

WGSS 102: Gender and Sport

Spring 2011

T/TR 1:20 to 2:50

Old Main 111

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a sociological investigation of ‘modern sport’ within the context of the United States. As a major social institution, sport functions as a microcosm of society. Sport thus illuminates quite powerfully the larger, hegemonic social forces and structures operating in our world. Sport as we know it is a relatively modern institution, a product of industrialization that took shape over the course of the 20th century. Like all social institutions, sport functions *around and through* “difference” (such as in terms of sex/gender, race, ability and so on). As such, sport relies on notions of the “natural”—a notion that itself will be continuously contested throughout the semester—which in turn reinforces social inequality. In short, sport is constitutive of contemporary life and is a core (and visceral) component of our culture (our “way of life”).

Much of our focus in the course will revolve around sex and gender, and the sex/gender system. Sport has been, and continues to be, an expression of dominant masculinity. Sport and sporting culture have thus greatly shaped and rigidified the (hetero)gender binary system. Much of this course will thus be spent critically investigating how sport works to maintain our gender normative structure (that is, “woman”/ “man,” “boy”/ “girl”), which in turn reinforcing gender difference—and thus, gender inequality. We will also investigate ways in which sport (potentially) challenges dominant notions of “masculinity”/ “femininity” and binarized gender.

Using a variety of theoretical frameworks—such as feminism, queer theory and critical race scholarship—this course will also investigate sport in order to assess and better understand the relationships between gender, sexuality and race. For instance, how does homophobia in sport operate differently depending on one’s particular gender and race? What kinds of dominant racial paradigms are reinforced through the institution of sport, and how might this differ depending on gender and/or sexuality? Our objective *as a class* thus involves understanding and dissecting the ways that sport maintains, codifies and reinforces hegemonic heterosexuality, the binary gender regime and dominant constructions of race/ethnicity.

By the end of the semester we should be able as a class to address the following questions:

- * In what ways does sport contribute to gender inequality, sexism, and the larger societal debates regarding gender difference and binary gender?
- * How might sport play a significant role in fostering gender in/equality?
- * How might sport reinforce homophobia? Challenge homophobia?
- * How does homophobia in sport operate differently depending on gender? Race? Race and gender?
- * How can we think of sport—and thus gender—differently, and in ways that promotes a more just society?

FIRST YEAR COURSE EXPECTATIONS

First year courses at Macalester College have multiple functions, one of which is to facilitate your transition to college life. Although this course is *about* the gendering of sport, this first year course is also meant to foster reading, writing and research skills. Such skills are instrumental to academic success here at Macalester College. *This is thus a writing intensive course.* This course, Gender and Sport, will essentially “use” sport as a vehicle through which to improve college level writing and hone library research skills.

MACALESTER COLLEGE STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND BELIEF

At Macalester College we believe that education is a fundamentally transforming experience. As a community of learners, the possibilities for this personal, social, and intellectual transformation extend to us all. We affirm the importance of the intellectual growth of the students, staff, and faculty through individual and collaborative endeavor. We believe that this can be best achieved through an environment that values the diverse cultures of our world and recognizes our responsibility to provide a supportive and respectful environment for students, staff, and faculty of all cultures and backgrounds.

We expect students to develop a broad understanding of the liberal arts while they are at Macalester. Students should follow a primary course of study in order to acquire an understanding of disciplinary theory and methodology; ***they should be able to apply their understanding of theories to address problems in the larger community. Students should develop the ability to use information and communication resources effectively; be adept at critical, analytical, and logical thinking, and express themselves well in both oral and written forms.*** Finally students should be prepared to take responsibility for their personal, social, and intellectual choices.

We believe that the benefit of the educational experience at Macalester is the development of individuals who make judgments and interpretations of the broader world around them and choose actions or beliefs for which they are willing to be held accountable. We expect them to develop the ability to seek and use knowledge and experience in contexts that challenge and inform their suppositions about the world. We are committed to helping students grow intellectually and personally within an environment that models and promotes academic excellence and ethical behavior. The education a student begins at Macalester provides the basis for continuous transformation through learning and service.

