



EDUH 4058: Sport and Learning in Australian Culture is a very popular class offered at the University of Sydney for exchange students. It combines lecture instruction with class field trips to different local sporting events and matches.

EXPLORING AUSTRALIAN SPORT THROUGH EDUH 4058

- Class format and assignments
- History and culture of sport within Australia
- Australian rules football (AFL)
- Rugby union (RU)
- Horseracing
- Surf life saving

All information within this presentation is directly taken from course lectures that I attended at USYD (Georgakis & Light, 2024). I will introduce sport within Australian culture and then provide a few examples of different sports!

CLASS FORMAT & ASSIGNMENTS



- 2 hour lecture x 6 weeks
- Field trips x 6 weeks
 - Self-selected
 - Potential options: RU, soccer, Indigenous games, horseracing, rugby league, outdoor education hike, cricket, surf life saving, netball, lawn bowl, AFL
- 2 workshops
- 4 field trip responses
- Group research presentation



The class is split into lecture for the first half and then attending field trips for the rest of the semester, with some overlap of the two. There are also a few workshop sessions you will attend in addition to lecture. You choose which field trips you will attend and must attend at least six, but there are so many options and you can even bring friends (not in the course) along to some of them!

The most popular field trips are the different types of rugby games and horseracing. There are also field trips at beaches (Bondi, Manly) and on special holidays, such as Anzac day.

The assignments are fairly simple and allow you to reflect on your field trip experiences through creative writing and photography! You also get to research your own Australian sport topic and present with a group at the end of the course.

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF SPORT WITHIN AUSTRALIA



- British influence
- Australian nationalism
- Transition of sport from education to community
- Geographic and economic characteristics

British colonialism inspired the introduction of sport within Australia. In modeling the British, Australia invented a football code within rugby that reinforced the British style and rules of playing. Those who engaged in sport were signaling their loyalty to the British. The continuous playing of sport inspired by British rules reinforced the power dynamic between Australia and Britain.

As time progressed, Australia began to beat the English in cricket and gain more confidence in their independence. Sport acted as a unifier and helped to define Australia as an independent nation and helped to unify the nation and build Australian nationalism.

When sport was first introduced within Australia, it was mandated within schools and central to the curriculum to teach courage, teamwork, and obedience. With time, sport became a community activity as youth and adults began to play after school.

The landscape of sports in Australia is key as the beach holds significant meaning socially for community bonding while engaging in sport. Sport also acts as an economic institution within Australia as it is a main form of entertainment for residents and drives significant profit.

AUSTRALIAN RULES FOOTBALL (AFL)



- Objective
- Team and fan base
- Inclusivity
- Commercialization and community



The main objective for each team during Australian rules football (AFL) is to score six points through kicking the ball through the goalposts.

AFL has had a major impact on unifying Australian players and spectators. It has maintained its traditional fan base with a large number of supporters near USYD rooting for the Sydney Swans.

AFL is considered to be the most inclusive sport as it publicly supports diverse groups within the community, such as LGBTQ+ and immigrant populations.

AFL drives a major portion of profit within the Australian sports industry and actively engages the community through inviting youth teams to play on the field during halftime. The top right picture is a picture I took of youth teams playing at a Swans game. The bottom right picture is a sunset I captured at the Sydney Cricket Ground- the home field for the Swans.

RUGBY UNION (RU)

- Origins and guidelines
- Spectating competition
- Commercialization, class, and conflict



In 1871, rugby union (RU) was the first established football code in Australia following the introduction of sport by the British. The first RU game was actually played at the USYD field in 1963. The Southern Rugby Union was the first institution to control rugby in New South Wales and is represented today by the NSW Waratahs. Traditionally, RU was much more of a violent game reflecting British patterns of the sport. The aim of an RU game is to score points by usually running with the ball and passing it, rather than kicking it like in AFL. In RU, a goal is worth five points.

RU often falls short in comparison to spectator numbers for the alternative Australian football codes, AFL and rugby league (RL).

RU has a large economic and international presence with its role in the Rugby World Cup. Conflict often arises as valuable players are poached by international teams, most often within Europe, the United States, and Japan. Additionally, in 1907, RU split into RU and RL. This division occurred due to social class and has driven RU's maintained connection to wealth and international interests.

HORSERACING



- Origin
- Class divide
- Animal cruelty
- Economic effect



Horseracing was one of the first sports established within Australia and the first sport accessible to all social classes. Horseracing gained a major presence within Australia through the introduction of the Melbourne Cup in 1861. Over time, this event became more mainstream as it was viewed and discussed within the education system.

Horseracing within Australia caters to the very wealthy. The race track is divided by classes of spectators although a diverse group of social classes attend these races. For the upper class, this sport allows them an opportunity to demonstrate their status through betting large amounts of money and dressing luxuriously. For the working class, this sport was the first institution that permitted gambling and drinking, providing entertainment.

With a high demand for fast race horses, overbreeding often occurs that results in a surplus of horses. Many of these horses are subject to injury and death, substance abuse, and poor aftercare. The industry is poorly regulated, allowing the well-being of the horses to fall low in priority.

It would be extremely challenging for this sport to exist without gambling. Horseracing drives an immense profit for the Australian sport industry. Races often attract over fifteen thousand spectators and the horses are worth millions of dollars when sold.

The two images on this slide are of my friends and I at the Royal Randwick Racecourse in Sydney.

SURF LIFE SAVING



- Origin
- Aspect of sport and competition
- Community engagement



In 1903, long held bans regarding swimming and sun bathing on the beach were uplifted in Australia. Due to an increase in drowning bathers being rescued by surfers, the Surf Bathing Association of NSW was formed in 1907. This grew into the formation of many surf clubs within Australia aimed at protecting those on the beach through the movement of surf life saving.

Surf life saving involves volunteer commitments and extensive training. Sport and competition are essential aspects of surf life saving as they attract volunteers and allow them to maintain high levels of fitness, while increasing club status. These events drive the funding of these clubs and allow them to continue serving.

Due to a decrease within members in the past, the surf life saving movement developed the Nippers program. This program invites youth to train and become certified surf life savers through educational sessions on surfing, how to read the ocean, and skills specific to this sport. The program also engages youth and their families through competitive land and water events.

Within the bottom left, I have added a picture of Bondi Beach. We traveled here for a field trip to learn about surf life saving, how to understand the rips in the ocean, and to engage in surf life saving activities.

