



UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

University Council

August 14, 2026

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2026-2027

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Undergraduate Student Representative – TBD

Graduate Student Representative – TBD

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences for an Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Humanities will be an agenda item for the August 21, 2026, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Rodney Mauricio, Chair

cc: Interim Provost Ron Walcott

Dr. Marisa Anne Pagnattaro

PROPOSAL FOR A CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

Date: March 31, 2026

School/College/Unit: Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

Department/Division: Philosophy

CIP: 31050800

Certificate Title: Sports Humanities

Effective Term: Fall 2027

Which campus(es) will offer this certificate? Athens

Level (Undergraduate, Graduate, or Post-Baccalaureate): Undergraduate

Program Abstract:

The proposed Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Humanities will provide the opportunity for students to critically examine sports as part of human life through a variety of disciplinary approaches. By taking advantage of existing courses in the humanities and social sciences across multiple colleges, the multidisciplinary curriculum offers an engaging and intellectually robust educational experience.

Participants will gain familiarity with, and knowledge of, ethical frameworks used for evaluating issues related to sports. They will also come to understand the place of sports in both the contemporary world and the past. Overall, the program emphasizes the significance of understanding sports in their cultural, ethical, historical, religious, and social contexts.

Upon successful completion, students will possess knowledge and skills sought after by employers in sports-related fields (sports business, sports law, sports media, athletic departments, physical therapy, etc.), giving them a competitive edge in the job market.

1. Purpose and Educational Objectives

State the purpose and educational objectives of the program. How does this program complement the mission of the institution?

The Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Humanities provides students with an interdisciplinary framework for the critical study of sport in their cultural, ethical, historical, religious, and social contexts. The program formalizes a coherent pathway through existing upper-division courses that examine sport not merely as competition or entertainment, but as a powerful institution that shapes and reflects identities, values, institutions, and public life. The certificate is designed to

deepen students' analytical and interpretive skills by engaging sports through humanistic and social scientific inquiry. It offers a structured opportunity for students from diverse majors to examine ethical debates, historical developments, media representations, religious meanings, and artistic expressions connected to sport.

The educational objectives of the Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Humanities are to:

- Develop students' ability to analyze sport using interdisciplinary theories and methods drawn from the humanities and social sciences.
- Strengthen students' capacity for ethical reasoning and critical evaluation of social and political issues related to sport.
- Cultivate historical and cultural literacy by situating sport within broader social, religious, and global contexts.
- Enhance students' written, oral, and creative communication skills through advanced analytical work.
- Encourage integrative thinking across disciplines in preparation for professional careers, public engagement, or graduate study.

The proposed certificate is aligned with the University of Georgia's 2025 Strategic Plan in that it supports the University's strategic directions of promoting excellence in teaching and learning, growing innovation, and strengthening partnerships with communities. The certificate would advance these objectives by organizing existing coursework into a formal interdisciplinary program that enables students to examine the historical, cultural, ethical, and representational dimensions of sport. In doing so, the program would make effective use of existing instructional strengths, expand opportunities for integrative undergraduate learning, and provide an additional framework for connecting academic study to issues of local, national, and global significance. The plan specifically identifies as a priority promoting collaboration among academic units, which this certificate exemplifies.

2. Need for the Program

Explain why this program is necessary.

The proposed certificate is intended to address an identified curricular gap by creating a coherent interdisciplinary framework through which undergraduate students may examine sport from humanistic perspectives. At present, students may encounter individual courses related to sport and culture, but no formal certificate program exists that organizes such coursework into a unified and academically focused area of study. There is an existing Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Media offered by the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communications, but this program focuses on preparation for a career in sports media. The proposed Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Humanities would provide students with a structured opportunity to engage the historical, cultural, ethical, and representational dimensions of sport while making effective use of existing courses and faculty resources. As such, the program would expand undergraduate curricular offerings, promote interdisciplinary collaboration, and support student interest in academically rigorous and professionally relevant humanities-based study.

The proposed certificate is additionally supported by the alignment between humanities-based instruction and the knowledge and skills associated with a range of sports-related professional

pathways. National career-readiness frameworks identify competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork as essential outcomes of undergraduate education.¹ Federal labor data further indicate that study in the humanities develops writing, critical thinking, and related capacities valued by employers across occupational sectors.² These outcomes are directly applicable to professional fields connected to athletics, including communications, media, development, administration, and student support, all of which require strong analytical, interpretive, and public-facing communication skills.^{3,4} Accordingly, the proposed certificate would not only expand opportunities for humanistic study of sport, but also provide students with transferable competencies relevant to a broad range of careers in and around athletics.

