

RACE, SPORT, AND INEQUALITY

Summer 2020

SOC 30819

MTWR 2:00-3:35 pm EST

Class: [Zoom Link](#)

Password: SPORT30819

Instructor: Mette Evelyn Bjerre

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Office hours by appointment: [Zoom Link](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From Muhammad Ali's conscientious objection to the Vietnam War draft to Colin Kaepernick taking a knee for police brutality, sport continues to serve as a major platform for social discourse. In many ways, the world of sports is a microcosm of society - an arena through which we can understand more about our society's dynamics, values, and problems. Because sports are an integral part of social life, they offer an important lens to study social inequality, race, gender, and sexuality. The overarching theme of the course is to understand the complex, interconnected relationship between sports and social inequality. The predominant focus is on the United States and North America but with some international comparisons or examples. This class will introduce students to critical perspectives on racial, gender, and sexuality dynamics in society and the sport industry with a primary focus on the athlete.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Students will acquire a working knowledge of the social construction of race.
2. Students will have a clear understanding of the interplay of sport, race, and other social identities.
3. Students will examine their own experiences as participants or spectators through a sociological lens to achieve a better understanding of one's self in society.
4. Students will investigate social processes and institutions beyond their individual experiences and challenges.
5. Students will build communication and literacy skills through class discussions and assignments.

REQUIREMENTS

Course participation and attendance = 20%

Office hours (minimum once) = 5%

Weekly reflection memos = 25%

Research paper = 50%

- Choose a topic/research question = 5%
- Draft bibliography = 10%
- Final paper = 35%

POLICIES

Excused Absence:

Unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade, in that you will receive a zero that day for participation and attendance. If you expect that your absence should be excused, please let me know in advance.

Disability Services:

Any student who has a documented disability and is registered with Disability Services should speak with me as soon as possible regarding accommodations. Students who are not registered should contact the Office of Disability Services - <https://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu/>.

Office Hours:

I am available for office hours immediately after each class or by appointment. You are welcome to make an appointment at any time to discuss course related issues. If you are interested in learning more about a topic, are having trouble with an assignment, have questions about something we discussed in class, or have any other concerns, do not hesitate to get in touch.

I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me!

You are also welcome to email me to ask questions, schedule appointments, or notify me of any course related issues. I strive to respond within 24 hours. Please keep in mind however, that I do not promptly respond to emails over the weekend, and am unlikely to respond before class if you contact me less than two hours before class begins.

Late Assignments:

You will be given ample notice of all deadlines for this class and late submissions are not accepted. Extensions will be granted for assignments only in exceptional circumstances. My policy is that grades will be dropped by 5 points or ½ letter grade for every day it is late.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

In this class we will have the opportunity to discuss a range of issues as we try to understand the sociological perspective on sport, race, and inequality. **Above all else, do your part to maintain an atmosphere of respect in the classroom.** Discussions about race and other social identities can arouse strong feelings and differences of opinion. You – or some of your peers - may have strong feelings or conflicting opinions about them. We must recognize and acknowledge such differences as learning opportunities. Please make every effort to listen, question your own assumptions, and approach class discussions with a spirit of openness and inquiry. Our goal is to put our collective experiences into conversation with scholarly thought, so please come to class prepared to engage with others on those terms.

General Classroom Conduct

- Be on time.
- Turn on your webcam/phone camera.
- Be engaged (no texting, email, Facebook, sleeping, side conversations, etc.)
- Ask thoughtful questions during discussions.
- Volunteer to answer questions and respond to your peers.
- Be respectful of others and listen attentively when others are talking.
- Stay the entire class unless cleared before class.

ACADEMIC HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM

Notre Dame students are expected to abide by Academic Code of Honor Pledge. The full Code and a Student Guide to the Academic code of Honor are available at: <http://honorcode.nd.edu>.

Plagiarism is not tolerated in this course. Plagiarism is representing the work of others as your own (including copying other students' work or using Internet resources without proper citation). Those who plagiarize will receive an F. I treat plagiarism, cheating, and other acts of academic dishonesty very seriously. If you turn in plagiarized material, cheat on a test, or participate in any other dishonorable act, your activities will be brought to the attention of the Honor Committee. Go to <https://library.nd.edu/help/plagiarism.shtml> for more information on avoiding plagiarism and come see me before you turn in an assignment if you are unsure.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Participation and Attendance:

In this class, completing the readings is non-negotiable. You must make every effort to read for class and prepare for discussion. Please bring readings for the day's discussion and your journal with you to class at all times. I do not expect you to understand everything perfectly! If there is something you do not understand, I encourage you to bring your questions to class and we can figure it out together. **There is no such thing as stupid questions!**

If you want to do well in this class, come every day. Because this is an accelerated summer course where we cover in six weeks what normally takes sixteen, missing a single day is like missing over two days of a regular semester-long course. You should come to class having completed the assigned reading and be prepared to engage in group discussions. The syllabus is organized so that **the readings listed are due for that day in class.** Being an active participant means you regularly share your thoughts, observations, and questions about the readings as you interact with me, your classmates, and the material.

