



## SYLLABUS

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism  
Sport, Culture, and Society  
SPMT 304.3  
Fall 2015

DAY – Tuesday / TIME: 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m. LOCATION: **Krug 242**

Dr. Earl Smith  
Adjunct Professor  
SPMT  
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Permanent:  
Rubin Distinguished Professor of  
American Ethnic Studies  
Director, American Ethnic Studies Program  
Professor of Sociology  
(former Chairman, Department of Sociology, 1997-2005)  
WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

### SPMT Department Course Description:

Analyzes sport from educational, political, economic, and cultural perspectives.

SPMT Department Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, students will know:

1. how and why sport, in general, and certain sports in particular, have been created and organized in certain ways;
2. the connection between sports and other spheres of social life, such as family, education, politics, the economy, the media, and religion;
3. how sports and sport participation inform the way people think about their own bodies and about gender, social class,

race and ethnicity, and disability;

### **Précis**

*Sport, Culture & Society* is a Sociology course that integrates the substantive areas of sport from this academic discipline. Combining both lecture and class discussion we seek to engage everyone in the room to be engaged in this class. The course will examine selected sport & society topics of intellectual interest.

Applying a sociological lens to the study of sport focuses our attention on sports as an institution. In contrast to other disciplines such as psychology or history, a sociological perspective on sport considers the ways in which the institution itself operates—who controls sports, how resources and benefits are doled out---as well as how the institution of sport interacts with other social institutions such as the family, the institution of higher education, the economy, the labor market, the system of racial inequality etc.

Some of the topics to be addressed are:

(1) How does a specific nation's **culture** shape the sports that are played there? Which sports draw a paying audience (or are broadcast on national TV), and which sport is chosen as the national identity? (2) What is a sport? (3) What fuels the Athletic Industrial Complex (sports as a business--\$\$)? (4) Gender and sports: are women better athletes than men? After all these years why are we still discussing /arguing over Title IX? (5) Race and sport: are White athletes better than Black athletes? Are the African American athletes still exploited as they were in the 1960's? (6) What is sports leadership? (7) Who qualifies as "sport heroes"? (8) Why is there so much violence in sports (both on and off the playing fields) and why is so much of this violence directed at women? (9) Why do "fine-tuned" athletes use performance-enhancing drugs? And so forth...

### Additional Course Objectives

- First, and foremost: that sports are a reflection of the society in which we live
- SportsWorld is now global, reaching far beyond the continental United States
- Sports are an integral institution in the US and around the world, an institution similar in scope and objectives such as the family, schools, religion and the economy
- Sports and sport participation have become central in American life
- Inherent in SportsWorld is conflict, social stratification, violence and over time social change.

The “A” grade is for excellence; if you want to earn this grade you must do EXCELLENT work in all aspects of the class (e.g., attendance, test taking, clear, grammar perfect writing assignments, very well prepared and delivered oral presentations etc. Just coming to class and completing assignments is NOT excellence

**Requirements:** The success of the course and subsequent learning experience will rely heavily on **active** student participation. Along with participating in class and reading the required material, the following constitute course requirements:

1. Take all tests/exams (written and / or oral)
2. Complete all essay and book writing assignments
3. Have near perfect attendance
4. Each student is expected to take part in class discussions.

### ***OK – WHAT PARTICIPATION REALLY MEANS***

Students generally like to complain about their grades unless they get an A

A lot of the complaints are about the “participation” grade.

Participation means more than coming to class, it means being *fully present* in class. It means coming to class ready to participate (having done the readings and otherwise prepared). It means participating in class discussion and debates. It means asking questions.

**Class attendance is required:** Attendance will be taken at the start of each class session. Students on excused absences are responsible for all material covered in class as well as assigned readings. If you miss more than four classes your chances for passing the course are greatly diminished.

**Warning:** You may find some of the issues discussed in this course to be shocking, disturbing or offensive to you as an individual. By definition, the subject matter of this course includes things that many people find objectionable on moral and aesthetic grounds. This course requires that you have a certain amount of tolerance for the unusual and disreputable side of human social interaction. This does not mean that you have to approve of them, but you will have to keep your personal feelings in check in order to study these topics. If you cannot handle this subject matter it may be best for you to take another course.

## IMPORTANT PROCEDURES FOR EACH CLASS: READ CAREFULLY

### General Instructions

#### THIS IS A NO COMPUTER/LAPTOP CLASS

No talking in class

No reading of newspapers, etc in class

No cell phones or iPhones or TEXTING in class!