The faculty acknowledge that there are many established humanities programs at the university and that the courses in the proposed certificate already exist. Nevertheless, the proposed certificate addresses an identified curricular gap at the university. Current sports-related humanities courses remain dispersed across departments and colleges and do not form a coherent pathway for students. As a result, students interested in sport as a humanistic subject have no formal mechanism to connect these perspectives into a sustained program of study. The certificate would fill this structural gap by organizing existing faculty expertise and coursework into an interdisciplinary credential that is academically rigorous, administratively efficient, and responsive to student interest.

- a. Semester/Year of Program Initiation:** Fall 2027
- b. Semester/Year of Full Implementation of Program:** Fall 2027
- c. Semester/Year First Certificates will be awarded:** Fall 2027
- d. Annual Number of Graduates expected (once the program is established):** 83
- e. Projected Future Trends for number of students enrolled in the program:**

This certificate is of interest to a wide range of students from a number of colleges, as evidenced by the survey results in 3A. As described below, 213 students from a

¹ National Association of Colleges and Employers, *Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce* (December 2025), identifying communication, critical thinking, teamwork, leadership, professionalism, and equity and inclusion among core competencies for college graduates. <https://www.nacweb.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/2025/career-readiness/competencies/nace-career-readiness-competencies-december-2025>

² U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Field of Degree: Humanities Employment and Wages,” *Career Outlook* (2025), noting that humanities study helps develop “critical thinking, writing, and other skills that employers seek for the workplace.” <https://www.bls.gov/careeroutlook/2025/data-on-display/field-of-degree-humanities-employment-and-wages.htm>

³ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, “Public Relations Specialists,” updated 2025, projecting 27,600 openings per year on average from 2024 to 2034 in a field centered on organizational communication and public image. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/public-relations-specialists.htm>

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, “Fundraisers,” updated 2025, describing responsibilities that include designing promotional materials, increasing public awareness, and crafting persuasive fundraising messages. <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/fundraisers.htm>

variety of majors who were either taking introductory philosophy courses or saw an announcement of the survey in the Terry College of Business were surveyed. For an initial highly conservative estimate, the faculty are estimating that 1% of the students in the following six majors listed below (Finance, Psychology, Management Information Systems, Advertising, Biology, and Computer Science) would enroll in the certificate. These were the majors that had the most number of student respondents expressing a high degree of interest in the program. As of Fall 2025, there were 8,383 students in those six majors. One percent of that total would be 83 students. If this certificate program shows growth over the next five years where two percent of students in those majors apply for the certificate program, the estimated number of enrollment would increase to approximately 160-170 students. Note, again, this is a highly conservative estimate that only focuses on 6 majors.

3. Student Demand

a. Provide documentation of evidence of student demand for this program, including a student survey.

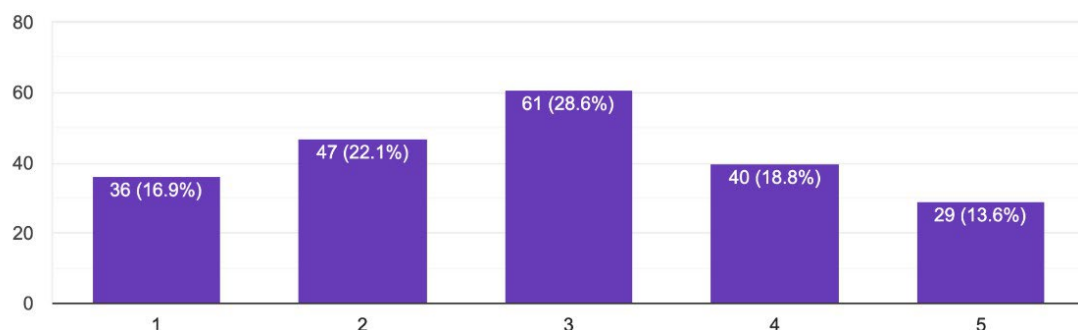
Survey

A survey was posed to students from a variety of majors enrolled in introductory philosophy courses and in the Terry College of Business. Out of 213 students, 69 (32%) expressed a significant degree of interest; that is, they selected '4' or '5' on a scale from (1) = Not interested at all, to (5) = Extremely interested.