Participation will also include occasional class exercises and discussion of relevant current events. From time to time this may mean that I will look to students who haven't said very much to chime in, and ask those that have, to hold back. **This is never a judgment on the quality of your contributions, but rather an effort to facilitate a richer learning experience.** The success of this class depends on your active engagement with one another. If speaking in class is difficult for you, please let me know and we will strategize ways to boost your class participation.

Office Hours: All students are required to email me to set up a 1:1 meeting at an agreed upon time during the semester. Unfortunately, many college students never go to office hours and never speak directly with their instructors/professors. Attending office hours teaches you valuable cultural capital and professionalism, helps build social capital, and often improves your grades. **It is also an opportunity for me to get to know you a little bit which helps me help you succeed in this course!**

Reflection Memos:

For each week of the course (except the final week), you will be assigned a short reflection question or exercise. In response to those questions or exercises, you are expected to respond with a reflection paper of 1-2 double-spaced pages in point 12 fonts. Reflection papers are not reading summaries and I expect you to synthesize and critically reflect on readings and lecture material to build your paper's argument. You can draw on material from outside class, but it is

not necessary. I will post your weekly assignments on Sakai and they will be graded on a pass/fail basis. **All assignments are submitted on Sakai and due on Sundays at 6 pm.** Reflection memos will be graded with the following rubric:

Fail	Pass
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not turn in a memo • Contains factual inaccuracies • No synthesis and show poor understanding of the material • Does not answer the questions/follow the assignment instructions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good or excellent understanding of the material and concepts • At most one factual error • Synthesis and application of concepts • Answers the questions/follow the assignment instructions

Final Paper:

Instead of an exam, you will work on a research paper over the semester. The final product should be 2,000-3,000 words excluding the bibliography. The paper should address either an issue covered in class or another issue related to the class subjects but outside the scope of the class. You should conduct your research using **minimum 5 academic sources** (journal articles and books) and limit your non-academic sources (e.g. news articles, sport magazines, etc.) to maximum 3.

The final paper is comprised of three distinct tasks with different deadlines. The purpose of dividing the tasks is to make sure that you are not overwhelmed at the end of the semester.

1. **Choosing a topic:** Write a paragraph (50-100 words) describing your topic of interest and 1-2 questions you wish to answer.
2. **Draft bibliography:** The purpose of creating a bibliography is for you to start the research earlier in the semester by identifying academic sources to use in your paper. You should list no fewer than 5 academic sources and write a few sentences for each about what specifically you can use this paper for (how will it help answer your question or shed light on the topic). The library resources folder on Sakai contains instructions on how to locate and cite academic sources and we will also discuss the assignment in class. If you remain unsure about how to locate academic sources, let me know so we can set up a meeting and go through a literature search together.
3. **Final paper:** You will frame your paper around a particular research question. You will answer this question by synthesizing multiple different preexisting research articles and making an argument of your own. Spend the majority of the time diagnosing your problem, but make sure to provide solutions based on your research. For example, if you were to write a research paper on unequal pay in sport, you'll want to create a research question and answer it for the majority of your paper. As you finish, you should conclude your paper with a few solutions that you think would be best given your analysis.

Course Grading:

I fully anticipate that students who complete all assignments, attend class, and engage in class discussions are capable of excelling in this class. Original and critical thought will be rewarded in this class, and can make up for less than sterling work in other areas. Improvement over the

course of the semester will also be taken into consideration. Likewise, students who occasionally slip, but make efforts to improve, will not be unfairly penalized. A-level students will: (1) Meet or exceed requirements of assignments (2) Demonstrate critical thinking (3) Contribute positively to the learning environment of the course (4) Be prepared, professional, and responsible.

