

Portland Watches the World (Cup)

A NEIGHBORHOOD
HUMANITIES SHORT
COURSE



Soccer's World Cup is the most watched sporting event on earth, and it's coming to North America this June and July. The event is both a global tournament and a cultural laboratory putting questions of identity, community, performance, and emotional engagement on vivid display. This free intergenerational short course will bring together curious Portlanders with University of Portland students to discuss those types of cultural questions during weekly sessions facilitated by UP professor Andrew Guest and sponsored by UP's Engaged Humanities program. Whether you're a lifelong soccer devotee or a curious newcomer, this discussion-focused seminar is designed to make the World Cup more intriguing, more fun, and more of a shared community experience relevant to our city.

Through four weeks in late May and early June we'll use the 2026 FIFA World Cup as a shared text for cultivating "thinking fandom": a way of watching sports that helps us better understand people, places, and our interconnected world. Portland provides a distinct vantage point for this type of watching, drawing on deep soccer roots, diverse fan communities, and an appreciation for what sports can mean to a place. The intention is to focus less on wins, losses, and celebrity players and more on curiosity, connection, and learning.

WHAT: A FREE FOUR-SESSION DISCUSSION-BASED SHORT COURSE

WHEN: FOUR CONSECUTIVE THURSDAY EVENINGS:

- MAY 28
- JUNE 4
- JUNE 11
- JUNE 18

TIME: 5:30–7:00PM

WHERE: UNIVERSITY OF PORTLAND CAMPUS, NORTH PORTLAND (SPECIFIC ROOM TBD)

COST: FREE

DINNER: A LIGHT DINNER WILL BE PROVIDED AT EACH SESSION

SPACE: LIMITED; SIGN UP EARLY

SIGN UP: INTERESTED? SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT [THIS LINK](#) TO FILL OUT A BRIEF INTEREST FORM.



The Four Sessions:

Session 1: Soccer Matters Here, There, and Everywhere

Thursday, May 28 | 5:30–7:00pm Why does soccer inspire such fierce loyalty in so many different parts of the world? To set the stage for our seminar, we'll draw on writers such as Eduardo Galeano (*Soccer in Sun and Shadow*) and Franklin Foer (*How Soccer Explains the World*) to explore why the world's game means so many different things in so many different places. And we'll consider what that looks like here in Portland, exploring what our own relationships with the game might tell us about sports, identity, and community.

Session 2: Reading and Imagining Soccer Cultures

Thursday, June 4 | 5:30–7:00pm Every national team carries a cultural story. In this session we'll develop tools for reading those stories by drawing on research and writing about nationalism, identity, and what it means to root for a team. Participants will also prepare for Session 3 by choosing a World Cup nation connected to their own background or curiosity, and engaging in deep conversation with at least one person in Portland (or beyond) who cares about that team to a degree that might seem irrational.

About the Facilitator:

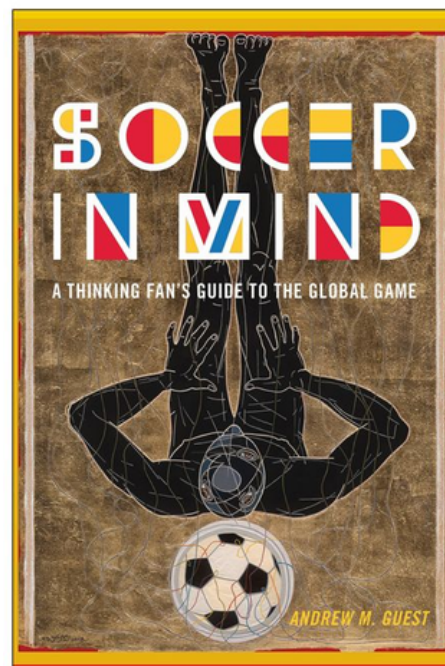
Andrew Guest is a professor of psychology and sociology and director of the liberal arts core curriculum at the University of Portland. He is the author of *Soccer in Mind: A Thinking Fan's Guide to the Global Game* and has played, coached, researched, taught, and enjoyed soccer in locales ranging from Malawi to Michigan and Northern Ireland to North Portland. Send any questions to guesta@up.edu

Session 3: Fans, Teams, and Identities

Thursday, June 11 | 5:30–7:00pm What can we learn by talking to fans? In this session, participants share what they learned about their chosen nation's soccer culture and about the fan they spoke with. With the tournament now underway, we'll also start thinking about what we're looking for in the tournament, using our conversations and observations to understand how sports fandom connects to deeper questions of belonging, identity, and community.

Session 4: The Tournament as Text

Thursday, June 18 | 5:30–7:00pm Now that the tournament has fully begun, we put our "thinking fan" tools to work on the games themselves. What are we watching for beyond the score? What do the crowd rituals, the media narratives, the performances under pressure, and the moments of drama help us understand about people, places, and our world? We'll reflect on what it means to watch sports with a mix of intellectual curiosity and moral imagination, and what that way of watching might offer beyond the games themselves.



Sponsorship Note: Portland Watches the World (Cup) is sponsored by the University of Portland's Engaged Humanities program, supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, as part of a pilot effort to bring university and community together for intergenerational neighborhood humanities experiences.