

Georgia Institute of Technology  
School of History, Technology & Society  
HTS 3073 Sociology of Sports  
Professor: Dr. Mary McDonald  
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Office Hours: T 8:25-9:25 am; TTH 12:00-1:00 pm; and other times by appointment

**Course Description:** Nike. The Super Bowl. The Olympics. The WNBA. Sporting Life. On-line betting. Fantasy leagues. Celebration and scandal. Commerce, entertainment, intervention. In contemporary North America, sport is pervasive. Despite the distance of playing fields, courts, and rinks from most people's daily lives, sport is a tremendously powerful presence in our culture. It can be a source of identity, of patriotism, of economic gain or loss. It ignites passions, fills time, and influences the way we understand genders, races, classes, nations, and bodies. While sport brings many people pleasure, it also draws on and contributes to many of the disparities in societies across the globe. This course offers an investigation of sport as an important aspect of historical and contemporary cultures. It offers a critical perspective on the myths and ideologies connected to sport and US culture. Our role will be to serve as cultural critics of sport as we investigate sport in relationship to a variety of sites, issues and identities. Historical analysis as well as sociological and cultural studies perspectives will inform our investigations. The class will include lectures, discussions, small and large group activities, debates and the viewing of videos.

**This course meets the Area E Approved Learning Outcome:**

Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

**How this course satisfies the Area E learning outcome:**

This course focuses on the sociological analysis of sport as an important institution in American culture. Students will learn how social, political, and economic forces influence social behavior through such subjects as education, violence, commercialization and media representations. Students will also learn how cultural beliefs about gender, race, class and sexuality influence opportunities within sport and related institutional settings. Students will demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcome through completion of three written exams, weekly readings assignments, and preparation for a debate that requires students to integrate and apply course materials and concepts.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- 1) describe the historical contexts, which helped create and continue to shape the growth of US sport.
- 2) discuss the political and economic forces shaping sport and sporting experiences.
- 3) understand the social and cultural dimensions of sport.
- 4) understand the relationship between sports and related social institutions (e.g., economy, education, media, etc.).
- 5) demonstrate a working knowledge of core concepts, theories and methodologies.

- 6) use written and oral forms of communication to construct compelling arguments.
- 7) demonstrate a deeper understanding of the course materials through collaborative learning and discussions with peers.

**Required Textbook and Readings:** Coakey, J. (2009). *Sports and Society: Issues and Controversies* (10th edition). New York: McGraw Hill. There are many editions of this textbook. Course readings, assignments and exam questions will be drawn from the 10th edition. This book is available at the Georgia Tech Barnes and Noble Bookstore. Additional readings will be posted on T-square. Please bring a copy (print or electric) of each day's reading with you to class.

**Student Responsibilities and Class Policies:**

While I will lecture on key ideas, this class is designed as a discussion-based class and thus class attendance is expected. You will also be asked to stay current with the required readings, writing assignments and each student will participate in an in-class debate. Your willingness to engage with the various theories and debates surrounding the sociology of sport will greatly influence your ability to master the material and contribute to the success of this class. Thoughtful ideas respectfully shared with the entire class are especially valued as these insights contribute to your peers' learning.

As stated in the Institute's attendance policy "students are responsible for all material covered in their absences, and they are responsible for the academic consequences of their absences" (see <http://deanofstudents.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=25>). Students with documented personal emergencies and participation in Institute approved activities (e.g. field trip, athletic events) are permitted to make up work missed during class time but will be expected to attend class at all other times. Please let me know as soon as possible when you will miss a class due to a personal emergency or participation in an Institute approved activity so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Class attendance will be factored into your participation and final class grade. Those students missing over three classes will be penalized (see course evaluation information below).

Students are expected to follow the Georgia Tech Honor Code (<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>). Violations will be treated seriously and in accordance with university guidelines.

**Laptop and Cell Phone Policy:** Since many of course readings are available electronically on T-Square you should print these out or access them on your computer or cell phone so that you can refer to them during class discussion. However if you do bring your laptop (or other device) you will be limited to reviewing course materials (including web links), typing notes or showing examples related to course materials. Any other use of computers (e.g. checking e-mail, posting to Facebook, etc.) during class time is prohibited. I reserve the right to revoke laptop or cell phone privileges for those not following class rules. Failure to follow these rules will result in the lowering of your participation grade.

**Accommodations:** I am happy to accommodate you if you have a disability. Please notify me as soon as possible and be sure that you are also working with ADAPTS—the Office

of Disability Services (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/index.php>).

**Emails:** I do not always have instantaneous access to e-mail, but make every attempt to answer e-mails within 24 hours during weekdays. I typically respond on Monday morning when I receive e-mails on the weekend.

