

**KINESIOLOGY 388**  
**CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN SPORT**  
Sam Houston State University  
Department of Health and Kinesiology  
College of Education  
Spring, 2008

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**PROFESSOR**

Emily A. Roper, Ph.D.  
Department of Health and Kinesiology  
210, Health and Kinesiology Center  
936-294-1169  
[ear007@shsu.edu](mailto:ear007@shsu.edu)

Office Hours: Mondays 10:30 – 12:30 a.m., Wednesdays 11:00 – 12:30 a.m., or by appointment

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

Coakley, J. (2007). *Sport in society: Issues and controversies*. Boston, Mass: McGraw Hill.

(Students may use any edition of Coakley's text after 2001)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course takes a broad analysis of the complex relationship between sport, society, and identity in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We'll be tackling some tough issues throughout this semester, and although we probably will NOT arrive at one definitive answer, as that would be an impossibility, we will hopefully be in a better position from which to critically assess these issues that involve all of us. Indeed, we will see early on that there are very few "Truths" in Sport Sociology. From questions surrounding things like sport and character development, the use of performance enhancing drugs, race and gender issues, and the influx of new technologies in sport, this course will take us well past the "common sense" discussions we see on Sportcenter and hear at the local pub, and into a deeper level of understanding and analysis. Understand that "reading" sport critically and taking power issues in sport seriously often runs counter to everything we think we know about sport and society. What I ask is for us to work hard to remain open to differences, regardless of whether or not we are in total agreement with them. This is, in my estimation, a big part of what higher education is all about. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. describe the complex relationship between sport, culture and society
2. explore the ways in which children are socialized into and through sport
3. understand and describe how race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability are negotiated within sport
4. analyze the role of power in sport
5. explore the ways in which sport and education are inexorably intertwined within North American culture, and in particular the ways in which "big-time" intercollegiate sport programs may compromise the integrity of the educational mission of universities
6. analyze various social problems including violence and deviance (on and off the field)
7. apply different social theories to sport, and defend their positions on the issues using these theories

8. critically analyze the symbiotic relationship between sport and the mass media
9. identify and understand movements toward equality and social justice in an increasingly multicultural sporting environment
10. explore current trends and possible future changes in society and discuss how each is likely to be manifested in sport.

### **COURSE FORMAT**

We will use a combination of readings, films, papers, and class discussions to accomplish course objectives. Class sessions will involve primarily the discussion and application of assigned readings. I assume that you and I, students and instructor, share the responsibility for making this class a successful learning experience. To contribute to and get the maximum benefit from class discussions, it is important that you attend class regularly and come prepared. It is also important to realize the importance of two-way communication: the flow of information should be among two or more persons, not simply from one person to another. In other words, we need to respond to what others - including the instructor - have to say. As a teacher, I feel free to dispute with my students, and I hope they feel the same about me. While numerous topics are somewhat controversial, this class should remain a safe place for students to respectfully voice their views.

We will watch several sport films in this course. I recognize that you may have seen some of the films we will watch, however, we will spend considerable time critically analyzing and applying the film content (themes, messages, etc.). Consider each film to be a medium in which to learn the material...I am not showing these films to simply "pass time." I will generally provide students with a series of questions to consider while observing each film.

### **COURSE GUIDELINES**

- Students must come to class on-time. As the professor, I have the ability to refuse any student's entry into the classroom after the scheduled class time has begun.
- Students are required to take notes. Notes will NOT be provided via Blackboard. Students should also come prepared to take detailed, extensive notes.
- All assignments must be typed (double-spaced).
- All materials submitted for this course must be original works of the student (see plagiarism). Papers/projects are to be used for this class only.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Late papers will be penalized 5 points per day.
- Do NOT submit assignments electronically (unless given approval)
- Turn off (or place in vibration mode) your cellular phones/pagers during class
- If absent, it is your responsibility to obtain the notes (see attendance policy).

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS**

Students will complete various written assignments in this course:

1. In-Class Assignments/Participation: All students are responsible for attending class. Students are permitted one "free" absence (without penalty). Students are not permitted to miss more than three days (including the "free" absence). Students missing more than three days will earn an "F" in the course.

**NOTE:** Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence.

2. **Sport Autobiography:** Think back to your earliest experiences of playing physical games and sports and describe when they occurred, the context in which they occurred, and what was going on in your life as they occurred. How were those early experiences related to your age, social class, race or ethnicity, family, and neighborhood or community? Researchers have found that, for high school students, a combination of conditions and characteristics had a powerful effect on whether an individual was likely to continue participation in sport and physical activity. These included school experiences in sport and physical education classes, individual perceptions of talent and ability, gender, a sense of how sport and physical activity fitted with how individuals saw themselves as adults, and social class. How did these and other conditions and characteristics affect your own decisions about sport participation (or non-participation)? [Recommended page length: 3 pages].
  
