

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
**School of Kinesiology**

**Kinesiology 381: Leisure, Sport, and Popular Culture**

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**CLASS TIMES:** Wednesdays, 4:00 - 7:00pm

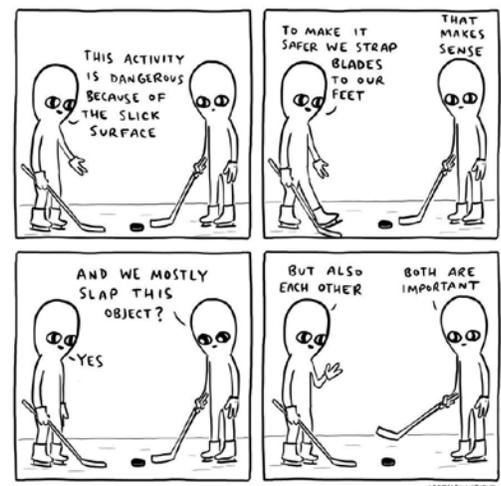
**LOCATION:** WOOD IRC 4 (main lecture room & tutorial breakout room)  
WOOD IRC 3 (tutorial breakout room)

*We study “Sport and Popular Culture” at the UBC Point Grey (Vancouver) campus, an institution which sits on the lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) people, past, present, and future. The territory commonly known as Vancouver is also home to other Coast Salish Peoples, and includes the territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil- Waututh) Nations. This is a critical acknowledgement because, as we will see throughout this course, all claims to knowledge are contextual; they are produced by, and (re)productive of, broader socio-historical contexts.*

**COURSE PREREQUISITE:** Third year standing

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

What messages circulate within and around sport and other forms of popular culture? How might these messages contribute to taken-for-granted understandings of the world around us and of our place within it – of the people we encounter, the environments we inhabit, the activities we are involved in (and not involved in), the things we purchase and desire, and our perceptions of ‘(un)healthy’ bodies? How do people respond to these messages – and how might we explain these responses? Why do we participate in some (sub)cultural activities and not others? What can the answers to these questions tell us about the cultures and structures of the societies we live in – about who is more and less privileged, and how inequalities are reinforced through, reflected in, and challenged on the ‘contested domains’ of sport, leisure and popular culture?



The broad goal of this course is to explore responses to the sorts of questions posed above and, in doing so, to work our way through a series of key topics drawn from the intersecting fields of cultural studies and the sociology of sport. As a way of exploring these and other questions, in this course we explore various interrelated themes connected to sport, leisure, and popular culture. Examples include (but are not limited to) 'reading' (sport) media and promotional culture, the politics of space, the environment, violence, resistance and deviance, and technology in/and sport. Guided by a set of sociological theories, this course is intended to provoke us to think about how and why particular forms of popular culture are constructed the way they are, why people engage with popular culture the way they do, and how learning about popular culture can help us understand the subtle and explicit ways that particular viewpoints and ideologies are privileged, and inequalities (e.g. race, class, & gender) are perpetuated.

**The aim of this course is two-fold. First, it is designed to help you become familiar with seeing and thinking about sport and popular culture 'sociologically'. Second, it is designed to encourage you to be more sophisticated and critical consumers of sport, media, and popular culture more broadly.**

Lastly, you'll notice that a recurring theme of the course is a discussion of 'bullshit'. By this I mean there are times throughout the course where we will discuss both how to recognize and also remain vigilant against 'bullshit' both in academia and in popular culture. In doing so, the aim is to provoke conversations about what it means to be 'critical' while thinking through avenues to incite pro-social transformations within and across societies.

"Critical' does not mean destructive, but only willing to examine what we sometimes presuppose in our way of thinking, and that gets in the way of making a more livable world."

Judith Butler, 2012

## **MY TEACHING PHILOSOPHY**

In my experience, the classroom is often constructed by both parties as a place where the instructor plays the role of expert, providing the 'correct answers' to various questions. While I come to the classroom equipped with a degree and range of knowledge that is different (and perhaps more specifically focused on the subject at hand) than most of you, it is certain that all of you bring with you stores of knowledge that I do not possess. Part of my goal as an educator is to move beyond constructing you as subjects who will passively learn to realizing you as active learners. To that end, I work to create opportunities for you to share your knowledge, both informally in classroom discussions, and more formally in and through your assignments.

