

22S-COMM A380-005: Tackling Sports and Politics

Spring 2022

Tues & Thurs - 11:00 am – 12:15 pm

CMN 301

Instructor: Prof. Ty Lawson

tklawson@loyno.edu

Office Hours: MWF - 10:30 am - 11:30 am; Tue/Thur - 1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Summary of the course

This course uses media to examine the interrelationship between sports and politics and how that intersection reinforces social values, sometimes challenges social norms, and draws on the cultural identity of class, race, and gender to identify sports values with cultural values. We are in the middle of a journalistic reckoning – social unrest, newsrooms in crisis, extreme diversity issues, a pandemic. All of this adds on to an already complex sports landscape, one that has converged with racism, sexism, drugs, discrimination, and corruption. To put it simply, sports are human, and sports are political. We will critically examine the different styles of sports writing, focusing on the social context of sports and writing and the relationship between sports and politics. And we will analyze how media outlets approach these subjects differently.

Course Objectives:

- Students will learn to recognize and distinguish critical social and political questions from other sorts of intellectual considerations that are relevant to modern sport.
- Students will be introduced to various types of critical analysis and develop acceptable competence in applying them to social/political issues in sports.
- Students will be exposed to select critical readings that challenge both the typically uncritical and facile way the media covers and discusses sports and the way dominant groups use sport to further their political ambitions and agendas.

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

Course readings are outlined in the schedule of classes. Readings can be accessed in two ways: via course syllabus where some material is hyperlinked and via course Canvas where I will upload those texts that are not hyperlinked in the syllabus. **PLEASE COME TO CLASS WITH AT LEAST TWO QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION TOPICS RELATED TO THAT DAY'S READINGS.**

Grading

Feature Story on Sports and Politics Issue	15%
Special Assignment Video and Critical Reaction Paper	25%
Final Critical Essay	35%
Class Participation	15%

Attendance	10%
Total	100%

ASSIGNMENTS:

Special Assignment Video and Critical Reaction Paper: Students watch on their own the Documentary “League of Denial: The NFL’s Concussion Crisis,” and write a critical reaction to the video examining the response of the NFL to this public crisis. It should be two typed pages (double-spaced). Be prepared to discuss your critical response to the video in class. **DUE: THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10th 11:00 AM. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Feature Story on Sports and Politics Issue: Write a feature story related to the intersection of sports and politics. **It must be 600 words. DUE: THURSDAY, MARCH 24th 11:00 AM. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

Final Critical Essay: The paper is to be a critical analysis of a particular issue(s) discussed in the course readings. The paper is to be no more than five pages (the page requirement will be strictly enforced to encourage concise writing), double-spaced, and follow a regular format. The purpose of the paper is to evaluate your own ability to think and write about issues in a thoughtful and critical manner. **DUE: (Thursday, May 5th at 11:00 am). You will need to present your final essay in class at that time. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED.**

****GRADING RUBRICS WILL BE POSTED BEFORE THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE****

THE SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND DESIGN DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The School of Communication and Design is an intentional community that welcomes, nurtures, celebrates, educates, and fervently supports its students, faculty, and staff from richly diverse backgrounds. Persons from different racial/ethnic groups, genders, sexual identities, ideological frameworks, faiths, and socioeconomic backgrounds are equitable stakeholders in our school. We embrace behaviors, actions, and words that affirm and uplift each other and reflect the very best the school has to offer.

We refuse to tear down, obstruct, or marginalize each other’s differences. We hold each other accountable for actions that are contrary to these core beliefs. Our theoretical and practical approach to teaching, learning, and interacting reflect the world we live in. We know we are not perfect, but we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts because we are stronger united and become better storytellers when we realize representation and respect are essential to our progress.

TERMS OF USE:

A student’s continued enrollment in this course signifies acknowledgment of and agreement with the statements, disclaimers, policies, and procedures outlined within this syllabus and elsewhere in the Canvas environment. This Syllabus is a dynamic document. Elements of the course structure (e.g., dates and topics covered, but not policies) may be changed at the discretion of the professor.