Total responses: 213

On a scale from 1–5, how interested would you be in pursuing this certificate if it were offered at UGA? (1 = Not interested at all, 5 = Extremely interested)

213 responses



69 students expressed a high degree of interest in the program. Because the students who answered the survey came from a very wide variety of majors, the faculty have decided to focus on the six most frequent majors of the respondents who indicated a high degree of interest in the certificate (i.e., a response of 4 or 5). The faculty believe that these six majors would be the most likely to enroll in the program.

Finance – 9 of the students who chose '4' or '5' had a major or intended major of Finance

Psychology – 7 students

Management Information Systems – 5 students

Advertising – 3 students
Biology – 3 students Computer
Science – 3 students

Students were asked to list the aspects of a certificate program like this that would interest them in a free form response. Aspects of the certificate program that interest students most were:

1. History of Sports:

Students are highly interested in exploring the origins, evolution, and cultural development of sports beyond surface-level fandom.

2. Philosophy and Ethics of Sports:

Many are drawn to the intellectual dimension—examining identity, meaning, culture, and ethical issues in sport rather than just performance or business.

3. Media and Behind-the-Scenes Perspectives:

Students are curious about how sports are represented, marketed, and consumed, including storytelling, branding, and media influence.

4. Interdisciplinarity:

The blend of history, philosophy, media, and culture appeals to students who value cross-disciplinary learning and broader perspectives.

5. General Passion for Sports:

For many, simple enthusiasm for sports and sports culture makes the certificate personally engaging and exciting.

The certificate addresses all five of these aspects. Aspect 1 can be pursued in courses such as CLAS 3030, HIPR 2200, and HIST 3755. Aspect 2 will be addressed in the required course for the certificate, PHIL 3300. Aspect 3 is addressed in SPTM 3800. The program is a model of interdisciplinarity (aspect 4), and we believe that all courses will satisfy those with a passion for pursuing a sports-related career (aspect 5).

b. Provide evidence that demand will be sufficient to sustain reasonable enrollment.

The faculty invited 336 students taking Philosophy courses to answer the survey. This was the main pool of subjects for the survey. A student worker also distributed surveys informally to a small number of Terry students. A total of 213 responded to the survey and 69 of those expressed strong interest in the program. As mentioned earlier, if 1% of students in the top six majors listed above apply for the certificate program, the estimated number of enrollments would be 83 students. Since this is only six majors, the faculty expect the number of interested students to be higher. This estimate provides evidence for sufficient enrollment to maintain this certificate program.

4. Program of Study

a. Provide a detailed program of study for the certificate program.

Required Course (3 hours)

PHIL 3300, Philosophy of Sports and Games (3 hours)

Elective Courses (9 hours)

Choose any three of the following:

ANTH 2700, Anthropology of Sport (3 hours)

CLAS 3030, Ancient Sport (3 hours)

HIPR 2200, Sports Heritage (3 hours)

HIST 3755, The History of Sport (3 hours)

KINS(AFAM) 3580, Sport and the Black Culture (3 hours)

RELI 3040, Religion and Sports (3 hours)

SOCI 3740, Sociology of Sport (3 hours)

SPTM 3800, Sports, Media and Society (3 hours)

THEA 2140, Athletes and Artists: The Drama of Sports (3 hours)

b. Identify any new courses created for this program

No new courses are needed for this certificate program.

Total = 12 hours

5. Model Program and Accreditation**a. Identify any model programs, accepted disciplinary standards, and accepted curricular practices against which the proposed program could be judged. Evaluate the extent to which the proposed curriculum is consistent with these external points of reference and provide a rationale for significant inconsistencies and differences that may exist.**

The University of Pittsburgh offers a Sports Studies Certificate that provides students with the opportunity to engage, learn, and think critically about sport as part of the human experience from multidisciplinary approaches.” The program requires students to take a gateway course that functions as “an expansive, multi-disciplinary overview of sport” and then five other courses, including electives such as the History of Sports, Ethics and Sport, and Sociology of Sports. Arizona State University offers a Sports, Culture, and Ethics Certificate which is described as a “cross-disciplinary inquiry into the social, ethical and cultural influence of sports in society.” It requires two courses—Sports Ethics and either Race, Gender and Sport or Sports in United States History—as well as four electives, which include courses such as History of College Sports, Religion and Sports, and Sociology of Sport. The University of Notre Dame offers a 15-16 credit minor in Sport, Media, and Culture, which “invites students to examine the cultural politics of sport from a scholarly point of view, and to practice sport with an eye toward human dignity and the common good.” It has one required course—Sports and American Culture—and a wide-range of electives including Ethics in Sport, Football in America, and History of American Sport.