3. **Event Analysis:** Theories are tools that enable us to ask questions, identify problems, gather information, and explain social life. Using the three theories introduced in class – Functionalism, Conflict and Critical – select an event within the sport world and generate an event analysis (i.e., The case of Casey Martin, Don Imus/Rutger's women's basketball team, recent criticism of Title IX, Sheryl Swoopes coming out, Barry Bonds, Michael Vick, Roger Clemens). Students must provide each of the following:
  - a. Overview of the event, providing specific details of the event (i.e., who, why, what, when, etc.)
  - b. Discussion of how the topic relates to the Sociology of Sport (i.e., deviance, violence, race, gender, religion, politics).
  - c. Critically assess the event using at least one of the three theories discussed in class (students may examine from multiple frameworks if they choose to). For example, how would a critical theorist interpret the recent removal of men's gymnastics and men's wrestling at several Division I universities? In what ways would a functionalist differ in her/his perspective?
  - d. A reference list of ALL resources used (online, books, journal articles). Students will want to obtain extensive coverage of the event (the Internet will be especially helpful in gathering information).

**NOTE:** This assignment is designed to CHALLENGE you – this will not be a simple task. It will require that you spend considerable thought on the issue. It may be beneficial to ask for others' opinions (family members, friends, professors), as this will allow you to consider all possibilities/issues surrounding the event. Often we become absorbed in a one-dimensional view of a situation – generating discussion with others allows for a more critical and open investigation of the issue [approximate page length = 5-7 pages].

4. **Rationale:** Write a powerful argument for why you (as a Kinesiology/Health student) should take a Contemporary Issues in Sport course. Include discussion that demonstrates how Sociology is (and can be) relevant to your sub-discipline within Health/Kinesiology (Coaching, Physical Education, Physical Therapy, Community Health, Exercise Science, etc.). In general, you are answering the question – How will I use the information obtained in this course in my future career? Students may want to incorporate scholarly research, but it is not mandatory. I consider this to be an application-based paper, one in which you generate considerable thought regarding WHY this course is important? However, if you feel strongly that this course is (was) not beneficial to your professional development, you should feel free to honestly express yourself. Be sure to always support your comments/points. If you are not a Health/Kinesiology major, please see me to discuss this assignment. Recommended page length: approx 2-3 pages.
5. **Examinations:** There will be two examinations throughout the semester (mid-term and final). All material is cumulative and both examinations will include short answer essay questions. Specifics regarding each examination will be discussed in class. Review sessions will occur prior to each examination.

### **WRITING CENTER**

This course is writing intensive and as such, students will be graded on their writing ability (organization, flow, grammar, spelling, and creativity). Students are encouraged to visit the SHSU writing center at Farrington 111 (936-294-3680, wctr@shsu.edu).

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials. Please refer to the University's Code of Student Conduct for actions that may result from student academic misconduct. The consequences for any infraction will include no credit for the assignment and being reported to academic affairs. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** At the beginning of the semester, any student with a disability should inform the course instructor of instructional accommodations or academic adjustments that will be needed. For more information about the ADA and academic accommodations or adjustments, contact the Office of Disability Resources and Services at - <http://www.shsu.edu/~counsel/sswd.html> or (936) 294-1720.

<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>REQUIRED READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS DUE</b>
1/16	Introduction to course	
1/21	What is sport? Why study sport?	Chp 1
1/23	Using theories to study sport	Chp 2
1/28	Sport socialization/Youth Sport	Chp 4 & 5
1/30	Gender, sexuality and sport	Chp 8 <b>Sport autobiography DUE</b>
2/4	Gender, sexuality and sport	
2/6	Gender, sexuality and sport	
2/11	Gender, sexuality and sport	
2/13	Race and ethnicity	Chp 9
2/18	Race and ethnicity	
2/20	Race and ethnicity	
2/25	Sport and the mass media	Chp 12
2/27	Sport and the mass media	
3/3	Review for mid-term	
3/5	Mid-term	<b>MID-TERM EXAM</b>
3/10	SPRING BREAK	
3/12	SPRING BREAK	
3/17	Deviance and Violence	Chp 6 & 7
3/19	Deviance and Violence	
3/24	Sport and education	Chp 14
3/26	Sport and education	
3/31	Sport and education	
4/2	NASP conference – No class	

4/7	Sport subcultures	
4/9	Sport subcultures	<b>Event analysis DUE</b>
4/14	The sporting body	
4/16	The sporting body	
4/21	(Dis)ability sport	
4/23	(Dis)ability and sport	
4/28	Future sport	Chp 16
4/30	"Make-up" Day	
5/5	Review for final examination	<b>Rationale paper DUE</b>
5/7	FINAL EXAMINATION	