**Course Evaluation:** Final grades will be based upon

Participation & Goals Statements	40 points
Class Debate	20 points
Weekly Writing Assignments	40 points
Exams (3 exams @ 60 points each)	<u>180 points</u>
	280 points

**Grading Scale:** A's = 90%-100%; B's = 80%-89.9%; C's = 70%-79.9%; D's = 60%-69.9%  
59.9% and below = F

**Participation and Attendance Policy:** Your active participation is crucial to the development of your own personal understanding and to the success of this course. To actively participate, you must do the assigned readings. You should also bring the day's reading to class (in print or electronic form) in order to best contribute to the class with questions and comments to offer to the class and within small group discussions. I reserve the right to give pop reading quizzes, which will count toward your participation grade to ensure preparation. Please also note that class attendance is expected and any absence will figure into your final participation grade. Consistently coming late to class or leaving early will result in (an) absence(s). For every absence over three (excused and unexcused) your final point total will be lowered by 5 points. Please see me at the start of the semester if there is a possibility of you missing three or more classes for Institute related activities.

**Goals Statements:** Two brief papers (2 typed pages each) that will count as 10 points total (of the 40 total for participation). The first paper (worth five points) details your personal reading, critical thinking and participation goals for the semester. At the end of the semester you will be asked to evaluate how well you have achieved your reading, critical thinking and participation goals for the semester (worth five points). More information will be given about each of these assignments during class time.

**Class Debate:** The goals of this assignment is for you to research a topic, prepare a written outline of the key debate points on that topic so that you can engage course issues in a different format. Each person will be required to be a member of a debate team on one of three debate topics. Those not directly participating in a given debate will be able to ask questions of either debate team. We will discuss this assignment in greater depth as the semester progresses.

**Weekly Reading/Writing Assignments:** To facilitate course discussion, assist you in honing your analytic skills and to prepare for your exams, you will be expected to read that day's assigned readings and come prepared to discuss those readings during class time. Additionally you will be required to post short analysis of that week's readings to

T-square. Typically you will post these on Thursday prior to class, but in a few cases these comments will be due to T-square on other dates. Each Friday, I will post the next weeks' reading and writing assignment on T-square. Students are required to complete 10 of the 13 (worth 40 points) reading assignments. Students may complete one additional assignment for extra credit (up to 4 points). If you do not complete the written assignment for a given week, you are still responsible for knowing the content of those readings during class discussions and exams.

Each written assignment is worth up to 4 points. You will be graded upon the following scale: 4—outstanding: paper demonstrates deep understanding of concepts discussed in the readings. The entire assignment was completed. Well written prose; written in the student's voice and own language. Examples offered (where appropriate) are relevant to specific ideas being discussed in the reading; 3—good: paper demonstrates average to above average understanding of concepts discussed in reading. The entire assignment was completed. Well written prose; written in the students voice and own language. Examples offered (where appropriate) are relevant to specific ideas being discussed in the reading; 2—fair: paper demonstrates superficial understanding of the concepts discussed in the readings and/or elements of the assignment were not completed. Well written prose; written in the students' voice and own language. Examples offered (where appropriate) are so general as they do not relate to specific ideas being discussed in the reading; 1—needs work: paper demonstrates superficial or incorrect understanding of the concepts discussed in the readings and/or over half of the assignment was not completed. The assignment may also demonstrate problems with prose and/or text is largely written in the words of the assigned reading's author—not the student's voice. Examples offered (where appropriate) are so general as they do not relate to specific ideas being discussed in the reading; 0—no credit: paper does not demonstrate any understanding of the concepts discussed in the readings or provides incorrect information. The assignment may also demonstrate problems with prose and/or text is largely written in the words of the assigned reading's author—not the student's voice. Examples offered (where appropriate) are so general as they do not relate to specific ideas being discussed in the reading.

**Exams:** You will have three exams. The format will be multiple choice, true/false and short answer/ essay. These exams will be held on the following dates during class time and the final exam period:

Important Exam Dates\*\*\*

First Exam: Tuesday, September 16

Second Exam: Tuesday, October 28

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 9 @ 8 am

\*\*\* Please note: The dates for the first two exams are tentative and subject to change if unforeseen circumstances warrant an adjustment to this exam schedule.

**Course Outline and Reading List\*\*\*\***  
**Readings posted on T-square designated by T.**

**I. Introduction to the Critical Study of Sport**

Weeks 1, 2 & 3

Readings

Sage, G. (1998). A sociological perspective of sport (Chapter 1). In *Power and ideology in American sport: A critical perspective* (Second Edition). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. **T**

Coakley, J. Chapter 1: The sociology of sport: What is it and why study it?

Coakley, J. (2004). Using social theories. In *Sport and society: Issues and controversies* (pp. 30-54). Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill. **T**

Coakley, J. Chapter 3: Studying the past: Does it help us understand sports today?

Rader, B. (2008). *Selections from American sports: From the age of folk games to the age of televised sports* (Sixth Edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall. **T**

**Part II: Capitalism, Class Stratification and Commodity Sport**

Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6

**1. What is Class? How do Class Mythologies Operate in Sport?**

Readings

Mantsios, G. (2006). Class in America: Myths and realities. In P. Rothenberg (Ed.), *Race, class and gender in the United States: An integrated study* (Seventh Edition) (pp. 182-197). New York: St. Martin's Press. **T**

Eitzen, D. S. (2012). The path to success: Myth and realities. In *Fair and Foul: Beyond the myths and paradoxes of sport* (pp. 187-201). Lanham: Roman & Littlefield. **T**

Coakley, J. Chapter 10: Social class: Do money and power matter in sports?