The proposed certificate requires 12 credit hours rather than 15-16 (Notre Dame) or 18 (Arizona State and Pittsburgh); however, the faculty think this may be an advantage for UGA students since it will facilitate completion of the program.

b. If program accreditation is available, provide an analysis of the ability of the program to satisfy the curricular standards of such specialized accreditation.

No accreditation program is offered for multidisciplinary sports studies programs.

6. Student Learning Outcomes

Students who complete the Sports Humanities Certificate will be able to:

1. **Analyze sport as a central human activity and cultural practice** using theories and methods from the humanities and social sciences.
2. **Evaluate ethical, social, and political issues in sport**, including race, identity, religion, media, and power, through evidence-based and interdisciplinary analysis.
3. **Synthesize perspectives on sport across cultures and historical periods** to explain how sport reflects, shapes, and contests social values and cultural meaning.
4. **Communicate critical analyses of sport effectively** in written, oral, or creative forms using appropriate scholarly sources and disciplinary conventions.

7. Assessment and Admissions

Assessment of student learning outcomes will be conducted using direct measures embedded within required and elective courses for the certificate. Student work such as analytical essays, research papers, exams, media analyses, presentations, or creative projects will be evaluated using common rubrics aligned with the program's student learning outcomes. Aggregate results will be reviewed periodically by program faculty to assess student achievement and to inform curricular improvement as appropriate.

Course-to-Student Learning Outcomes Alignment Table

Course	SLO 1: Analyze	SLO 2: Evaluate	SLO 3: Synthesize	SLO 4: Communicate
PHIL 3300 (req.)	X	X	X	X
ANTH 2700	X	X	X	X
CLAS 3030	X		X	X
HIPR 2200	X		X	X
HIST 3755	X		X	X
KINS(AFAM) 3580	X	X	X	X
RELI 3040	X	X	X	X
SOCI 3740	X	X	X	X
SPTM 3800	X	X	X	X
THEA 2140	X		X	X

Notes:

- PHIL 3300 is a required course and addresses all four SLOs.
- SLO 1 and SLO 3 are reinforced across nearly all courses.
- SLO 2 is emphasized in philosophy, sociology, media, religion, and race-focused courses.
- SLO 4 is addressed through discipline-appropriate writing, presentation, or creative work.

Describe the process and criteria for how students will be admitted to and retained in the program.

Students can apply online to the Undergraduate Certificate in Sport Humanities through the Philosophy department's website. To be eligible to participate in the program, an applicant must be a currently enrolled student in good standing in an undergraduate degree-seeking program at the university.

Departmental efforts to retain students in the program will be done by regular communication through email and social media, as well as hosting events for career networking and community building.

Documentation of Approval and Notification

Proposal: Undergraduate Certificate in Sports Humanities

College: Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

Department: Philosophy

Proposed Effective Term: Fall 2027

School/College:

- Head of the Department of Philosophy, Dr. Aaron Meskin, 4/7/2026
- Franklin College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean, Dr. Paula Lemons, 4/30/2026

Use of Course Notification:

- Head of the Department of Classics, Dr. Mario Erasmo, 11/14/2025
- Head of the Department of Anthropology, Dr. Ted Gragson, 4/7/2026
- College of Environment and Design Dean, Dr. Sonia Hirt, 3/30/2026
- Head of the Department of History, Dr. Kevin Jones, 11/11/2025
- Head of the Department of Religion, Dr. Derrick Lemons, 11/11/2025
- Institute for African American Studies Director, Dr. Carolyn Jones Medine, 7/2/2025
- Carmical Sports Media Institute Director, Professor Vicki Michaelis, 3/6/2026
- Historic Preservation Program Director, Dr. Scott Nesbit, 3/30/2026
- Head of the Department of Sociology, Dr. William Pridemore, 11/11/2025
- Head of the Department of Theatre and Film, Professor Julie Ray, 11/12/2025