Western University Health Sciences | Kinesiology

Social Theory of Sport and Exercise — Essay CourseCourse Outline

2017-18 Kin 4465 G Online

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Contact: mheine@uwo.ca / +519-661-4113 | Lecture schedule: weekly online release |

TA: tbd. | Course URL: tbd.

Note

All course information including grades, assignment outlines, deadlines, etc. are available on OWL. Check the "Important Dates" tab on OWL for up-to-date information! If there is a discrepancy, dates listed on OWL override those listed in this Course Outline!

This course will explore key concepts, theorists, and issues in the social and cultural study of sport and exercise that help us to extend such questioning by way of *theorizing*.

Overview

We live in a world where sports and organized exercise / health practices are internationally dominant cultural phenomena. Sporting events have become part of the social and cultural fabric of nations across the world. Sports matter on a global scale — sports matter greatly to most of us. Very likely, most of us hold positive opinions about the world of sports as it currently exists. It is easy to assume that our own positive experiences in sport are the general norm. Likewise for 'exercise' — it seems hardly possible to separate the two concepts, so much do we take them for granted.

Thinking theoretically about sports and exercise helps us establish a reflective perspective on what we take for granted in sports and exercise, what we consider 'normal and meaningful' (or what we reject as 'not normal'). A critical, reflective perspective helps us to understand that what we tend to take for granted, is a socially constructed and historically variable phenomenon. In fact, you are already *theorizing* whenever you ask why the world of sport and exercise is the way we find it (and then, depending on your own interests, imagine how you might change it, or how it might be reinforced).

In this course, we will explore concepts and issues in the social and cultural study of sport and exercise that help us to develop such a critical perspective, by way of *theorizing*. We will use writings by several influential researchers and then apply them practically to some of the important issues in contemporary sports and exercise practices: we will investigate the *representation* of sport and exercise in different media, in particular film production, advertisements, magazines, newspapers and web sites. — Some of our broad areas of interest include the following:

Example Issue

- What's the importance of gold medals? -What stories do sports movies tell?
- Why can it be so important to look thin or big? What does a thin (big) body 'mean'? How 'healthy' can it be?
- The importance of 'pink'.
- What's the colour of Band Aid?
- "Throwing Like a Girl"?
- Why do Canadians care about the Olympics?

Main Area of Investigation

- The significance of symbols applied to exercise activities and the body, in particular as shown in sports films, sports media, and advertising.
- Constructions of our understandings of health and the healthy body.
- Constructions of our understanding of the gendered and raced body in sports and exercise practices.
- Globalization of Sport and Health Practices

Objectives

By the completion of this course, you should be able to:

- 1. explain the significance of thinking theoretically about sport and exercise (reflection)
- 2. identify different theoretical positions that are relevant in the cultural study of sport and exercise (*knowledge*, *application*)
- 3. critically reflect on the ways in which media representations of sporting practices and the body help to normalize our understanding of meaningful participation in sport and exercise. (*reflection*, *synthesis*)
- 4. develop reasoned arguments in the critical and reflective analysis of the relationship between sports, health and exercise practices, and their representation in the media (application)

Course Participation and Assignment/Exam Prep

- 1. What do you need for the course work?
 - The Course Readings and Viewings
 - The Segment Study Sheets (the Segment web pages on the OWL course site)
 - The Segment presentation slides and Instructor Commentaries (usually audio to go with the slides)
 - Forum Contributions. Don't forget that contributions by other course participants often contain valuable insights that can aid you in the development of your own thinking and arguments.
 - For journal and paper writing prep, you'll find several guide in the Resources section.
- 2. I find it advantageous to read the assigned Readings prior to accessing the On-line Lessons and Resources. That's also the case for the Viewings: If you haven't watched the movie or documentary that's on the schedule, you'll hardly be in a position to make a meaningful contribution. The Course Study Sheets can be thought of as the equivalent of lecture guides in a classroom setting; they are designed to guide you through the readings, and through the entire module. They are an important part of the course and it is expected that you will give the course notes the same attention that you would lectures and classes in the traditional setting. Please check the OWL schedule carefully, including any changes that are required throughout the term.
- 3. The final take-home exam will reference all course readings and viewings, class discussions and class notes, including those that may not have been discussed in class. The exam format includes short and medium length answers.

Evaluation

Final grades will be derived from totaling the scores on all assignments, exams and forum contribution marks. The tasks and exam weighting is as follows. Since this is an essay-designated course, all assignments contain written work.

