

SELECTED TOPICS IN HEALTH AND SOCIETY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND HEALTH

Winter, 2022

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Course Description

This special topics course provides a critical examination of the complex relationship between sport, physical activity and health. Taking a multidimensional approach to “health,” including the crucial role of its social and political dimensions, the course will: 1) consider how sport and physical activity can provide health benefits; 2) analyze how these benefits are not distributed evenly across society; and 3) critique how sport and physical activity can, in a multitude of ways, contribute to poor health. Issues and challenges related to definitions, concepts, models, research, policy, program and practice implications will be discussed.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Recognize and explain major theoretical approaches to the social understanding of sport, physical activity and health.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how sport and physical activity intersect with socio-political factors to produce diverse (and unequal) lived experiences and health outcomes.
3. Apply these understandings to contemporary media representations of sport, physical activity and health.

Required Materials and Texts

There is no text in this course. The schedule below lists the readings for each week. All are available through the McMaster library system or are linked on the [course website](#). If you are unsure how to access journal articles through the McMaster library system, please seek assistance from the [library](#). All assigned films are available for free online.

Class Format

Lectures are held on Mondays, Wednesday, and Thursdays. Some Thursdays will include a quiz and/or class discussions. Several documentaries will be screened during class time throughout the term.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Quizzes (5%)
2. Midterm Exam (25%)
3. Critical Media Analysis (35%)
4. Final exam (35%)

Course Evaluation – Details

In-class Quizzes (5%, held on 6 Thursdays throughout the term)

On 6 Thursday classes throughout the term, an in-class quiz will be given at the start of class. Quiz dates will not be announced in advance. Each quiz will cover material from the week in which it is given and be worth 1% of your final grade. Only your 5 highest quiz grades will be counted toward your final grade (i.e., if you complete all 6 quizzes, your lowest grade will be dropped). You must be present to complete a quiz or you will earn a grade of 0% for that quiz.

Midterm Exam (25%, held in class over two days), February 14 and 16

The midterm exam will cover material from Weeks 1-5 and will consist of two parts: 1) multiple choice questions (Feb. 14) and 2) short written responses (Feb. 16). MSAFs cannot be used for the midterm exam. The midterm exam will be written in class and students must be present at both classes in order to complete the midterm – if you miss one or both parts you will receive a grade of 0% unless you successfully petition your Faculty/Program Office, as per the university's [Policy on Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work](#).

Critical Media Analysis Essay (35%), due March 28 by start of class

Students will submit an original essay on that critically analyzes a contemporary media product (newspaper article, film, TV show, podcast, social media account, etc.). A detailed overview of this assignment will be communicated in class and on Avenue within the first three weeks of class.

Optional Flexible Deadline: Students may opt to submit their essay without late penalty up to one week late (by start of class on April 4). If you opt for this extension, however, you will not receive any comments or feedback on your paper beyond the rubric and the instructor will not meet with you to discuss your paper or revisit grade in any fashion – no exceptions. Further, if you take the extension, you are not guaranteed to receive your essay grade before the final exam. It is not necessary to request the flexible deadline, as it will be automatically granted. Any papers received after start of class on April 4 will accrue late penalties.

Final Exam (35%), TBD (April 14-29)

A cumulative final exam will be held during the exam period. Students must be available to write the exam during this time period. Please plan holiday and travel plans accordingly.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Jan. 10, 12, and 13)

Introduction: Thinking Critically About Sport, Physical Activity, and Health

Readings: none

Week 2 (Jan. 17, 19, and 20)

Are Sports and Physical Activity Healthy? Some Initial Considerations

Readings:

1. Arent, S. M., & Walker, A. J. (2018). Sport and health: the unique challenge of elite sport. In D. Parnell & P. Krstrup (Eds.), *Sport and Health: Exploring the Current State of Play* (pp. 179-197). New York: Routledge.
2. Lemke, W. (2016, October 10). The role of sport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *United Nations Chronicle*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/role-sport-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>.