No assignment you have for this class can make use of WIKEPEDIA

Appropriate dress only

No hats worn in class

Cheating will not be tolerated – do your own work

Check your GMU e-mail each day

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#### NB:

**Cellular Phone & Gadgets Rule (for the entire semester). The first 4-5 minutes of class you can call, text, clear your phone / other gadgets. In the 3-hour class we break ½ way into the class session. At the break (4-5 min) you can again access your phones and / or other gadgets. THESE ARE THE ONLY TIMES YOU CAN ACCESS THESE ITEMS. There will be a stiff penalty for using phones, texting, etc., at any other time!**

### Student Expectations

AT ALL TIMES COME TO CLASS DRESSED APPROPRIATELY!!

#### *Student Expectations*

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].

- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

#### *Campus Resources*

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu>].

**PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:** Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

**CORE VALUES COMMITMENT:** The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.

#### *Campus Resources*

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- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu>].

**OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:**

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200;  
<http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES “Ask a Librarian”  
<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;  
<http://caps.gmu.edu>

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

George Mason University is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else’s work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

**GRADE SCALE****GRADE SCALE**

95-100% A  
90-94% A-

86-89% B+  
83-85% B  
80-82% B-

76-79% C+  
73-75% C  
70-72% C-

66-69% D+  
63-65% D  
60-62% D-  
Below 60% F

## IMPORTANT DATES

Pre-Assignment		05
Test 1		10
Test 2 (Mid Term Exam)		20
Test 3		10
Participation	Across Semester	10
Op-Ed Report Due	<b>November 24, 2015</b>	20
Op-Ed Oral Report	Across Semester	5
Final Examination	Dec 15 <sup>th</sup> 4:30	20
<b>Total Points</b>		<b>100</b>

### Required Books:

Earl Smith, **Race, Sport and the American Dream**,  
 Carolina Academic Press  
**3<sup>rd</sup> edition ISBN-13: 978-1611634877**

Jay Coakley, **Sports In Society**,  
 McGraw Hill Pub  
**11<sup>th</sup> edition ISBN-13: 978-0078022524**

**Class Decorum:** RESPECT for everyone in the room! Talking is permitted, but as a part of class discussion only. Proper clothing attire required. Hats can only be worn if for religious purposes. No reading of newspapers, magazines etc in class. No TEXTING. No surfing the web. No eating food in class. NONE. You can bring water, coffee or a soft drink.

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### *September*

T – 1

Topic: Introductions; Course Syllabus; Questions -- Also What Is A Sport  
 Reading Assignment for Today: Coakley – All front matter and Chapter 1 (“What is the Sociology of Sport? - Why Study Sport in Society?”); Coakley, Chapter 2 – “Producing Knowledge about Sports in Society”  
 E. Smith, Chapter 1 (“A New Sociology of Sports”)

Tu - 8

Topic: Sports, Politics & Culture

Reading Assignment for Today: Jay Coakley, Chapter 13: "Sports and Politics"

and Matthew Stewart "*Fit For Office: The Curious Relationship Between Athletes and Politicians*" <http://bit.ly/1O3le7B>

DVD: *Not Just a Game*

Tu – 15 Test # 1 (10 points) (1<sup>st</sup> 15min of class)

Topic: Race & The Negro Leagues (Social Construction of race)

Reading Assignment for Today: E. Smith, Chapter 2, "African Americans and Sports: Explanations"

DVD: **Only the Ball Was White** <http://bit.ly/1BeYniU>

5 – Op Ed Reports

Tu-22 Fear To Freedom

Tu-29

Topic: Deviance in Sports : Child Sex Abuse

Reading Assignment for Today: Jay Coakley, Chapter 5, "Deviance in Sport" and Brian Denham, "Masculinities and the Sociology of Sport."

DVD: **Happy Valley**

### ***October***

Tu-6 GUEST: Washington Football Team Members

Tu – 13 Columbus Day No Class

Tu-20

Topic: Athletes Violence Against Women

Reading Assignment for Today: E. Smith, Chapter 6 · Athletes' Violence Against Women  
Coakley, Chapter 6, "Violence in Sports"

**DVD: Bro Code**

5 Op-Ed Reports

Tu-27 Mid Term Exam (20)

### ***November***

Tu-3

Topic: Paying Student Athletes

Reading Assignment for Today: Rachel Cohen and Ralph Russo, "Paying College Athletes: Not If, But How."

DVD:

5 Op- Ed Reports



Tu - 10

Topic: Gender & Title IX

Reading Assignment for Today: Angela J. Hattery, 2012, "They Play Like Girls: Gender and Race (In) Equity in NCAA Sports." *Wake Forest Journal of Law & Policy*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Pp. 247- 265.