Task Score Sheet

Forum Contributions (1/week)	20%
Journal entry (3 @ 5% each)	15%
Term Paper + Proposal (30%+5%)	35%
Final Exam (Take-home)	30%
	<u>100%</u>

Task Description

1. **Participation / Forum Contributions** (ongoing throughout the term)

Your grade for class participation will be based on your submissions to the "Weekly Discussions" Section of the Forums. Regular participation is worth 20% of your grade, when you submit at least one meaningful contribution / commentary per week, related to course contents and forum discussions. It's not sufficient to enter an "I agree!" etc. - These 20% are your to lose/reduce! For example, these messages can be in response to issues raised in the course notes, or you may wish to share your thoughts or ideas on the readings. You may also want to apply aspects of the course material to the news of the day. In order to facilitate active participation by all, you may not post more than 3 participation comments per week. It is recommended that you participate once, preferably twice a week in order to receive full credit for this component.

In our discussions, we will adhere to civil standards of netiquette (for an example, see here).

2. Journal entries

3 Journal entries responding to a question or issue set by the instructor every third week. The required length for this assignment is 300 - 500 words; time for completion and online submission of each entry is one week from posting of the question. Information on the expected structure for this assignment will be posted on OWL.

3. Written Term Project & Proposal

An investigation of a media event in the area of sports, exercise, or health—an image, story, film, cover, picture, etc., etc., anything that is of interest to you and that allows you to develop a plausible research topic. The written topic proposal must be cleared with the instructor. The length for this assignment is about 2,500-3,000 words (ca. 10 pages). Supporting documentation on the production of a term paper will be posted on OWL.

4. Final Exam

Take-home written exam; on-line submission with one week turn-around time deadline for submission to coincide with last day of classes. The format will be discussed well in advance. Questions range from long-answer questions [750-1000 words] to short answer questions [250-300 words].

Dates

For up-to-date information, please consult the 'Important Dates' web page on the OWL course site. In case of discrepancies between this time table and the one posted on OWL, the OWL time table will be valid.

Jan 8	Segment 00 and 01 posted
Jan 8	Beginning with # 01, Segments 01-10 will be posted weekly on Monday mornings (except during Reading Week)
Jan 26	Journal Entry 1 posted
Feb 02	Journal Entry 1 due
(Feb 07)	This would be a good time to start thinking about the term paper and term paper abstract - the abstract is due two weeks from now.
Feb 19-23	Reading Week, no Segment
Feb 17	Journal Entry 2 posted
Feb 26	Term Paper Abstract due
Mar 2	Journal Entry 2 due
Mar 7	Last day to drop a second-term half / full courses, without academic penalty
Mar 19	Term paper due
Mar 17	Posted: Journal Entry 3
Mar 24	Due: Journal Entry 3
Mar 27	Posted: Final Take-home Exam
April 7	Due: Final Take-home Exam

Readings/Viewings

- [R-xx] Required Readings: Most of the readings can be accessed online through the UWO library system; the remaining ones will be made available through the library system.
- [V-xx] Required Viewings: You are responsible for making your own arrangements to view the films listed on the course outline under <u>video</u>. They will usually be available via Hulu, Netflix, Amazon online, etc. Some movies can also be accessed through the UWO library system. (In a pinch, the video can be borrowed from the instructor for a limited time.)
- [O-xx] Required OWL pages: The OWL Segment pages are your study guide!

Segment Schedule

Segment - Topic

SEGMENT 0: ONLINE COURSE WORK

Course Overview

- Course Content and structure
- A 'how to': How to study for this online course?
- Description of grading requirements

Readings / Viewings

O-0 OWL Course Site: Segment 00 Page

SEGMENT 1: THINKING ABOUT 'REPRESENTATION' WHAT IS SPORT? WHAT IS REAL (IN SPORT & EXERCISE) — WHAT IS REPRESENTED?

We all hold and enact implicit assumptions about what makes sports and exercise practices meaningful and relevant, but what makes us so sure? Is Professional Wrestling really a sport? What are the criteria we use to define sports? Why do we use these criteria? And: do we all share the same criteria when defining 'sport' and 'physical exercise', and why we should exercise? How come?

This course is based on the assumption that what the practices we so obviously take for granted, is based to a large extent on the stories (narratives) told about them, that is to say, how those practices are *represented*.

Reflecting on something that is seemingly 'totally obvious', gets us in the right frame of mind to investigate **representation** — using the tools of theory.

We start out by investigating a practice that most of us would say is *not* a sport — but the fans in popular culture would beg to differ. So, what is represented in professional wrestling?