Required Texts:

- *Sport, Sexualities and Queer Theory*, by Jayne Caudwell (**SSQ**)
- *Little Girls in Pretty Boxes*, by Joan Ryan (**LG**)
- *The Rites of Men*, by Varda Burstyn (**RM**)
- *Forty Million Dollar Slaves*, by William Rhoden (**FM**)

Other Assigned Readings:

You will find other articles in the schedule of assigned readings. MOODLE is the name of Macalester's on-line "course management software package." It can be located on the WWW at:

<http://moodle.macalester.edu>. When you use MOODLE for the first time, you will be asked for your user name and password (the same as your Macalester email). These articles on MOODLE are marked **ER**.

Late Paper/Exam Policy:

Late papers and exams will NOT be accepted, unless you have an excused absence (i.e., you are ill, there is a family emergency, etc. *AND* you have documentation of this event). Papers are due at the beginning of class. Because I do not accept any late assignments I suggest you make final corrections/amendments/drafts the day *before* the assignment is due. I do not recommend doing things at the last minute.

Cell phones/Gadgets:

Turn off your cell phone and all other devices/gadgets before coming to class. If a student repeatedly fails to turn off their cell phone during the semester they will be asked to leave class. I do NOT allow laptops in my class.

Preparation:

Come to class having read and re-read the assigned readings for that day. While reading the material be sure to take notes over the assigned materials, jot down questions you would like to ask and share, and extend and connect the current assigned readings to previous discussions/articles addressed in class.

Some reading/studying techniques:

- Read the main ideas.
- Summarize in your own words.
- Reread, visualize, relate, think aloud.
- Take notes.
- Review.
- Underline, highlight, write all over the text!

Email Policy:

I do not accept any assignments emailed to me unless otherwise specified. All documents (papers, essays, exams) should be in word document, stapled, and handed to me in class. Please do not email me questions regarding an assignment if you have failed to come to class. Additionally, do not email me questions/concerns the night before an assignment. Email communication should be a **secondary** vehicle for communication. Please talk to me either before or after class or during my office hours.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION FOR THIS COURSE:

Participation	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Reflection Papers	15%
Research Paper	30%

Course Requirements:

Attendance is mandatory. Daily attendance will positively affect the outcome of your grade. Class discussion is an extremely important aspect of this course.

Other expectations: Please be on time! Chronic tardiness (3 per semester) may result in a failing grade. Please do NOT interrupt class if you are more than 15 minutes late.

Participation

Participation is essential for this class. The participation component of your grade will be evaluated in the following ways: attendance, in-class quizzes, and in-class writing assignments/exercises.

In-class essays/quizzes (10%): Throughout the semester I will have periodic and unannounced in-class essays or quizzes over the assigned readings for that day. These essays/quizzes will be graded A-F. If you have carefully prepared and read the material you should do well on these essays/quizzes.

Exams

There will be two exams during the semester: an in-class mid-term exam and an in-class final exam. The final exam is not comprehensive, and will only include material covered after the mid-term. These exams will be essay in format. The mid-term and final exams are worth 20% of your grade.

Research Paper

You need to start thinking *now* about a particular topic that you would be interested in delving into further. A detailed outline of the paper specifications/requirements will be handed out in the coming weeks. Your grade on this project will be a culmination of points received on each of the component pieces: the first rough draft, the second rough draft and the final draft. Each student is also expected to give a 5-minute research paper presentation at the end of the semester. The final paper is expected to be at least 12 pages. The final paper is due in class on **December 6th**.

Accessibility Accommodations:

I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Contact the Associate Dean of Students, Lisa Landreman at 696-6220 to make an appointment. It is important to meet early in the semester to ensure your accommodations are approved so that you begin the semester successfully.

GRADING

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	86-89
B	84-85
B-	80-83
C+	76-79
C	74-75
C-	70-73
D+	66-69
D	64-65
D-	60-63
F	< 60

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE: It is highly likely that this schedule will change over the course of the semester. Although I aim to keep to the syllabus as much as possible, I also realize that one cannot predict things in advance. The class flow/dynamics as well as possibilities for guest speakers, additional readings not on the syllabus, and additional time for class discussion on the readings will impact the pace at which we proceed. Any changes/updates will be announced in class. It is thus *up to you* to know where we stand in relation to the syllabus.