**2. Professional Sport--Commodification, Contradictions and Contestation**

Readings

Coakley, J. Chapter 11: Sports and the economy: What are the characteristics of commercial sport?

Sage, G. (1998). The professional team sports industry (Chapter 9). In *Power and ideology in American sport: A critical perspective* (Second Edition). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. **T**

Smith, J. M., & Ingham, A. G. (2003). On the waterfront: Retrospectives on the relationship between sport and communities. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 20, 252-274. **T**

Matheson, V. A. (2011) Sports and the economy: Boon or burden? *ICSSPE Bulletin*, Issue 60. **T**

Coakley, J. Chapter 13: Sports and politics: How do governments and global political processes influence sports?

**Part III: Education, “Deviance” and Media Power: Tensions and Contradictions**

Weeks 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

**1. High School Sport and College Sport: Are They Worth the Effort?**

Readings

Sage, G. (1998). Power and ideology in intercollegiate sport (Chapter 10). In Power and ideology in American sport: A critical perspective (Second Edition). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. **T**

Knight Commission. (2010). College sport 101. **T**

USA Today Sports’ College Athletics Finances (2012). **T**

Coakley, J, Chapter 14: Sports in high school and college: Do competitive sports contribute to education?

**2. Violence, Deviance and “Positive Deviance”**

Readings

Coakley, J. Chapter 6: Deviance in sports: Is it out of control?

Coakley, J. Chapter 7: Violence in sports: How does it affect our lives?

**3. Sport and Media**

Coakley, J. Chapter 12: Sports and the media: Could they survive without each other?

**Part IV: Gender and Sexuality**

Weeks 12, 13

**1. Gender as Fluid and Ideological**

Readings

Boyle, E., Marshall, N. & Robeson, W. (2003). Gender at play: Fourth-grade boys and girls on the playground. *American Behavior Scientist*, 46, 1326-1345. **T**

**2. The Historical and Ideological Exclusion of Women from Sports**

Readings

Mangan, J. A. (1989). The social construction of Victorian femininity: Emancipation, education and exercise. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 6, 1-9. **T**

Vertinsky, P. (1987). Exercise, physical capability, and the eternally wounded woman in late nineteenth century North America. *Journal of Sport History*, 14, 7-27. **T**

Adams, M. L. (2010). From mixed-sex sport to sport for girls: The feminization of figure skating. *Sport in History* 30(2), 218-241. **T**

### **3. In the Game: Ideologies and Gender Equity**

#### Readings

Coakley, J. Chapter 8: Gender and sports: Does equity require ideological change?

Hogshead-Maker, N. (2012). Statement before US Senate in celebration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Title IX. **T**

Women's Law Center (2012). Battle for gender equity in college athletics.

<http://www.nwlc.org/> **T**

Women's Law Center (2012). The next generation of Title IX: Athletics.

<http://www.nwlc.org/> **T**

### **4. Hegemonic and Competing Masculinities**

#### Readings

Messner, M. (2011). Gender ideologies, youth sport and soft essentialism. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 28, 151-170. **T**

## **Part V: Racisms, Racialization and Sport**

Weeks 14, 15, 16

### **1. Historical Exclusion of People of Color from the Mainstream of Sport: Racisms and Segregation**

#### Readings

Lipste, R. & Levine, P. (1995). Jim Thorpe. Idols of the game: A sporting history of the American century (pp. 55-75). Atlanta: Turner. **T**

Himes-Gissendanner, C. (1994). Black women and competitive sport. In S. Birrell & C. Cole (Eds.), *Women, sport and culture* (pp. 81-92). Champaign: Human Kinetics. **T**

### **2. Power and Ideology**

#### Readings

Omi, M. & Winant, H. (1986). Racial formation. In M. Omi & H. Winant, *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960's to the 1980's* (pp. 57-69). New York: Routledge. **T**

Coakley, J. Chapter 9: Race and ethnicity: Are they important to sports?

Harris, O. (2007). Taboo's explanation of black athletic dominance: More fiction than fact. In D. Brooks & R. Althouse, (Eds.), *Diversity and social justice in college sport: Sport management and the student athlete* (pp. 233-244). Morgantown: Fitness Information Technology. **T**

### **3. Racialization and Its Effects: Leadership and Opportunities**

#### Readings

Lapcheck, R. (2011). The 2010 racial and gender report card. Institute for diversity and ethics in sport. **T**

Lewis, T. (2010). Where the brothers and sisters at? In ballers of the new school: Race and sports in America (pp. 99-149). Chicago: Third World. T

Hoose, P. (1989). "Hot-blooded" from Necessities: Racial barriers in American sport. New York: Random House. T

## **VI: Change and the Future of Sport**

Week 16

Readings

Coakley, J. Chapter 16: Sports and the future: Are we agents of change?

\*\*\*\* I reserve the right to make adjustments to the reading list and to add to or change readings when appropriate.