Readings / Viewings

- O-1 Owl Site, Segment 01 Page
- R-1 de Garis, Laurence. 2005. "The Logic of Professional Wrestling." In: *Steel Chair to the Head: The Pleasure and Pain of Professional Wrestling*, ed. N. Sammond. Durham, NC: Duke UP.
- V-1 Aronofsky, Darren. 2008. The Wrestler. Wild Bunch Production Co.
 - You have to locate your own copy -- UWO: King's College Multimedia PN1997.2.W7478 2010
 - Instructor: 4-hour loan possible

SEGMENT 2: WHY THEORIZE? THE RELEVANCY OF 'DOING THEORY' (BELL HOOKS)

Theories help us identify issues and problems to examine. They provide frameworks for asking research questions, interpreting information, but also for the reflection on our own 'sports and exercise / health biographies.' We examine Bell Hooks' view on the relevancy of *doing theory*.

Readings / Viewings

- O-2 Owl Site, Segment 02 Page
- R-2 Hooks, Bell. "Theory as liberatory practice." Yale Journal of Law and Feminism 4/1 (1991-2), 1-12.
 - UWO: Weldon online access
- V-2 Hooks, Bell. 2005. *Cultural Criticism and Transformation*. Dir Sut Jhally. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
 - UWO: Weldon / Huron, HM623.B45
 - Youtube playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5A99EF9376125764 (Playlist items #1-8)
- R-3 Transcript of Belle Hook's entire video lecture
 - https://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/402/transcript_402.pdf

Segment - Topic

SEGMENT 3: ZOOMING IN ON OUR MAIN INTEREST: CULTURE AND REPRESENTATION (STUART HALL)

We examine an important lecture by cultural theorist Stuart Hall. He explains how we can investigate our culture as issues of *representation*. We'll make use of Hall throughout the course — his explanations of how to understand our social and cultural realities as shaped by *representation* provides us with the critical understanding to 'theorize' those realities (Bell Hooks has already explained to us why we should. Randy the Wrestler has already explained to us that an activity some of us wouldn't consider a 'sport', is identified as just that by many in the popular culture of sport — because of the ways in which the activity is *represented*).

Readings / Viewings

- O-3 Owl Site, Segment 03 Page
- V-3 Stuart Hall. 2002. *Representation and the Media*. Intro by Sut Jhally. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
 - DVD: Brescia / Huron HM621.R42
 - Youtube playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL33E370F138F566FE
- R-4 Transcript of the entire video of Stuart Hall's lecture
 - https://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/409/transcript_409.pdf

SEGMENT 4: REPRESENTATION IN THE CULTURE OF SPORT: SPORTS MOVIES

How should we 'read' what sport films, even those identified as documentaries, present to us? Can we trust this presentation? Is it the truth? — Are there other questions to ask about them?

Readings / Viewings

- O-4 Owl Site, Segment 04 Page
- R-5 Baker, Aaron. 1998. "Sports Films, History and Identity." Journal of Sport History 25(2): 217-233.
 - http://library.la84.org/SportsLibrary/JSH/JSH1998/JSH2502/JSH2502c.pdf
- R-6 Briley, Ron. 2005. "Basketball's Great White Hope and Ronald Reagan's America: "Hoosiers" (1986)." Film & History 35(1): 12-19. [UWO: Weldon online access]
- R-7 Gruneau, Richard, David Whitson & Hart Cantelon. 1988. "Methods and Media: Studying the Sports/Television Discourse," *Society & Leisure*, 11(2): 265-281.
- V-4 Anspaugh, David. Hoosiers. 1986.
 - You have to locate your own copy
 - From the instructor: If in a fix, there's a 4 hour loan.

SEGMENT 5: MORE ABOUT REPRESENTATION, MORE FROM STUART HALL: RACE WHAT'S IN A SKIN COLOUR?

Race: Biology and fate — social construction motivated by media representations? We make use of a Stewart Hall lecture again. Unsurprisingly, his interest in the social reality of race concerns different representations of race.

Readings / Viewings

- O-5 Owl Site, Segment 05 Page
- V-5 Hall, Stewart. 1998. Race-The Floating Signifier. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
 - DVD: Brescia HT1521.R11 / Huron DVD-video HT1521.R23
 - Youtube playlist: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTdg9d1-cx8XNg06aUIN5Gn-DOp99GB7x1 [only 'part 17' to 'part 67', ie., parts 1 to 6 they are mis-listed in the playlist]
- R-8 Transcript of the full video of Stuart Hall's lecture
 - http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/407/transcript_407.pdf

Segment - Topic

SEGMENT 6: REPRESENTATIONS OF MASCULINITY BEING MALE IN SPORTS—HOW HARD CAN IT BE?

