



# Syllabus

## Course Title:

### Writing British Sport: Creative Nonfiction and Football Culture

**Program and Date:** London Winter 2026-27 / December 26 - January 7

**Instructor Name:** Graham Shelby

**Instructor Home Institution:** Bellarmine University

**Instructor Email and Phone:** [gshelby3@gmail.com](mailto:gshelby3@gmail.com) / 502-889-7937

**Academic Department:** ENGLISH

## Get to Know Your Professor

I want to teach this study abroad class in London because of the incredible experience I had when I was a nervous 19-year-old on my first trip overseas (and my first plane ride) to study abroad in London. That experience opened my mind to the world in ways that continue to enrich my life more than 30 years later. Today, I'm a writer, teacher and documentary filmmaker. The intersection of sports and culture is something I've explored in my own work and a subject I'm eager to explore further with students in this unique study abroad class that will provide an opportunity to get to know the UK in ways that will be both fun and fascinating, and help us produce and share powerful stories of what will be an unforgettable learning experience.

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## Course Description

Soccer is a cultural force in the United Kingdom, with a depth and power unrivaled by anything else on the sports landscape. Hone your writing skills while gaining valuable insights into the national obsession with English football, by attending matches of Premier League teams, Women's Super League and lower-tier clubs, visiting a youth football academy, touring stadiums, and interviewing current and former players, coaches, journalists and fans. Students will document their own experiences along with the stories about the role of soccer in Britons' lives and communities, and we will use this material to compare and contrast sports culture in the UK and the United States. The course is designed for those with interest in creative non-fiction writing, journalism, sports management, pop culture, or all things soccer.

## Course Level and Credit Hours

Lower Division Undergraduate  
Three credit hours



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## Prerequisite(s)

None

## Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of all coursework with a passing grade and full participation in course activities, students shall be able to:

- **Produce** a well-researched and engaging account—written, audio, or video—that incorporates observations, interviews, and storytelling as part of English soccer culture.
- **Analyze and critique** sports journalism, commentary, and fan-generated media in the UK to assess how football-related narratives develop and circulate.
- **Compare and contrast** the sports culture of US and UK sports fans and their relationships with their teams.
- **Describe** fan practices, match-day rituals, and neighborhood culture through field notes, photos, audio, or video gathered during site visits in London.
- **Engage** in an informed conversation about English football with any of the English Premier League’s hundreds of millions of fans around the world (including their home university).

## Required Readings and Materials

“Super League rage, Ronaldo mania and the fight for the soul of Manchester United” by Wright Thompson, (espn.com) and other creative nonfiction articles and materials to be distributed prior to arrival and while in London.

## Assignments and Grades

The final grade will be assessed as follows:  
Pre-departure response to assigned readings - 5%  
Five-minute presentation of student research on an assigned topic (team/player/coach/media outlet/fan community or historical event) - 5%  
Written summaries of and reflections on the previous day’s activities - 20%  
Individual questions/learning goals for the next day’s activity - 20%  
Essay exploring one specific subject or activity - 20%  
Soccer Stories Summary Project (audio, video or print) - 20%  
Attendance and General Participation - 10%

## Grading Scale

The following scale will be used to compute your grade.



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90 – 100% = A
80 – 89% = B
70 – 79% = C
60 – 69% = D
Below 60% = F

## Onsite Learning Experiences and Activities

Onsite learning experiences in this class will likely include the following site visits. This is a tentative list which will be replaced with a detailed daily itinerary of class meetings and field trips prior to the departure date.

- Attend Premier League match involving London clubs e.g. Chelsea, Arsenal, Tottenham.
- Attend a match involving lower-league teams e.g. Barnet, Bromley, Crawley Town.
- Attend a Women’s Super League match and talk with coaches/staff and players
- Take an official tour of a stadium (Stamford Bridge, Emirates Stadium, Selhurst Park) that serves as home to one of the London-based Premier League clubs
- Conduct oral history interviews to collect stories from players, ex-players, coaches, journalists and members of fan groups
- Connect with members of London’s immigrant communities to learn about the overlap between soccer culture and the immigrant experience.
- Attend the London edition of The Moth Story Slam to learn about the city’s storytelling culture
- Take a soccer-themed walking tour
- Watch a live match from a pub whose clientele supports a specific team

## Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory at all scheduled activities and class meetings as well as field trip excursions. This includes any virtual meetings before and after the onsite experience. Repeated absences, including for ill health, will require documentation to be excused.

## Academic Integrity Policy

Plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty (see your campus student handbook for definitions) will not be tolerated and will result in failing assignment grades or even a course grade of F. Violations of academic honesty will be reported back to student’s home campus.

## Physical Expectations

Program requires walking 3-5 miles per day on uneven pavement in all kinds of weather and long periods of standing. Students must be able to carry their own bags and belongings.

## Disability Accommodation

CCSA is committed to providing access to education abroad to the extent possible in a study abroad setting. The earlier CCSA and the faculty know the needs, the more likely we can accommodate them. At a minimum, students seeking accommodations are to contact both the CCSA office and the faculty one month in advance of the program’s beginning. Students seeking such accommodation



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must provide CCSA with a copy of the letter on file with their own Office of Disability Services outlining what services they receive on their home campus.

## **Title IX Policy**

Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sexual discrimination violate CCSA policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain support from the Onsite Program Director or the CCSA Executive Director. To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact either of these two officers. Disclosure to faculty instructors or CCSA officers of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on the program or involving a visitor, student or employee is not confidential under Title IX. Faculty and other CCSA employees are required to forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the CCSA Executive Director.

## **Statement about Final Syllabus**

Please note that all CCSA syllabi are subject to change, but every effort will be made to ensure participants receive notice of such changes in a timely manner.