Why is it called a hat trick? What’s the point of trash talk? Is it racist to name a team the Redskins? How much is 110%? Who came up with grand slam? Haven’t I seen that headline before? Is Smitty as good a nickname as Animal? What if the pitcher doesn’t speak English?

The structure of language in and around games and sports is sometimes surprisingly complex. This seminar will focus on the specialized usage of language in a variety of contexts of both team and individual sports, such as language use among players, narratives constructed by journalists, and conversations among viewers and fans. We will explore the social and cultural role of sport-related linguistic structures. We will also examine phenomena like team names, nicknames, and the jargon of particular games.

This course counts toward the major in linguistics or sociocultural linguistics and toward the sociocultural linguistics minor.

For more information, contact Dr. Robert Kennedy at rkenney [at] linguistics.ucsb.edu.