

NUS course to discuss football's global impact

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In recent months, discussions in football have centred not only on players and tactics but also racism, finance, inequality and sustainability.

A general education module offered by the National University of Singapore's geography department will explore these issues in the new semester that starts on Aug 10.

The 12-lecture online course, titled *Worlds Of Football*, seeks to ask and answer three questions:

- What is football?
- Who plays the game?
- What is the business of football?

It aims to promote greater critical reflection about football and its politics and inequalities, said Dr Kamalini Ramdas, one of the five lecturers who will oversee the convening of the module.

"A lot of times when people talk about sport, they focus on the merchandising and the passion of the team," she said. "They don't really focus on the challenges faced by specific areas or issues like class

and cost of tickets or broadcasts."

The module was introduced with the aim of making geography more appealing to non-geography majors through the world's most popular sport.

She explained: "Geography is an important subject that teaches us about the world we live in – concepts like place, scale, region and networks are all critical to geographers and important for concepts in today's highly globalising world.

"Football truly is a sport that can be used to explain these concepts to students – and we hope this will help us to connect with them better."

The other four lecturers involved in the course are Prof Tim Bunnell, Prof David Taylor, Dr Shaun Lin and Dr Shaun Teo.

The course looks at football through three aspects of geography – regional, social, and networked.

The first aspect examined will delve into what football is and how it is played and valued differently in different parts of the world.

Issues such as race, racism, class, gender and other types of identity conflicts in football will be covered in the second "world".

The third part explores the business of football and the wider politi-



Manchester United's French midfielder Paul Pogba warming up in a T-shirt with an anti-racism message last month. Recently, football discussions have involved not just matches and tactics but also topics such as inequality and sustainability.

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cal and economic implications that come with playing and watching the sport.

It will also address topics like the production and consumption of football, football tourism and global infrastructure.

Loh Zhang Yuan, a second-year economics and business analytics major at NUS, expressed his interest in the module, saying: "As a huge football fan, anything in relation to football is bound to interest me.

"But while I'm more fixated on the glamour and excitement of the game, the universality of football also means that there are a host of deep-seated issues that still exist within the game.

"I'm keen to find out more about these issues, but also how football can in fact be a significant driver for change in our society."

This is the first time that the department is offering a course on a non-mainstream topic, although it has included such content as individual lecture topics in other modules before.

NUS is not the only local university that has such courses.

Nanyang Technological University's history department has a course titled *The Cultural, Social And Economic History Of Football*, which explores the connections between football and global political, economic and cultural power relations.

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