SOC 380
Sports in Society

Professor: Grant Farr
Department of Sociology
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Office Hours: TTH 12:00 to 1:00
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Course Description:
Sports and athletics is an important part of our society and culture. Many people participate in sporting events as participants or spectators, and many of us are active in exercise and organized athletics programs. Sociologists have studied sports from the individual perspective, the team perspective, and from the perspective of society as a whole. Sports reflect the values of the society and culture and we find in sports all of the issues we have in our society, both good and bad. Not only do we find issues of societal issues of racism, sexism, and violence in sports, but we also find positive issues of teamwork, leadership, and cooperation.

This class will be an objective examination of sports in American culture, using the tools of sociology. The class will combine relevant readings, speakers, student participation, and lectures on topics that will include among other things, the role of racial issues in sports, gender issues and the role of Title XI, the issues of Native American Mascots, homophobia, violence, and the use of supplements and drugs.

Student Expectations:
The success of this class will depend on the active participation of the students. Students are expected to come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings or watched the assigned videos, and, when appropriate, completed their assigned reports. It is expected that students will participate in class discussion.

Since class participation is important, class attendance will play a part in the student’s grade.

Grades:
• Papers or reports: 60%
• Class participation: 20%
• Weekly Quizzes: 20%
• Total Grade: 100%

Class Policies
D2L: Some of the class reading material and other information will be available on D2L. Students should familiarize themselves with D2L and access the class D2L site.

Email: I will expect to communicate with the class via the PSU email. Be sure that you are receiving emails. If you prefer your can arrange to have your PSU email forwarded to another email address. It is your responsibility to check your email daily during the school week and respond in a timely manner.

When sending email to me please use the email on the heading of this syllabus. Also place the title of the course in the subject line and sign your emails using your first and last name.

Classroom conduct: This class will deal with material that maybe controversial and some class member may have strong views regarding some of the material. Nonetheless students must demonstrate the highest level of respect for their peers, and the instructor. All points of view will be welcomed and respected, but statements or behaviors that are disrespectful towards individual or groups will not be tolerated.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU academic policies. These include policies regarding plagiarism and cheating.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who may require accommodations are encouraged to contact the PSU Disabilities Resource Center (DRC) and the class instructor at the beginning of the term to arrange accommodations. The DRC is located in 435 Smith Center.

Laptops/tablets/e-readers: If you prefer to read electronic versions of articles or books, you can bring these devices to class to reference the reading during in-class assignments and class discussion. You may also use these devices to take notes in class. However, please do not use your devise for non-class purposes such as checking Facebook or email.

Class Attendance: Attendance is important and attendance will be taken. If it becomes necessary for you to miss class, you should clear your absence with the Instructor ahead of time.

Cancelled Classes: In the case of inclement weather or other campus emergencies, please refer to the PSU web page: http://www.pdx.edu. In the event that the instructor has to cancel class, I will email the class as soon as possible. If the instructor has not arrived in class 10 minutes after the scheduled class time, the class is cancelled for the day.
Course Outline

Week One: Jan 5th, Jan 7th
Introduction to course and to Sports in Society
Reading: Sage and Eitzen, Chapters 1 and 2

Week Two: Jan 12th, Jan 14th
Intercollegiate Sports
Reading: Sage and Eitzen, Chapter 10
Additional Readings on D2L
First Paper Due Jan 12th
Guest Speaker From PSU Athletic Department

Week Three and Four: Jan 19th to Jan 28th
Race, Ethnicity, and mascots
Reading: Sage and Eitzen, Chapter 6
Reading: Race and Sports in America: An Historical Review
Reading: Understanding the American Mascot Issue
Additional Readings and videos on D2L
Two speakers: One on Mascots, and one on race in sports
Second paper due on Jan 19th

Week Five and Six: Feb 2nd to Feb 11th
Gender, Sexuality, Title IX, and Homophobia
Readings: Sage and Eitzen, Chapter 7
Additional Readings on D2L
Speakers: Women’s coach from PSU
Paper Three Due: Feb 2nd

Week Seven and Eight: Feb 16th to Feb 26th
Violence in sports: on and off the field.
Reading: Sage and Eitzen, Chapter 4 (Pages 69 to 89)
Reading: Crosset, Athletic Affiliation and Violence Against Women
Additional Reading on D2L
Speaker: Assistant Dean of Student Life
Paper four Due Feb 16th

Week Nine and Ten, March 1st to March 10th
Nutrition, Supplements, and Drugs
Readings: Sage and Eitzen, Chapter 4 (Page 90-103)
Additional Reading on D2L
Speaker: Jim Wallis Assistant Athletic Director, Sports Medicine
Paper Five Due March 2nd
Paper Six Due March 13th
Papers

The papers are an important part of the class work and account for 60% of your grade. Each paper should reflect both your research and your opinion on the paper’s topic. In addition, you should come to class on the day each paper is due prepared to discuss the ideas and findings in your paper with the class.