## **CLASS FORMAT:**

The format of the classes may vary from week to week, but the usual format will include:

- *Lecture* 45 mins to 1 hour
- *Break* 10 minutes
- *Tutorial* 60 to 90 mins (group discussion, research presentations)

### COURSE READINGS:

Most readings will be posted to Canvas. However, since each of you have access to the UBC library (both in person and online) these resources are easily accessible, and I trust that you can access them as required. Book chapters can be accessed through the Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR) at: <https://courses.library.ubc.ca/c.9Dr3V7>.

### COURSE MATERIAL/WEBSITE:

Materials for the class (i.e., syllabus, lecture slides, assignment guides, exam materials) will be made available on Canvas. Any announcements not made in class will be made on Canvas.

### GRADE BREAKDOWN:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. <b>Participation</b>   | <b>10%</b>  |
| 2. <b>Reading Assignments</b><br>- Critical reflections   | <b>10%</b>  |
| 3. <b>Midterm</b> (in class on <i>February 26</i> )<br>- Primarily long answer format<br>- May also include short answer and/or matching Qs | <b>15%</b>  |
| 4. <b>Major Research Project</b><br>- Research Proposal Presentation (5%)<br>- Essay/Un-essay (25%)<br>- Final Presentation of Project      | <b>30%</b>  |
| 5. <b>Final Exam</b> (long answer format, held during final exam period)  | <b>35%</b>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100%</b> |

### EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

**Participation (10%):** Throughout the term you will be asked to provide feedback on your classmates' research-related presentations in your respective tutorials, which means attendance will be crucial for attaining maximum marks. At the end of the term, you will be asked to self-assess your participation and propose a mark out of ten – this will be worth up to 10% of your course grade.

**Reading Assignments (10% total):** Most weeks, you are tasked with reading and responding to short readings categorized as 'public sociology' (these are in **red** in the reading list and include links to the articles). In total, there are seven (7) weeks with required written reflections. **Your top five marks will each count for 2% of your course grade**, for an overall contribution of 10% towards your course grade. These must be submitted via Canvas *by the beginning of class on the*

*week of the given reading.* Late or missed submissions will receive a grade of 0. More information about this assignment will be provided in class.

**Major Research Project (30%):** Either individually or in pairs, you will be asked to: (a) identify a socially-relevant (and course-relevant) study topic you are interested in doing your major research project on for the class; (b) indicate why you think this topic is important (e.g., how it contributes to the literature, why it has social relevance); (c) provide an overview of literature that you consider to be most relevant to or topic; (d) identify one or two studies that you think would be particular useful guides for your study and indicate what parts of these studies you think will be most useful for you as you conduct your own study (focusing especially on the use of theory by the authors of the studies and the types of research methods used by the authors); (e) tell the class what you propose to do for your study, and how your study relates to existing literature (i.e., what makes it different from and similar to previous studies you looked at – does it ‘re-test’ an idea that has been proposed before, and or does it offer sometime quite novel in your view). This first presentation is a ‘research proposal’ for a study will be doing over the term and presenting during the final three weeks of the course.

The details of the major research project/essay will be discussed in class on January 15. The expectations for the (un)essay will also be clarified at this time. The first presentation is worth 5% of your overall mark, and your final presentation (which will take place during an end-of-term mini-conference) is not itself weighted but may influence your final grade. You will present during the conference on March 25, April 1, or April 8. You will be notified of your presentation date at least two weeks before the conference.

**Examinations (Midterm 15%; Final 35%):** There are two examinations in this class – a midterm and a final. On the midterm, you will be asked a combination of short and long written responses based on lectures, videos, readings, and discussions up to and including the February 12 lecture. The final examination will follow a similar format and *will be comprised exclusively of long format written questions*. The final exam will be based on content drawn from the entirety of the term (i.e., lectures, videos, readings, and discussions), although there will be an emphasis on work that was not covered in the mid-term. The final examination will be held during the April examination period. Additional details about these examinations will be clarified in class.