Jay Coakley, "Gender & Sports" – Chapter 7

5 Op-Ed Reports

Tu –17 Test #3 (10)

Topic: "Do Competitive Sports Contribute to Education?"

Coakley book, Chapter Fourteen: "SPORTS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE" --

DVD: *Friday Night Lights*

Tu - 24

**Op- Ed Report is due**

Topic: Athletic Industrial Complex

Reading Assignment for Today: E. Smith, Chapter 8 · The Athletic Industrial Complex

Jay Coakley, "Sports & Economy" – Chapter 11

DVD: *Schooled - The Price of College Sports*

5 Op-Ed Reports

### ***December***

Tu - 1 Test 4 (10) (1<sup>st</sup> 15 min of class)

Topic: The African American Athlete

Reading Assignment for Today: E. Smith, Chapter 3, "Race and Sports: the Genetic Argument" and E. Smith, Chapter 5 · The Promise of an Education: Truth or a Lie?

Jay Coakley, Chapter 8. "Race & Ethnicity"

5 Op-Ed Reports

Tu - 8

Topic: The African American Athlete

Reading Assignment for Today: E. Smith, Chapter 9, "The Future of Sports in the United States"

FINAL EXAM - SPORT Tuesday, December 15th 4:30PM (20 points)

## Op- Ed Assignment (20)

This assignment is *persuasive*

That is, it is (1) for or (2) against argument.

**The assignment is due November 24, 2015. No late assignment will be accepted!!**

You are assigned a topic from the course and you are to write an op-ed.

An op-ed is 800 to 1000 words. **BUT NO MORE THAN THIS!!**

The purpose of an op-ed is to use facts and research to develop a persuasive argument. (Read some op-ed's in the *Washington Post* to get an idea of what these are like).

An op-ed generally tackles only one small part of an issue and takes a clear stance on the issue.

For example, you might develop an argument about *mass incarceration* by focusing on state and federal drug laws.

Your op-ed will be written and then you will read it in class.  
(6 min maximum)!!

Your op-ed will be judged on the following:

- The op-ed is built using reliable sources (e.g. research!)
- The op-ed has a thesis statement that is concise and narrows the argument to one main point that can be argued
- The op-ed is persuasive
- The op-ed offers some alternative or action

## Sport Fall 2015 Op-Ed Assignment

Student		Topic
Binczewski	Erik	Should Barry Bonds be in t he baseball Hall of Fame
Brown	Nicholas	Why no .400 hitters in Major League Baseball
Donner	Joshua	Is Serena Willaims best tennis athlete ever
Emery	Joseph	Title IX – should women college athletes get same resources as men sports
Frapech	Alexander	Use of PEDS (performance enhancing drugs) in track & field
Goldsmith	Hallie	Should student-athletes be paid
Holtberg	Alexander	Triple Crown – Why did it take so long (1978 to 2015) – 37 years
Hrebenach	Stephen	Should Pete Rose be in the baseball Hall Of Fame
Hurtado	Alan	Should prayer be allowed at start of sport events (e.g., Indy 500)
Juranovic	Gabriel	Is NASCAR a sport
Khan	Shahroze	Is “Conference Realignment” good or bad for NCAA college sports
Luong	Vivi	Should prayer be allowed at start of sport events (e.g., Indy 500)
Malajian	Brian	Should women be allowed to compete on men’s teams (football; BB, golf etc)
Medina	Vicente	Trans Athletes: should they be allowed to play on team of their gender identity
Morgan	Brittany	Is NASCAR a sport
Negron	Brian	Should Pete Rose be in the baseball Hall Of Fame
Novak	Patrick	Trans Athletes: should they be allowed to play on team of their gender identity
O’Neil	Hannah	Title IX – should women college athletes get same resources as men sports
Porcella	Evan	Triple Crown – Why did it take so long (1978 to 2015) – 37 years
Richter	Justin	Domestic Violence in NFL (should it be addressed differently than it is)
Roessler	Alexander	What is the concern over the Confederate Flag & sports (NASCAR; NCAA)
Safdari	Zahrah	What is the concern over the Confederate Flag & sports (NASCAR; NCAA)
Stilletti	Dominique	Who is GREATEST athlete ever – male or female
Swanson	Cassidy	Use of PEDS (performance enhancing drugs) in track & field
Tran	Mary	Why no .400 hitters in Major League Baseball
Tran	Phuc	Should Barry Bonds be in t he baseball Hall of Fame
Trelawny	John	Should women be allowed to compete on men’s teams (football; BB, golf etc)
Williams	Joseph	Should student-athletes be paid