

# SELECTED TOPICS IN HEALTH AND SOCIETY: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SPORT, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND HEALTH

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## **Course Description**

This special topics course provides a critical examination of the complex relationship between sport, physical activity and health. Taking a multidimensional approach to “health,” including the crucial role of its social and political dimensions, the course will: 1) consider how sport and physical activity can provide health benefits; 2) analyze how these benefits are not distributed evenly across society; and 3) critique how sport and physical activity can, in a multitude of ways, contribute to poor health. Issues and challenges related to definitions, concepts, models, research, policy, program and practice implications will be discussed.

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course students should be able to:

1. Recognize and explain major theoretical approaches to the social understanding of sport, physical activity and health.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of how sport and physical activity intersect with socio-political factors to produce diverse (and unequal) lived experiences and health outcomes.
3. Apply these understandings to contemporary media representations of sport, physical activity and health.

## **Required Materials and Texts**

There is no text in this course. The schedule below lists the readings for each week. All are available through the McMaster library system or are linked on the [course website](#). If you are unsure how to access journal articles through the McMaster library system, please seek assistance from the [library](#). All assigned films are available for free online.

## **Class Format**

This class consists of weekly topics, which will be divided into several modules for which video lectures will be provided. Occasionally, and as noted on the syllabus, class format will be different (e.g., a documentary film should be watched prior to the lectures).

## **Course Evaluation – Overview**

1. Media Analysis Proposal (5%)
2. Take-home Midterm Exam (25%)
3. Critical Media Analysis (35%)
4. Final exam (35%)

## **Course Evaluation – Details**

### **Media Analysis Proposal (5%), due February 12 at 11:59 PM**

Students will submit a proposal (0.5-1 pages in length) that outline their proposed topic for the critical media analysis and demonstrate an initial level of research into the topic.

### **Take-home Midterm Exam (25%), due February 24 at 11:59 PM**

This take-home exam will cover material from Weeks 1-5 and will consist of short written essay responses. The exam will be posted on Avenue at 9:00 AM on Monday February 22 and must be submitted by 11:59 PM on Wednesday February 24. Late submissions will receive a grade of 0%, so early submissions are encouraged.

### **Critical Media Analysis (35%), due April 9 at 11:59 PM**

Students will submit an original essay on that critically analyzes a contemporary media product (newspaper article, film, TV show, podcast, etc.). A detailed overview of this assignment will be communicated in class and on Avenue within the first three weeks of class.

### **Final Exam (35%), TBD (April 15-30)**

A cumulative final exam will be held during the exam period. Students must be available to write the exam during this time period. Please plan holiday and travel plans accordingly.

## **Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings**

### **Week 1 (Jan. 11-15)**

**Introduction: Thinking Critically About Sport, Physical Activity, and Health**

Readings: none

### **Week 2 (Jan. 18-22)**

**Are Sports and Physical Activity Healthy? Some Initial Considerations**

Readings:

1. Waddington, I. (2000). Sport and health: A sociological perspective. In J. Coakley & E. Dunning (Eds.), *Handbook of Sports Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
2. Lemke, W. (2016, October 10). The role of sport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *United Nations Chronicle*. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/role-sport-achieving-sustainable-development-goals>.

### **Week 3 (Jan. 25-29)**

**Theoretical Perspectives on Sport, Physical Activity and Health**

Readings:

1. *Readings to be determined.*

## **Week 5 & 6 (Feb. 1-5 and Feb. 8-12)**

### **Social Determinants of Health and Lived Experiences of Physical Activity**

Readings:

1. Kay, T. (2016). Bodies of knowledge: connecting the evidence bases on physical activity and health inequalities. *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 8(4), 539-557.
2. Mason, C. W., McHugh, T. L. F., Strachan, L., & Boule, K. (2019). Urban indigenous youth perspectives on access to physical activity programmes in Canada. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 11(4), 543-558.
3. Koch, J., Scherer, J., & Kafara, R. (2020). Structural inequality, homelessness, and moral worth: salvaging the self through sport? *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 49(6), 806-831.
4. Wigglesworth, J. (2019, January 7). What's in a name? Sexism in rock climbing route names. *Engaging Sports*. Available at <https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/01/07/whats-in-a-name-sexism-in-rock-climbing-route-names/>.

Notes: *Media Analysis Proposal due February 12 at 11:59 PM*

## **Week 6 (Feb. 15-19) – No Class**

**Reading Week**

## **Week 7 (Feb. 22-26)**

**MIDTERM EXAM**

Readings: none

Notes: *The exam will be posted on Avenue at 9:00 AM on Monday February 22 and must be submitted by 11:59 PM on Wednesday February 24.*

## **Week 8 (March 1-5)**

**Commodifying Fitness and Health**

Readings:

1. Esmonde, K. (2020). 'There's only so much data you can handle in your life': accommodating and resisting self-surveillance in women's running and fitness tracking practices. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 12(1), 76-90.
2. Webb, J. B., Vinoski, E. R., Warren-Findlow, J., Padro, M. P., Burris, E. N., & Suddreth, E. M. (2017). Is the "yoga bod" the new skinny?: comparative content analysis of mainstream yoga lifestyle magazine covers. *Body Image*, 20, 87-98.