'Tough guise?' In what ways do men and boys participating in sports express their gendered—male and/or masculine—identities? Jason Katz has several interesting suggestions to make. The examples in the lecture are somewhat dated, and Katz has recently released the updated *Tough Guise Two*, but the argument is more clearly expressed in the older version, so we'll use that one in class.

Readings / Viewings

- O-6 Owl Site, Segment 06 Page
- V-6 Jhally, Sut & Jason Katz. 1999. *Tough Guise: Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity*. Northampton, MA: Media Education Foundation.
 - You have to locate your own copy -- UWO: Weldon BF692.T68.1999 / CRC BF692.5.T72 / Brescia BF692.5.T72
- R-9 Transcript of the full video of Sut Jhally's & Jackson Katz' lecture (this is an abridged transcript)
 - http://www.mediaed.org/assets/products/212/transcript_212.pdf
- V-7 Jhally, Sut & Katz, Jackson. 2013. *Tough Guise Two. Violence, Media & the Crisis in Masculinity.* CRC, Weldon, Kings BF692.5.T682.2013 (transcript available at mediaed.org)
- R-10 Messner, Michael A, Michele Dunbar & Darnell Hunt. 2000. "The Televised Sports Manhood Formula," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 24, 380-394.

SEGMENT 7: REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN 'THROWING LIKE A GIRL' — WHO WANTS TO?

How can we understand the impact of different representations of women and girls in sports movies and media?

Readings / Viewings

- O-7 Owl Site, Segment 07 Page
- V-8 Kusama, Karyn. 2000. Girl Fight.
 - You have to locate your own copy Youtube or Weldon do not have copies of the full movie
 - From the instructor: If in a fix, there's a 4 hour loan [Weldon online]
- R-11 Daniels, Dayna. 2005. "You throw like a girl: Sport and Misogyny on the Silver Screen." Film & History 35/1. 29-38. [Weldon online]
- R-12 Fojas, Camilla. 2009. "Sports of Spectatorship: Boxing Women of Color in *Girlfight* and Beyond. *Cinema Journal* 49/1: 103-115. [Weldon online]
- R-13 Casper, M. 2001. "Knockout Women. A Review of Kusama's Girlfight." *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 25/1: 104-110. [Weldon online]
- R-14 Caudwell, Jayne. 2008. "Girlfight: Boxing Women." Sport in Society 11(2-3): 227-239. [online]

SEGMENT 8: APPLICATION—ANALYZING ADVERTISEMENTS THEY'RE MAGIC - BUT WHAT DO THEY ACTUALLY SAY?

They surround us, we consume them 24/7. Or is it ads that consume us? In this step, we will consider the history of advertising as a cultural form, and its effects in the contemporary world of sports. We will argue that the impact of advertisements on our understandings of healthful exercise is particularly strong.

Readings / Viewings

- O-8 Owl Site, Segment 08 Page
- R-15 Jackson, Steven. "Globalization, Corporate Nationalism and Masculinity in Canada: Sport, Molson Beer Advertising and Consumer Citizenship." *Sport in Society* 17, no. 7 (2013): 901-16. [DBW online]
- R-16 Williams, Raymond. 2000. "Advertising: The Magic System." *Advertising & Society Review.* [online journal] 1/1. [reprint from: Williams, Raymond. 1980. "Advertising: The magic system." In *Problems in Materialism and Culture*. London: Verso, 170-195. [DBW online]

Segment - Topic

SEGMENT 9: APPLICATION—NARRATIVES OF HEALTH CAN 'HEALTH' BE A NARRATIVE? IS IT A MATTER OF REPRESENTATION? WHOSE INTERESTS DO THOSE NARRATIVES SERVE?

Can 'health' be narrative or representation? Shouldn't we simply focus on the facts of healthful living and exercise, and the medical problems posed by obesity? What's to talk about? We take a look at a very well known example, the colour pink. What does the colour 'mean' in representations of health, how does the narrative of 'pink' relate to the reality of the case?