Each paper should be at least five pages long, but the number of pages is not the major determinant of your grade. Papers should reflect original research, and/or original findings and observations, and where appropriate, cite relevant literature and be properly referenced.

While you should be prepared to discuss your paper in class on the due date, the actual submission of the paper should be done as an attachment to my email address.

Paper One: Personal Statement
Due Jan 12th at class time
What has sports and athletics meant to you? Have you participated in organized athletics on a sports team in the past or presently? Do you exercise regularly or otherwise participated in exercise or athletic activities? Have you had good or bad experiences with athletics? How has your relationship with athletics affected your life positively or negatively? Give examples. Be ready to share your observations with the class.

Paper Two: Sporting Event.
Due Jan 19th at class time
Attend some kind of organized athletic or sporting event. Approach the event like an anthropologist studying a newly discovered society. Describe what happens at the athletic event. Who were the teams, what ages, genders, ethnicity, or class composition of the participants and the audience? How was the competition, who won? Who was in the audience and how did they act? Did the teams have mascots and what where they? Was the competition friendly or aggressive? What happened after the game was over? What were some of the unusual or interesting things that you noticed? Be prepared to share your observations with the class.

Paper Three: Race or Mascots (Pick one)
Due Feb 2nd at class time
Race: Interview a coach of color at Portland State. What has his or her experience been as a minority athlete and as a minority coach? Can they give examples of racist acts or things that were said or done to them because of their race, negatively or positively? Why do they think that there are there not more head coaches who are minorities? Do they feel that over time things have gotten better or worse for minority athletes and for minority coaches? What can be done to improve the opportunities for minority coaches? Use the material you have read from the text in forming your questions and reference it in your paper. Be prepared to share your experiences with the class.
Mascots: Interview a Native American about the use of Native American mascots for sports teams. What do they think about this issue? Under what conditions do they think the use of Native American mascots is OK or not OK? For instance, do they think it is OK to use Native American mascots if the local Native American’s agree? Are there particular examples of mascot names that are acceptable and examples that are not acceptable? The State of Oregon has attempted to pass laws regarding the use of Native American mascots. Where does that now stand and what does your interviewee think about such laws? What is your opinion on this issue? Be prepared to share your experiences with the class.

Paper Four: Gender, Sexuality, and Sports
Due: Feb 16th at class time
Interview a female coach at Portland State University or at another local university or college. Using the information we have discussed in class and information that you have read in the class readings to formulate your questions. What has been her experience as a female coach? How are women athletes different than male athletes? Do they feel men coaches have better opportunities or receive better treatment than women coaches? Why has the number of men coaches in women’s sports increased in the last ten years? Could women coach men’s teams, since men coach women’s teams? How has Title IX helped women’s athletics? Give examples? Be prepared to share your experiences with the class.

Paper Five: Violence
Due March 1st at class time
Discuss the issue of violence in sports on and off of the field. Find examples of fan violence, athlete violence, and athlete-fan violence. This can include instances of domestic assault, including rape, that involve athletes. Describe what happened in each situation. Do you think athletes are more violent than other people, on and off of the field? Do you think that athletes get away with violent acts or are let off easy because of who they are? Reference the material we had read in class. Be prepared to share your information with the class.

Paper Six: Drugs and Supplements
Due Friday, March 10th (Last Day of Class)
Interview a member of the PSU athletic training staff. What are the NCAA rules regarding which drugs and/or supplements are banned and which are allowed? What kind of drug testing is required and how is it done at PSU. What are the long term physical consequences of taking supplements like HGH or testosterone for a long period of time? If supplements are banned, why and how are athletes getting stronger and faster? Are the use of supplements and/or drugs in sports a major problem or not? Be prepared to share your experiences with the class.