## **Week 9 (March 8-12)**

### **Deviance and Violence in Sport Subcultures**

Readings:

1. Dean, N. A., & Bundon, A. (2020). 'You're only falling into water!': exploring surfers' understandings of concussion in Canadian surf culture. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 12(4), 579-596.
2. Stirling, A. E., Bridges, E. J., Cruz, E. L., & Mountjoy, M. L. (2011). Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine position paper: abuse, harassment, and bullying in sport. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine*, 21(5), 385-391.
3. Malcolm, D. (2019, September 4). Understanding the concussion crisis in sport. *Engaging Sports*. Available at: <https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/09/04/understanding-the-concussion-crisis-in-sport/>.

## **Week 10 (March 15-19)**

### **Sport, Health and Spaces of Marginalization**

Readings:

1. Kennelly, J. (2015). 'You're making our city look bad': Olympic security, neoliberal urbanization, and homeless youth. *Ethnography*, 16(1), 3-24.
2. Norman, M. (2020). Sport and incarceration: theoretical considerations for sport for development research. *Social Inclusion*, 8(3), 187-196.

## **Week 11 (March 22-26)**

### **Disability Sport and Parasport**

Film:

1. Rubin, H.A., & Shapiro, D.A. (directors). (2005). *Murderball*. Available online through McMaster Library.

Reading:

1. Lindemann, K., & Cherney, J. L. (2008). Communicating in and through "Murderball": masculinity and disability in wheelchair rugby. *Western Journal of Communication*, 72(2), 107-125.

## **Week 12 (March 29-April 2)**

### **Sport, Physical Activity and Health in Later Life**

Readings:

1. Griffin, M. (2017). Embodied learning and new physical activity in mid-and later life. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 9(5), 554-567.

2. Gilmore, K.L. (2018, September 24). Guest post: women's ice hockey finally included in 55+ BC Games. *Hockey in Society*. Available at: <https://hockeyinsociety.com/2018/09/24/guest-post-womens-ice-hockey-finally-included-in-british-columbia-55-games/>.

### **Week 13 (April 5-9)**

#### **Sport, Physical Activity, and Environmental Health**

Film:

1. Yoon, L., & Wilson, B. (directors). (2018). *Mount Gariwang: An Olympic Casualty*. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7cPxrjbQIA>.

Readings:

1. Bunds, K., & Casper, J. (2018). Sport, physical culture, and the environment: An introduction. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(1), 1-7.

Notes: *Critical Media Analysis due April 9 at 11:59 PM.*

### **Week 14 (April 12-14)**

#### **Course Conclusion: Sport, Physical Activity and Health in Uncertain Times**

Readings: none

Notes: *This week will consist of a short course wrap-up, a brief discussion of course themes in the context of COVID-19, and an exam review.*

## **Course Policies**

### **Submission of Assignments**

All assignments should be submitted via the designated folder on Avenue. The final exam will be hosted synchronously on Avenue.

### **Grades**

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-

<b>MARK</b>	<b>GRADE</b>
57-59	D+
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

### **Late Assignments**

Late assignments will be deducted 5% per day. The midterm exam may not be submitted late.

### **Course Modification**

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. If any modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

### **Email and Online Office Hour Policies**

Emails will typically receive a response within 48 hours, weekends and holidays excepted. At unusually busy times this may be longer, though I will do my best to respond to time-sensitive emails as soon as possible. Online office hour appointments can be scheduled in 30-minute slots. Appointments must be scheduled at least one week in advance. Please reach out to me as soon as possible if you want to speak with me, so that we can arrange a mutually convenient time as early as possible. All online meetings will be held via Zoom, which is available to download for free from the university.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic Integrity**

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

### **Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection**

**Some courses may** use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

**All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld** (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to [www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity).

### **Courses with an On-line Element**

**Some courses may** use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

### **Online Proctoring**

**Some courses may** use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

### **Conduct Expectations**

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the "Code"). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a

positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online.**

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students' access to these platforms.

### **Academic Accommodation of Students With Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or [sas@mcmaster.ca](mailto:sas@mcmaster.ca) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University's [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

### **Requests For Relief For Missed Academic Term Work**

[McMaster Student Absence Form \(MSAF\)](#): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar "Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work".

### **Academic Accommodation For Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)**

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

### **Copyright And Recording**

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

### **Extreme Circumstances**

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

### **Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy**

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.