COURSE ATTENDANCE POLICY: Students have three personal days that count as excused absences. Beyond those three excused absences missing classes will result in 2 attendance points

per absence being deducted from their final grade. If a student is not present on the day an assignment is due it is their responsibility to turn in the assignment prior to the due date.

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SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

WEEK 1 (VIA ZOOM)

Tuesday, January 18th

Course Introduction, Syllabus Review, Semester Plans, etc

Thursday, January 20th

HISTORY OF THE INTERSECTION OF SPORTS AND POLITICS

Themes in the History of Sport up to the Twentieth Century
Sports and Politics
Sports and the Working Class

WEEK 2 (VIA ZOOM)

Tuesday, January 25th

LEAGUE OF DENIAL DOCUMENTARY

Thursday, January 27th

**LEAGUE OF DENIAL DOCUMENTARY
SIGNED STATEMENT OF STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY DUE**

WEEK 3


Tuesday, February 1st

THE CONCUSSION CRISIS/ RACE NORMING

Clinicians fear NFL's concussion settlement program protocols discriminate against Black players - ABC News
NFL Agrees to End Race-Based Brain Testing in \$1b Settlement on Concussions _ NPR
How 'race-norming- was built into the NFL concussion settlements

Thursday, February 3rd

STUDYING POPULAR OPINION

LeBron James Is  Online - The New York Times
Bryan-Colangelo-Philadelphia-76ers-Twitter-Joel-Embiid-anonymous-Markelle-Fultz
ESPN-Anchor-Sage-Steele-claimed-Black-Colleagues-Excluded-Her-From-Race-Special
Clippers-Marcus-Morris-why-the-only-NBA-player-who-wears-senior-on-his-jersey-chose-
a-different-message
Kevin Durant Apologizes for Twitter Comments About Thunder - The New York Times
The Passion of Muhammad Ali

WEEK 4

Tuesday, February 8th

SPORTS AND POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Richard M. Nixon the Psychic Political and Moral Uses of Sport
Olympic Games Politics of Sports
NBA-about-president-trump-triggers-Gregg-Popovich
NBA restart - How the NBA bubble has become a platform for social justice
Inside the NBA's silent tension surrounding Rockets' GM Daryl Morey

Thursday, February 10th

GUEST:

WEEK 5

Tuesday, February 15th

COVID CONTROVERSY (NFL VACCINE, NBA VACCINE, DJOKOVIC'S AUSSIE VAX SNAFU)

The NBA and NFL Surrendered to Their Vaccine Refusers

Brooklyn Nets say Kyrie Irving won't play, practice until eligible under local COVID-19 vaccination mandate
NBA Anti-Vaxxers Are Pushing Around the League--It's Working - Rolling Stone

LEAGUE OF DENIAL CRITICAL REFLECTION PAPER DUE

Thursday, February 17th

COVID CONTROVERSY (NFL VACCINE, NBA VACCINE, DJOKOVIC'S AUSSIE VAX SNAFU)

Aaron Rodgers taking ivermectin for COVID-19 blasts NFL protocols
Aaron Rodgers goes in on NFL COVID-19 protocols on Pat McAfee Show
Novak Djokovic/ Having Covid gave tennis star vaccine exemption - lawyers - BBC News
Tennis legend admires Novak Djokovic but can't defend his vaccine stance

WEEK 6

Tuesday, February 22nd

GUEST

Thursday, February 24th

FIRST DRAFT OF FEATURE STORY DUE IN-CLASS WORKSHOP

WEEK 7

Tuesday, March 1st

NO CLASS

Thursday, March 3rd

NO CLASS

WEEK 8

Tuesday, March 8th

NBA SHOT AT GUN VIOLENCE / BLACK LIVES MATTER MOVEMENT

NBA stars, Spike Lee collaborate on gun violence PSA
NBA reportedly will have 'Black Lives Matter' painted on courts when season resumes
The Heritage Strikes Back: Athlete Activism, Black Lives Matter, and the Iconic Fifth Wave of Activism in the (W)NBA

