

<p style="margin: 0;">Western University Health Sciences Kinesiology Social Theory of Sport and Exercise — Essay Course Course Outline</p>	<p>2016-17 Kin 4465 G Online</p>
<p>Overview Objectives Evaluation Readings/Viewings Course Modules Dates Tech Support </p>	
<p>Credit: 3 lecture hours, 0.5 course Schedule: Online Instructor: Michael Heine office: HSB 335 Contact: mheine@uwo.ca Meeting: by appointment (meet in person / via phone or Skype) // TA: tbd. Prerequisite: Kin 2250A, or instructor approval Course URL: https://tbd</p>	

Overview

We live in a world where sports and organized exercise practices are internationally dominant cultural activities. Sporting events have become part of the social and cultural fabric of nations across the world, and healthy life-style issues have become dominant media narratives. Very likely, most of us hold positive opinions about the worlds of sports and healthy lifestyles. It is easy to assume that our own positive experiences in these areas represent the general norm. Likewise for ‘exercise’ — it seems hardly possible to separate the two concepts, so much do we take them for granted.

Thinking theoretically about sports, exercise, and healthy lifestyles helps us establish a reflective perspective on what we take for granted in sports and exercise, what we consider ‘normal and meaningful’ (or what we reject as ‘not normal’). A critical, reflective perspective helps us to understand that what we tend to take for granted, is a socially constructed and historically variable phenomenon. In fact, you are already *theorizing* whenever you ask why the world of sport and exercise is the way we find it (and then, depending on your own interests, imagine how you might change it, or how it might be reinforced).

In this course, we will explore concepts and issues in the social and cultural study of sport and exercise that help us to develop such a critical perspective, by way of *theorizing*. We will use writings by several influential researchers and then examine some of the important issues in contemporary sports and exercise practices, by investigating the *representation* (images and stories) of sport and exercise in different media, in particular film production, advertisements, and newspapers. — We will investigate key examples from the following broad areas:

Example Issue	Main Area of Investigation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why can it be so important to look thin — or big? What does a thin (big) body ‘mean’? How ‘healthy’ can it be? Does it ‘tell a story’? • The importance of ‘pink’. • What’s the colour of <i>Band Aid</i>? • “Throwing Like a Girl”? • Why do Canadians care about the Olympics? • What’s the importance of gold medals? - What stories do sports movies tell? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructions of our understandings of health and the healthy body. • Constructions of our understanding of the gendered and raced body in sports and exercise practices. • Globalization of Sport and Health Practices • The significance of symbols applied to exercise activities and the body, in particular as shown in sports films, sports media, and advertising.

Objectives

By the completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. explain the significance of thinking *theoretically* about sport and exercise (*reflection*)

2. identify different theoretical positions that are relevant in the cultural study of sport and exercise (*knowledge, application*)
3. critically reflect on the ways in which media representations of sporting practices and the body help to normalize our understanding of meaningful participation in sport and exercise. (*reflection, synthesis*)
4. develop reasoned arguments in the critical and reflective analysis of the relationship between sports, health and exercise practices, and their representation in the media (*application*)

Course Participation and Assignment/Exam Prep

1. What do you need for the course work?
 - The Course Readings and Viewings
 - The Session Study Sheets
 - The Session Power Point Slides and Instructor Commentaries
 - Forum Contributions. Don't forget that contributions by other course participants often contain valuable insights that can aid you in the development of your own arguments.
2. I find it advantageous to read the assigned Readings prior to accessing the On-line Lessons and Resources. That's also the case for the Viewings: If you haven't watched the movie or documentary that's on the schedule, you'll hardly be in a position to make a meaningful contribution. The Course Study Sheets can be thought of as the equivalent of lecture guides in a classroom setting; they are designed to guide you through the readings, and through the entire module. They are an important part of the course and it is expected that you will give the course notes the same attention that you would lectures and classes in the traditional setting. Please check the OWL schedule carefully, including any changes that are required throughout the term.
3. The final take-home exam will reference all course readings and viewings, class discussions and class notes, including those that may not have been discussed in class. The exam format includes short and medium length answers.

Evaluation

Final grades will be derived from totaling the scores on all assignments, exams and the participation marks. The tasks and exam weighting is as follows. Since this is an essay-designated course, all assignments contain written work.

Task Score Sheet

Journal entry (3 @ 5% each)	15%
Term Paper + Proposal (30%+5%)	35%
Final Exam (Take-home)	30%
Forum Contributions (1/week)	20%
	<u>100%</u>

Task Description

1. **Participation / Forum Contributions** (ongoing throughout the term)
 Your grade for class participation will be based on your submissions to the "Weekly Discussions" Section of the Forums. You can earn up to 20% of your grade by submitting messages spaced throughout the course related to the course content. For example, these messages can be in response to issues raised in the course notes, or you may wish to share your thoughts or ideas on the readings. You may also want to apply aspects of the course material to the news of the day. In order to facilitate active participation by all, you may not post more than 3 participation comments per week. It is recommended that you participate once, preferably twice a week in order to receive full credit for this component. Although not for credit, you may also use the "Watercooler" Section of Forums to talk about issues, thoughts, notions that occur to you that are related to the course, but not necessarily to that week's segment. Just create a new topic (and respond to issues and observations posted by other students). In our discussions, we will adhere to civil standards of netiquette (for an example, see [here](#)).
2. **Journal entries**
 3 Journal entries responding to a question or issue set by the instructor every third week. The required

length for this assignment is ca. 400 - 500 words; time for completion and online submission of each entry is one week from posting of the question. Information on the expected structure for this assignment will be posted on OWL.

