

COM 205
Billings/Ruihley Reading

Takeaways:

I was shocked by the results of the study. The differences in the findings for the fantasy sports questionnaire and that for traditional sport consumption are slim to none. Both types of fans view their consumption as a way to have fun and escape from reality.

Perhaps most surprising was how both types of consumers/fans improved their self-esteem levels through wins, either by their fantasy league team or by the actual teams. In other words, both the motivational factors and the rewards or gratifications for traditional sports consumption and fantasy league sports consumption are basically, almost entirely the same.

Residual questions:

1) Would Butterworth's classification of traditional fan types that we read about in the textbook apply to fantasy fanship, as well? Based on this study, it looks like they would.

1) Someone can be a traditional sports fan without also being a committed fantasy fan. Why can't someone be solely a fantasy fan without also being a traditional fan?

2) Is the level of camaraderie at a sports event with traditional fans all in the same arena higher or lower than those same fans "playing" or competing together in a fantasy league setting?

Michael Turner
COM 205
LeBon Article

Takeaways:

There are a lot of intriguing assertions in LeBon's writing on the mindset of organized crowds. Mob mentality, as it is often called, is a fascinating psychological phenomenon that is surprisingly measurable. Something the author mentions is the fact that this phenomenon can occur in a variety of ways, not solely in large physical groupings of people spurred on by some event. I thought this was interesting because it is readily observable in the world of sports, which we have seen played out in many ways in our class discussions and readings. Sure, a big play or questionable ruling on the field can set off thousands of people packed into tight seating in an arena, but additionally, thousands or millions of additional people are sharing in that experience, and reacting accordingly, from remote locations across the nation or world. By just the nature of impassioned fans cramming into a packed setting, "the disappearance of conscious personality and the turning off of feelings and thoughts in a definite direction" (LeBon, p.13) can be expected, but for those emotions to be translatable to individuals who are in a much less stressful and crowded environment is a compelling find. Additionally, LeBon's observation of the positive potential of organized crowds is a nuanced viewpoint, being that the average person's idea of Mob Mentality is far from "fired with enthusiasm and for glory and honor" (LeBon, p. 20), and much closer to pitchforks and torches.

Residual Questions:

- 1) According to LeBon, these 'organized groups' take on many unique traits in a psychological way. Are there different reactions or attributes an organized group will display depending on size and makeup, or are these traits rigid in all types of organized groups?
- 2) "On the other hand, an entire nation, though there may be no visible agglomeration, may become a crowd under the action of certain influences." I believe this point is intriguing, but unlikely. How does LeBon believe a group the size of a country functions psychologically in the same manner as an average-sized organized group (subjective, I know)?
- 3) The examples chosen to indicate how crowds can be "heroic" or "honorable" seem extremely subjective (ex. The Crusades), and certainly have large amounts of detractors who would state those were just typical criminal and violent organized groups, spurred on by their mob mentality. Are there objectively positive characteristics notably promoted by organized group, and what would be examples of their effect above that of an average individual?

Memorandum

To: Sports COM 205
From: Dr. Brian Carroll
Re: Grading

One of the feedback remarks stated, "I wish I knew how my grade is going to go. I feel like each week my grade is up in the air."

Fair enough. Maybe I can help. Basically, I'm looking for two things: Good ideas and clear, artful expression of those ideas. That's it. To elaborate, I'm looking for substantial reflections on the things we're reading and doing, and I'm demanding (largely) mistake-free writing in communicating that substance. Do these two things and you are golden. If there are deficiencies in either or both, the grade will come down. If you're not sure which it is that pulled your grade down, please ask me. I've got no secrets. If I haven't called you out on your writing, it's probably more about substance.

There is one variable you can't know from week to week, which is what everyone else wrote. Thus, that bar for a perfect 10 might in fact move a little, but not a lot. When I read the 10, I know, "That's it! That's the bar." You can't see that bar. I've given you some examples of 10-level work. And I can give you more.

That said, virtually everyone is in the 8-10 range, or As and Bs, so the range is fairly tight.

To improve in the area of substance:

- Avoid straight summary (remember I assigned the reading; I've read it)
- Avoid lots of personal testimony and anecdote (a little is fine; a lot takes space and attention away from substance)
- Integrate and synthesize past readings, discussions, principles (the A-level work does this, and does it meaningfully)
- Show thoughtful consideration of the author's argument, and all the way through that argument, not just the first few pages
- Move the overall class discussion forward with both your takeaways and your residuals. This should keep you away from trivial residuals and toward those that fundamentally matter.
- Stop by my office. I'm here ALL THE TIME. There need be no mystery at all.



**Residuals/Takeaways rubric:
short version
Spring 2021**

Shakespeare: Invention of the Human

	Encore! (A)	Bravo! (B)	Meh (C)	Back to rehearsal (D)
Demonstration of close (or deep) reading				
Incisiveness of questions (do they advance the conversation?)				
Writing quality (punctuation, syntax, grammar)				

Overall grade (composite of the parts above): _____



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What to work on in terms of writing quality

	Punctuation: Comma usage (separating independent clauses, unnecessary commas, etc.)
	Punctuation more generally (semicolons, colons, overuse of exclamation marks, etc.)
	Syntax (sentence structure, sentence fragments, run-on sentences)
	Grammar issues, such as subject-verb and subject-pronoun agreement
	That/Which ('that' for essential clauses; 'which' for non-essential clauses and, therefore, needing a comma)
	Lack of parallel structure
	Word choice (need the right word, not just a right-sounding word)
	Compound adjectives and compound nouns, which get hyphens (long-winded, decision-maker)
	Lack of clarity and/or lack of precision/specificity (try not to use "it" or "they/them" >> only you really know to what "it" refers)
	Spelling, including names, proper nouns
Other pitfalls	
	Residuals that could be answered 'yes' or 'no' (too simple, therefore)
	Residuals that stray a bit too far off into never, never land (PURE speculation)
	Settling for "what's the next step?" or "where does this take us?" questions
	Takeaways that merely summarize the reading or part of the reading
	Failure to integrate the assigned texts and case studies/events
	Failure to demonstrate that you read closely