning";<br>Simon "The Critique of Competition in Sports";<br>A. Kohn, "Fun and Fitness w/o competition"   |                                    |
| Week 8:   | 10/7 10/9   | What is the role of violence in sport?                 | Dixon, Nicholas "A Critique of Violent Retaliation in Sport" ;<br>Russell, JS "The Value of Dangerous Sport"  |                                    |
| Week 9:   | 10/14 10/16 | Exam 1 (10/14)   |   | 10/16: Fall Break, No Class        |
| Week 10:  | 10/21 10/23 | Should PEDs be banned?                                 | Oxford Debate;<br>Simon, "Good competition and drug-enhanced performance";<br>Brown, WM, "Ethics, Drugs, and Sport"   |                                    |
| Week 11:  | 10/28 10/30 |  |   |                                    |
| Week 12:  | 11/4 11/6   | Should players with prosthetics be allowed to compete? | Edwards, "Should Oscar Be Excluded";<br>Epstein, "Does Oscar Pistorius have an unfair advantage?";<br>"Let 'em Play"; E:60 video (in class)   |                                    |
| Week 13:  | 11/11 11/13 | What is the role of money in sports?                   | "Does A-Rod Deserve So Much Money? Yes!";<br>"Does A-Rod Deserve So Much Money? No!";<br>Collins, "Does the Salary Cap Make the NFL a Fairer League?";<br>Sheehan, "Salary Cap";                  |                                    |
| Week 14:  | 11/18 11/20 |  |   |                                    |
| Week 15:  | 11/25 11/27 | Is it ethical to be a sports fan?                      | Simmons, "Rules of being a fan";<br>Dixon, "The Ethics of supporting sports teams";<br>The Philosophy of Sports Fan by Stephen Mumford (videos);<br>Tamburrini, "Sports, Fascism, and the Market" | 11/27:<br>Thanksgiving<br>No Class |
| Week 16:  | 12/2 12/4   |  |   |                                    |
| Finals Week   |             | Exam 2: Monday, December 8, 10:15 am                   |   |                                    |
| This schedule is a tentative and rough guide to the semester.<br>It is subject to change depending on the needs and contingencies of class. |             |  |   |                                    |