3. **Written Term Project**

An investigation of a media event in the area of sports, exercise, or health—an image, story, film, cover, picture, etc., etc., anything that is of interest to you and that allows you to develop a plausible research topic. The written topic proposal must be cleared with the instructor. The length for this assignment is about 2,000-2,500 words (ca. 10 pages). Supporting documentation on the production of a term paper will be posted on OWL.

4. **Final Exam**

Take-home written exam; on-line submission with one week turn-around time, deadline for submission to coincide with last day of classes. The format will be discussed well in advance.

Readings/Viewings

- **Required Readings:** Most of the readings can be accessed online through the UWO library system; the remaining ones will be made available through the library system.
- **Required Viewings:** You are responsible for making your own arrangements to view the films listed on the course outline under video. They will usually be available via Hulu, Netflix, Amazon online, etc. Some movies can also be accessed through the UWO library system. (In a pinch, the video can be borrowed from the instructor for a limited time.)

Course Modules

Segment - Topic	Text	Video
MODULE 0: ONLINE COURSE -WORK		
At the beginning of the course, we will conduct an online session to review the tools and work strategies best suitable for online course work in the OWL environment.		
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 1: SITUATING SPORT WHAT IS SPORT? WHAT IS REAL (IN SPORT AND EXERCISE)? WHAT IS CONSTRUCTED?		
We all hold and enact implicit assumptions about what makes sports and exercise practices meaningful and relevant, but how can we be so sure? What do you think about ringette, now? Or, is Professional Wrestling really a sport? What are the criteria we use to define sports? Why do we use these criteria? And: do we all share the same ideas about what might amount to ‘physical exercise’, and why we should exercise? How come? Reflecting on something that is seemingly ‘totally obvious’, gets us in the right frame of mind to investigate ‘representation’ — using the tools of theory.		
Readings / Viewings		*
MODULE 2: WHY THEORIZE? THE RELEVANCY OF ‘DOING THEORY’ (BELL HOOKS)		
Theories help us identify issues and problems to examine. They provide frameworks for asking research questions, interpreting information, but also for the reflection on our own ‘sports and exercise biographies.’ We examine Bell Hooks’ view on the relevancy of <i>doing theory</i> .		
Readings / Viewings		

Segment - Topic	Text	Video
MODULE 3: ZOOMING IN ON OUR MAIN INTEREST: CULTURE AND REPRESENTATION (STUART HALL)		
We examine an important lecture by cultural theorist Stuart Hall. He explains how we can investigate the culture of sport, p.a. and health as issues of <i>representation</i> . We'll need Hall later on to understand how issues of race and gender are always also issues of representation.		
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 4: REPRESENTATION IN THE CULTURE OF SPORT: SPORTS MOVIES		
How should we 'read' what sport films, even those identified as documentaries, present to us? Can we trust this presentation? Is it the truth? — Are there other questions to ask about them?		
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 5: REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN 'Throwing Like a Girl' — who wants to?		
How can we understand the impact of different representations of women and girls in sports movies and media?		
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 6: REPRESENTATIONS OF MASCULINITY Being male in sports—how hard can it be?		
'Tough guise?' In what ways do men (and boys) participating in sports express their gendered—male and/or masculine —identities?		
MODULE 7: REPRESENTATIONS OF RACE What's in a skin colour?		
Race: Biology and fate — social construction motivated by media representations? We make use of a Stewart Hall lecture again. Unsurprisingly, he approaches the issue of race from the <i>representation</i> angle.		
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 8: APPLICATION—ANALYZING ADVERTISEMENTS They're magic - but what do they actually say?		
They surround us, we consume them 24/7. Or is it ads that consume us? In this step, we will consider the history of advertising as a cultural form, and its effects in the contemporary world of sports. We will argue that the impact of advertisements on our understandings of healthful exercise is particularly strong.		
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 9: APPLICATION—NARRATIVES OF HEALTH Can 'health' be a narrative? Is it a matter of representation?		
Can 'health' be narrative or representation? Shouldn't we simply focus on the facts of healthful living and exercise, and the medical problems posed by obesity? What's to talk about?		

Segment - Topic	Text	Video
Readings / Viewings		
MODULE 10: APPLICATION—IDEOLOGY, SPECTACLE, THE CANADIAN OLYMPICS The politics of meaning in the era of globalization		
Global Sports, the Olympic Spectacle, and Canada at the Olympics Does it make Canadians 'feel better' when Canadian athletes 'own the podium'? Why would this be - whose interests are served by such narratives of 'Canadian ownership'? The Olympics Games provide a rich testing ground for the application of our critical reflections, and open them up to a global perspective — the Olympic Games are a phenomenon of globalization.		
Readings / Viewings		

Tech Support

In case of online problems please use the following options:

- Contact the ITS Help Desk at (519) 661-3800. For hours and additional contact information please visit <http://www.uwo.ca/its/helpdesk>.
- OWL troubleshooting and help information is available in the OWL Documentation Site. To join the site:
 - Log into OWL (<http://owltoo.uwo.ca/>)
 - From My Workspace, select Membership from the left-hand side
 - Click the "Joinable Sites" link
 - Find "OWL Documentation" in the list of Joinable Sites
 - Click the "Join" link
 - Click the "Home" link at the left to refresh the page
 - The site "OWL Documentation" will now be one of your active sites