Thursday, March 10th

SECOND DRAFT OF FEATURE STORY DUE IN-CLASS WORKSHOP

WEEK 9

Tuesday, March 15th

THE KAEPERNICK EFFECT

Kaepernick is asking for justice not peace
Kaepernick Can Kick It
Real Men Stand Our Nation Analysis
Nike's Colin Kaepernick Ad Campaign Sees Company Market Value Rise \$6 Billion

Thursday, March 17th

TRUMP EFFECT – MAGA INFLUENCE ON ESPN/SPORTS

Donald Trump Presidents Sports History Story
Get That S.O.B. Off the Field
7 Ways Trump changed Sports Forever
Jemele Hill Called Trump a White Supremacist. Now ESPN Has Condemned Her

WEEK 10

Tuesday, March 22nd

GENDER/SEXUALITY IN SPORTS

Good Sports Title IX 1972-1997
How Title 9 Transformed Women's Sports - HISTORY
Gender Equity NCAA
Chloe Kim Joins Hands With Alex Morgan, Sue Bird, and Simone Manuel for a Visionary Company - EssentiallySports
Are Only Male Athletes Allowed to Express Themselves Passionately About Sports?

Thursday, March 24th

GENDER/SEXUALITY IN SPORTS

Serena Williams battles umpire, loses US Open final in stunning upset - ABC News
Serena Williams accuses umpire of sexism and vows to 'fight for women' | Serena Williams | The Guardian
Sprinter Dutee Chand Challenges Ban Over Her Testosterone Level - The New York Times
FINAL DRAFT OF FEATURE STORY ON SPORTS/POLITICS DUE

WEEK 11

Tuesday, March 29th

GUEST:

Thursday, March 31st

TRANS ATHLETES

Podcast

Women can beat the odds, but we can't beat biology. Keep men out of women's sports
Penn swimmer Lia Thomas/ Why she's allowed to compete with women - On top of Philly
new

Defense of Lia Thomas Rang Hollow and Missed Point of Controversy

WEEK 12

Tuesday, April 5th

Students are to come to class with a pitch for a female-centric sports story for an in-class
Writing Workshop. **DUE AT END OF CLASS THAT DAY.**

Thursday, April 7th

GUEST:

WEEK 13

Tuesday, April 12th

Students will share their female-centric sports stories in-class

Thursday, April 14th

NO CLASS

WEEK 14

Tuesday, April 19th

G.O.A.T. In-Class Final Writing Workshop

Thursday, April 21st

GUEST:

WEEK 15

Tuesday, April 26th

FINAL PROJECT RESEARCH DAY

Thursday, April 28th

GUEST:

WEEK 16

Tuesday, May 3rd

FINAL ESSAY RESEARCH DAY

Thursday, May 5th

FINAL CRITICAL ESSAY DUE AND PRESENTATION

****** THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM ******

PLEASE KNOW THAT THIS SYLLABUS IS A WORKING DOCUMENT THAT THE PROFESSOR MAY CHANGE AT HIS DISCRETION AT ANY TIME DURING THE SEMESTER.

STUDENT STATEMENT OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

I, _____, have read the syllabus in its entirety, and understand the guidelines and agree to the policies detailed therein as a condition of being enrolled in this course. I understand my obligation to adhere to these guidelines and policies in this course, and that failure to do so may result in serious consequences, including (but not limited to) being dropped from the course, and/or receiving a grade of "F" in the course.

Student Signature: _____

Student PRINTED Name: _____

Date of Signature: _____

FAILURE TO RETURN THIS SIGNED STATEMENT BY THE FOURTH CLASS SESSION

(January 27, 2022) WILL RESULT IN YOUR BEING DROPPED FROM THIS COURSE.