Week 3 (Jan. 24, 26, and 27)

Theoretical Perspectives on Sport, Physical Activity and Health

Readings:

1. Ritchie, I. (2020). Thinking sociologically: sport, physical culture, and critical theory. In J. Scherer & B. Wilson (eds.), *Sport and Physical Culture in Canadian Society* (2nd Edition). **[Available through Avenue]**

Week 4 (Jan. 31, Feb 2 and 3)

Social Determinants of Health and Lived Experiences of Physical Activity

Part 1: Theoretical Foundations & Social Class

Readings:

1. Koch, J., Scherer, J., & Kafara, R. (2020). Structural inequality, homelessness, and moral worth: salvaging the self through sport? *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 49(6), 806-831.

Week 5 (Feb. 7, 9, and 10)

Social Determinants of Health and Lived Experiences of Physical Activity

Part 2: Gender and Sexuality & Race

Readings:

1. Mason, C. W., McHugh, T. L. F., Strachan, L., & Boule, K. (2019). Urban indigenous youth perspectives on access to physical activity programmes in Canada. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 543-558.

2. Wigglesworth, J. (2019, January 7). What's in a name? Sexism in rock climbing route names. *Engaging Sports*. Available [here](#).

Week 6 (Feb. 14 and 16)

IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

Readings: none

Week 7 (Feb. 21, 23 and 24) – NO CLASS

READING WEEK

Week 8 (Feb. 28, March 2 and 3)

Commodifying Fitness and Health

Readings:

1. Webb, J. B., Vinoski, E. R., Warren-Findlow, J., Padro, M. P., Burris, E. N., & Suddreth, E. M. (2017). Is the “yoga bod” the new skinny?: comparative content analysis of mainstream yoga lifestyle magazine covers. *Body Image*, 20, 87-98.
2. Ventresca, M. (2011, November 30). Mo' than just a moustache: hockey, masculinity and Movember. *Hockey in Society*. Available [here](#).

Week 9 (March 7, 9, and 10)

Deviance and Violence in Sport Subcultures

Readings:

1. Dean, N. A., & Bundon, A. (2020). 'You're only falling into water!': exploring surfers' understandings of concussion in Canadian surf culture. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 12(4), 579-596.
2. Malcolm, D. (2019, September 4). Understanding the concussion crisis in sport. *Engaging Sports*. Available [here](#).

Week 10 (March 14, 16, and 17)

Disability Sport and Parasport

Readings:

1. D. McGillivray, H. O'Donnell, G. McPherson, & L. Misener. (2020). Repurposing the (Super) Crip: Media Representations of Disability at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.” *Communication & Sport*, 9(1), 3-22.

Week 11 (March 21, 23, and 24)

Sport, Physical Activity and Health in Later Life

Readings:

1. Griffin, M. (2017). Embodied learning and new physical activity in mid-and later life. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 9(5), 554-567.
2. Gilmore, K.L. (2018, September 24). Guest post: women's ice hockey finally included in 55+ BC Games. *Hockey in Society*. Available [here](#).

Week 12 (March 28, 30, and 31)

Sport, Physical Activity, and Environmental Health

Readings:

1. Bunds, K., & Casper, J. (2018). Sport, physical culture, and the environment: An introduction. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(1), 1-7.

Notes: *Critical Media Analysis due by start of class on March 28.*

Week 13 (April 4, 6, and 7)

Sport, Physical Activity and Health in Uncertain Times & Course Conclusion

Readings: none

Notes: *This week will consist of a short course wrap-up and a discussion of course themes in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Week 14 (April 11)

Exam Review

Readings: none

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

The final essay should be submitted via the designated folder on Avenue. Quizzes and the midterm exam will be held and submitted in class. The final exam will be held and submitted in-person during the April exam period.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+

MARK	GRADE
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day.

Course Modification

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Email Policy

Emails will typically receive a response within 48 hours, weekends and holidays excepted. At unusually busy times this may be longer, though I will do my best to respond to time-sensitive emails as soon as possible.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [*Academic Integrity Policy*](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Courses with an Online Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms.

Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the

Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Copyright And Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.