



SYLLABUS

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
Sport, Culture, and Society
SPMT 304.2
Spring 2016

DAY – Tuesday / TIME: 4:30 p.m. – 7:10 p.m. LOCATION: Thom 013

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

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 1/2 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.

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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

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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

SPMT 304.2
IMPORTANT DATES

Pre Assignment		05
Test 1	Feb 2	10
Test 2 (Mid Term Exam)	March 1st	10
Test 3	April 5th	10
Test 4	April 19 th	10
Participation		10
Op-Ed Report Due	March 3, 2016	20
Op-Ed Oral Report	Across Semester	5
Final Examination	Tu May 10 th 4:30	20
Total Points		100

Required Books:

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

Earl Smith, **Sociology of Sport and Social Theory**
Human Kinetics **ISBN-13: 978-0736075725**

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

January

T – 19

Topic: Introductions; Course Syllabus; Questions -- Also What Is A Sport

Reading Assignment for Today:

Pierre Bourdieu, “Program for a Sociology of Sport” (BlackBoard)

E. Smith, *Race, Sport and American Dream* Chapter 1 (“A New Sociology of Sports”)

Tu – 26

Topic: Sports, Politics & Culture

Reading Assignment for Today:

Matthew Stewart “*Fit For Office: The Curious Relationship Between Athletes and Politicians*” (BlackBoard)

DVD: *Not Just a Game* 62 min

February

Tu – 2 Test1 = 10 points

Topic: High School Sports

Reading Assignment for Today: Bissinger, “Odessa.” (BlackBoard)

Rhonda F. Levine, “Social and Cultural Capital: Race, School Attachment, and the Role of High School Sports” (Chapter 9 in Smith (ed), *Sociology of Sport & Social Theory*)

DVD: *Friday Night Lights* (118 min) (own)

Tu - 9

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**

4 – Op Ed Reports

Tu-16

Topic: Deviance in Sports: Child Sex Abuse

Reading Assignment for Today: Katy Waldman, “The Devastating Pattern of Sexual Abuse in Competitive Swimming” (BLACKBOARD)

DVD: **Happy Valley**

Tu – 23

Topic: “Imported Athletes” - Athletes Switching Nationalities

Reading Assignment for Today: Roy D. McCree, “Sport and Multiple Identities in Postwar Trinidad: The Case of McDonald Bailey” (Chapter 15 in Smith (ed), *Sociology of Sport & Social Theory*)

4 – Op Ed Reports

March

Tu - 1 Mid Term Exam (10) **Op- Ed Reports are due**

Topic: ATHLETES & HEALTH (1)

Reading Assignment for Today: Nick Schwartz “Antwaan Randle El regrets playing football” and Malcolm Gladwell, “Football and Dogfighting” (BLACKBOARD)

Spring Break – no Class

Tu – 15

Topic: Athletes & Health (2)

Reading Assignment for Today: Malcolm Gladwell, “Football and Dogfighting” (BlackBoard)
DVD; “Concussion”

4 – Op Ed Reports

Tu- 22

Topic: Masculinity Problematic: Athletes Violence Against Women

Reading Assignment for Today: E. Smith, *Race, Sport & American Dream*, Chapter 6 “Athletes Violence Against Women

E. Smith (Chapter 10 in Smith (ed), *Sociology of Sport & Social Theory*)

DVD: Bro Code (60 min)

4 - Op-Ed Reports

Tu-29

Topic: Performance Enhancing Drug Use by Athletes

Reading Assignment for Today: Denham, “Masculinities and the Sociology of Sport: Issues and Ironies in the 21st Century” (Chapter 11 in Smith (ed), *Sociology of Sport & Social Theory*), *ALSO*

Ian Ritchie, “Sociology of Science: Sport, Training, and the use of Performance Enhancing Substances” (Chapter 4 in Smith (ed), *Sociology of Sport & Social Theory*)

DVD: Doping for Gold

April

Tu-5 Test 3 (10)

Topic: Athletic Industrial Complex

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

DVD: Schooled - The Price of College Sports (85 min)

4 Op- Ed Reports

Tu – 12

Topic: Gender & Title IX

Reading Assignment for Today: Angela J. Hattery, 2012, “Feminist Theory and the Study of Sport: An Illustration from Title IX.” (Chapter 8 in Smith (ed), *Sociology of Sport & Social Theory*), and MC BARRETT. “There Are Fewer Women Coaches In College Basketball Now Than There Were A Decade Ago.” (BlackBoard)

Tu - 19

Topic: Test 4 (10) (1st 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?

DVD: African American Athlete

3 Op-Ed Reports

Tu – 26

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, MAY 10TH 4:30PM (20 points)

Op- Ed Assignment (20)

This assignment is *persuasive*

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

The writing part of the assignment is due March 3, 2016 -- NOON!!

No late assignment will be accepted!!

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

An op-ed is 800 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* or elsewhere 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 or against)

For example, you might develop an argument about *Instant Replay* in intercollegiate sports; when it can be used; when it can't be used; how many times it can be used employed etc.

Your op-ed will be written and then on the assigned date 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