Readings / Viewings

- O-9 Owl Site, Segment 09 Page
- R-17 Selleck, Laurie, "Pretty in Pink: The Susan G. Komen Network and the Branding of the Breast Cancer Cause." <u>Nordic Journal of English Studies</u>, 9(3): 2010. 119-138. [click on link to trigger pdf file download]
- R-18 Johansen, Venke Frederike et al. 2013. "Symbols and Meanings in Breast Cancer Awareness Campaigns." NORA Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research, 21/2. 140-55. [DBW online]
- V-9 Samantha King on "Pinkwashing" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBgTiKs69_w
- R-19 Stone, George, Mathew Joseph & Michael Jones. 2003. "An Exploratory Study on the Use of Sports Celebrities in Advertising: A Content Analysis." *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12(2). 94-102 [DBW online]

SEGMENT 10:APPLICATION—NARRATIVES, REPRESENTATION AND CANADA AT THE OLYMPICS THE POLITICS OF MEANING IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

Does it make Canadians 'feel better' when Canadian athletes 'own the podium?' Why would this be - whose interests are served by such narratives of 'Canadian ownership'? The Olympics Games provide a rich testing ground for the application of our critical reflections, and open them up to a global perspective — the Olympic Games are a phenomenon of globalization. We'll approach the issue by investigating the representations of Indigenous cultures, in particular.

Readings / Viewings

- O-10 Owl Site, Segment 10 Page
- R-20 Wamsley, Kevin. 2002. "The Global Sports Monopoly" International Journal. Summer.
- R-21 Adese, Jennifer. 2012. "Colluding with the Enexmy? Nationalism and Depictions of 'Aboriginality' in Canadian Olympic Moments." *American Indian Quarterly*. 36/4: 479-502.
- R-22 O'Bonsawin, C. 2008. "The Conundrum of Ilanaaq." In R.K. Barney (ed.) Cultural Imperialism in Action: Critiques in the Global Olympic Trust. London: ICOS. 387-394. [la84.org]
- R-23 O'Bonsawin, C.2010. "A Coast Salish Welcome: The 2010 Vancouver Opening Ceremony and the Politics of Indigenous Participation." In: R.K. Barney (ed.). Rethinking Matters Olympic: Investigations into the Socio-Cultural Study of the Modern Olympic Movement. London, ON: ICOS. 255-264. [la84.org]

Tech Support

In case of online problems please use the following options:

- Contact the ITS Help Desk at (519) 661-3800. For hours and additional contact information please visit http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk.
- OWL troubleshooting and help information is available in the OWL Documentation Site. To join the site:
 - Log into OWL (http://owltoo.uwo.ca/)
 - From My Workspace, select Membership from the left-hand side
 - Click the "Joinable Sites" link at the top
 - Find "OWL Documentation" in the list of Joinable Sites
 - Click the "Join" link
 - Click the "Home" link at the left to refresh the page
 - The site "OWL Documentation" will now be one of your active sites

University Policies

- 1. Lateness/Absences. A missed examination without appropriate documentation will result in a zero (0) grade. The course policy is not to allow make-ups for scheduled midterms, presentations or final exams, nor to assign a grade of Incomplete without acceptable and verifiable medical (or equivalent compassionate) reasons. Acceptable reasons might include hospital stays, serious illness, family emergencies (like serious accidents or illness, death) or similar circumstances.
- 2. Written documentation. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. stating specific reasons and dates. Students must follow up with their professors and their Academic Counselling office in a timely manner. Documentation for any request for accommodation shall be submitted directly, as soon as possible, to the appropriate Academic Counselling Office of the student's Faculty/School of registration not to the instructor, with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician or walk-in clinic. These documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. See https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm for specific policy and forms relating to accommodation.
- 3. **Grades.** Where possible assignment objectives and rubrics will be posted on OWL. Should you have a concern regarding the grade you received for an assignment or feel that it is unfair in any way, you must wait 24 hours from the receipt of the assignment to approach the instructor or TA. In doing so, please make an appointment and prepare in writing, with evidence, why you feel your grade is inappropriate. Please be aware that in requesting a grade reassessment, your grade could go up/down/or stay the same. Note that calculations errors (which do occur!) should be brought to my attention immediately.
- 4. **Scholastic offences.** They are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic discipline undergrad.pdf.
 - A) Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar). All required papers might be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com)
 - B) Computer marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.
- 5. According to the **Examination Conflict policy**, "A student who is scheduled to write more than two examinations in any 24-hour period may request alternative arrangements through the office of their Academic Counsellor." *This policy does NOT apply to mid-term examinations. There will be no make-up for the midterm exam. Students who miss this exam with a valid reason will have the final re-weighted accordingly.

Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/board/code.pdf