September:

9/8 Introduction

9/13 **Theorizing Sex/Gender and Gender (In)Equality**

Readings: "Queer Theory, Gender Theory," Wilchins, pages 1-32 (ER)
"The Sports Nexus and Gender Injustice," by Travers (ER)

9/15 **Theorizing Sex/Gender and Gender (In)Equality in Sport**

Readings: Chapter 1, pages 14-44 (RM)
"The Victorian Cult of the Family and the Early Years of Female Sport," (ER)

9/20 Library Session

9/22 **The (Racialized) Origins and History of Sport**

Readings: Chapter 2, pages 45-69 (RM)
Chapter 2, pages 35-62 (FM)

PAPER TOPICS DUE!

9/27 **Imperialism, Colonization and (Hyper)Heteronormativity in Sport**

Readings: Chapter 3, pages 76-97 (RM)
Chapter 3, pages 63-97 (FM)

9/29 **Sport: A Challenge or Disruption to the Gender Binary?**

Readings: Go to: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/6-2/html/butler.html>
Chapter 4, only pages 120-131 **(RM)** & Chapter 5, only pages 143-162 **(RM)**

October:

10/4 **Sport: An Arena of Gender Resistance OR (Feminine) Recuperation**

Readings: "Sex Tested, Gender Verified," by Ritchie **(ER)**
"The Marketing of the Women's National Basketball Association and
the Making of Postfeminism," by McDonald **(ER)**

REFLECTION PAPER #1 DUE!

10/6 **Embodying Gender, Race and Sexuality: The BODY of Sport**

Readings: "The Embodiment of Masculinity," by Messner **(ER)**
Chapter 7, pages 192-213 **(RM)**

10/11 **The BODY of Sport cont'd**

Readings: Chapters: Introduction (page 1-15) & Chapters 2-3 (pages 55-122)

10/13 **Media, Marketing and Representation in Sport: Re(Fashion)ing Masculinity and
Femininity**

Readings: "The Male Consumer as Loser," by Messner and Montez de Oca **(ER)**
Chapter 4, only pages 103-120 **(RM)**

10/18 **Guest Speaker**

ROUGH DRAFT DUE!

10/20 **Discussion of Longitudinal Study by Messner & Cooky**

Film: *Training Rules*

10/25 **Mid-Term Exam**

10/27 **Fall Break**

November:

11/1 Queering Sport, Challenging Heteronormativity

Readings: Chapters 3 (Heidi Eng) & 4 (Nigel Jarvis) **(SSQ)**

REFLECTION PAPER #2 DUE!

11/3 Integration: The Consolidation of White Male Power?

Readings: Chapters 5, 8 and 9 **(FM)**
"Gender Equity in College Sports: 6 Views"

Discussion: Title IX: Money, Power and Women's Status in Sports

11/8 Race, Nation/alism and Sport

Readings: "From Nascar Nation to Pat Tillman," by Kusz **(ER)**
Chapter 6 **(RM)**

11/10 Money, Politics, and National "Values"

Readings: Chapters 4 & 6 **(LG)**
Chapter 10 **(FM)**

11/15 ROUGH DRAFT DUE!

Trans/sexual/gender Bodies in Sport: Challenging the Binary?

Readings: "Transsexual Bodies at the Olympics," by Cavanagh and Sykes **(ER)**
"Equality, Equity and Inclusion," by Teetzel **(ER)**

11/17 Trans/sexual/gender Bodies in Sport: Challenging the Binary? cont'd

Readings: "Double Fault" **(ER)**
Chapter 7 **(SSQ)**

11/22 NO CLASS

11/24 NO CLASS

11/29 Film: *100 Percent Woman*

REFLECTION PAPER #3 DUE!

December:

12/1 **Disability, Sport, Normativity and Able-Bodiedness**

Readings: "Disability and the Dedicated Wheelchair Athlete," (ER)
"Communicating in and through Murderball," (ER)

12/6 **Final Draft Due!**

12/8 Prepare for Final Exam, Discussion

12/13 **Final Exam**