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	D-	60-62
B	83-86	C-	70-72	F	0-59

COURSE MATERIALS

You do not have to buy any books for this class. All course materials are available online or on Sakai. We will be reading selected chapters from readers, academic journal articles, sport news articles, and popular media. Lecture PowerPoints/Zoom recordings will be available on Sakai after each class.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

PART 1: The Sociological Perspective and Sport		
Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Monday 06/15	Class Introduction	No readings
Tuesday 06/16	Key Sociological Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durkheim, “What is a social fact?” • Haney Lopez “The social construction of race”
Wednesday 06/17	What is sociology of sport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 in Delaney and Madigan, “The Sociology of Sport” • Carrington “The Critical Sociology of Race and Sport”
Thursday 06/18	Is sport an institution or a game?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steinberg “What defines a sport?” • “The greatest sport debate of all times” Link
Sunday 06/21	REFLECTION MEMO DUE AT 6:00PM	

PART 2: The Relationship Between Race and Sport		
Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments

Monday 06/22	Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 11 in Delaney “Race and Ethnicity in Sport” Kareem Abdul-Jabbar: what sports have taught me about race in America: Link
Tuesday 06/23	Racism in Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spencer, “Sister act VI: Venus and Serena Williams at Indian Wells” “Referee who forced wrestler to cut dreadlocks banned for two years”: Link
Wednesday 06/24	Are all athletes Black?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slurs and stereotypes: why US pro sports leagues lack Asian American stars: Link Gonzalez “The stacking of Latinos in Major League Baseball”
Thursday 06/25	The White athlete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criblez “White men playing a Black man’s game” “Whatever happened to the white athlete?” Link
Sunday 06/28	REFLECTION MEMO DUE AT 6:00PM	

PART 3: Biological Determinism and Media Framing

Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Monday 06/29	The media’s impact on sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 15 in Delaney and Madigan, “The Media in Sport” “The NFL is 70% black, so why is its TV coverage so white?”: Link
Tuesday 06/30	Objectification of players	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daffener et al, “Making gains: Hypermuscularity and objectification of male and female Olympic athletes in Sports Illustrated across 60 years” “Men and women aren't actually equally objectified in coverage of Olympics”: Link
Wednesday 07/01	‘Natural’ athleticism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haslerig et al: “Invincible bodies: American sport media’s racialization of Black and white college players” “How the 'natural talent' myth is used as a weapon against black athletes”: Link
Thursday 07/02	Paper ideas workshop	No Readings
Sunday 07/05	RESEARCH TOPIC AND QUESTION DUE @6:00PM	
	REFLECTION MEMO DUE AT 6:00PM	

PART 4: Intersectionality: Race, Gender, and Sexuality		
Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Monday 07/06	Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonard “Introduction” • Zenquis and Mwaniki “The intersection of race, gender, and nationality in sport”
Tuesday 07/07	White women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonard “White women and sports” • “Something is broken when the USA women are dominated by white girls next door”: Link
Wednesday 07/08	Hegemonic Masculinity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson “Openly Gay Athletes: Contesting Hegemonic Masculinity in a Homophobic Environment” • Nelson “We don’t like football, do we?”
Thursday 07/09	LGBTQ Athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAA “Mind, body, and Sport” Link • Caudwell, “[Transgender] young men: gendered subjectivities and the physically active body.”
Sunday 07/12	DRAFT BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE AT 6:00PM	
	REFLECTION MEMO DUE AT 6:00PM	

PART 5: Sport, Protest, and Activism		
Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Monday 07/13	What is sport activism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 in Edwards, <i>The Revolt of The Black Athlete</i> • “Shut Up and Dribble” Link
Tuesday 07/14	Sport and Protest Before the Civil Rights Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prologue and chapter 10 in Schaap, “Triumph: the untold story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics” • “Jack Johnson was a pioneer who gave hope to black boxers everywhere”: Link
Wednesday 07/15	Sport Activism in the 1960s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David K. Wiggins, “‘The Struggle That Must Be’: Harry Edwards, Sport, and the Fight for Racial Equality,” • “Smith and Carlos embodied many African Americans' Summer of Love and Reckoning”: Link

Thursday 07/16	Sport activism today **GUEST LECTURE** Emmanuel Cannady PhD Candidate Department of Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Power salute: 50 years on how much has changed? Link: • Towler et al, “Shut Up and Play: Black Athletes, Protest Politics, and Black Political Action”
Sunday 07/19	REFLECTION MEMO DUE AT 6:00PM	

PART 6: Inequality and Social Mobility: Who Benefits?		
Date	Topic	Readings/Assignments
Monday 07/20	Salaries and Profit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Why is Alex Cora's success as a Latino manager so exceptional?": Link • Chapter 12 in Delaney and Madigan, “Economics and Sport”
Tuesday 07/21	College v. Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCAA Plans To Allow College Athletes To Get Paid For Use Of Their Names, Images: Link • Chapter 7 in Delaney and Madigan, “High School and College Sport”
Wednesday 07/22	Movie: “Student Athlete”	No Readings
Thursday 07/23	Movie: “Student Athlete” and Class Discussion	No Readings
FINAL PAPER DUE AT 6:00PM		