### **OTHER COURSE POLICIES:**

1. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of **2 marks per day** (with the exception of weekly reflection assignments - see above). Final projects are due by 4pm, on either via Canvas or in person.
  - a. Re: Technology failure. Imagine it’s the day before your assignment is due and your computer crashes. It’s never fun and nobody ever plans for it. With this in mind, I encourage you to make a plan sooner rather than later, in the event that such a catastrophe occurs. It might be rare, but it *does* happen. If you experience a technical problem connecting to or submitting work through Canvas, you can call

the Learning Technology Support Hub at (604) 827-4775. If there is a problem with Canvas, or with the UBC Server, you will be granted a time extension for submitting assignments that were affected by the problem.

2. Students who know in advance they will be unavoidably absent from the midterm should apply for special consideration from the instructor as soon as possible to determine how the missed graded work can be completed. Supporting documentation must be submitted to the Undergraduate Advising Office at the earliest possible date.
3. Students with special needs (e.g., learning disabilities, hearing, sight or physical impairment) should discuss with me how to make the learning environment more supportive. Students whose attendance or academic performance is severely affected by medical, emotional, or other problems should consult with me *early* in the term to discuss special arrangements. Please note that supporting documentation, from either the UBC Centre for Accessibility (more information below) or a physician, must also be submitted to the Undergraduate Advising Office.
4. At or near the completion of this course each of you will be asked to complete a Course/Instructor Evaluation form. At other times, however, I may invite more informal feedback to improve the learning environment for you.

### **POLICY ON CHILDREN IN CLASS (adapted from a Twitter colleague)**

Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is simply a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student parents:

1. All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary.
2. For older children and babies, I understand that unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home with a child. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3. I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
4. In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that parents sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met.
5. Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have finally gone to sleep. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.

### **A NOTE ON LEARNING TOGETHER, WITH KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY**

**(adapted from Dr. Suzanne Lenon, University of Lethbridge)**

Throughout this course, I invite you to join me in observing Dr. Tracy Lindberg's (As'in'i'wa'chi Ni'yaw Nation Rocky Mountain Cree) principle of allowing for "kind mistakes" in the classroom. This means:

1. You have the right to make kind mistakes. We *will* make mistakes; it is your responsibility (and mine!) to be as informed as possible when we get to class to ensure that our mistakes are kind.
2. It actually *hurts* us, as humans, to hear stereotypes, generalizations and racialized understandings about Black, Indigenous and people of colour (as well as gender non-conforming people, disabled folks, and members of other communities oppressed by policies and practices). While we can all make mistakes, let us also be informed and gentle as we are talking with and about people in our social worlds, particularly when some of those people are disproportionately subjected to violences of various kinds.
3. You have the right to ask any question. If you are shy or uncomfortable, please write it down or send us an email and we will do our best to address it as part of our class (when appropriate).
4. One of the goals of this course is to acknowledge that we have relationships with ideas, but also with each other as people. These relationships must be respectful and reciprocal in order for us to share space and ideas (inside of this classroom and out).

Additionally, in the words of Dr. Daniel Heath Justice (Cherokee), "We can have sharp, even contentious arguments, but still return to the conversation and to our relationships when we're done; in other words, we can hold each other to account as we hold each other up – they needn't be mutually exclusive practices. We are sorely in need of more accountable kindness in our critical work as well as in our relationships...But kindness shouldn't be mistaken for docility. It's not a kind act to allow problematic or even destructive ideas to pass unchallenged, but we can do so with generosity and empathy" (Why Indigenous Literatures Matter, 2018, xxi).

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, RESOURCES, & ON-CAMPUS SUPPORTS**

### ***Indigenous Student Collegium at the Longhouse***

There is space inside the First Nations Longhouse for Indigenous students to meet and gather. For more information, visit <https://aboriginal.ubc.ca/indigenous-student-collegium/>.

### ***Safewalk***

The AMS Safewalk is "a transportation service that accompanies students, staff and visitors with its driving and walking teams across campus after dusk." Call 604-822-5355, use a UBC Blue Phone, or see <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/safewalk/> for more information.

### **SASC**

Located in the Nest, the Sexual Assault Support Centre is a space designed to "to educate, support, and empower people of all genders who have experienced sexual violence as well as

their friends and family.” See <https://www.ams.ubc.ca/student-services/sasc/> for more information.

### ***Centre for Accessibility***

Located in Brock Hall, the UBC Centre for Accessibility (formerly ‘Access & Diversity’) provides various kinds of support for students, including disability-related accommodations and programming initiatives designed to remove barriers for students with disabilities and ongoing medical conditions.” For more information see <https://students.ubc.ca/about-student-services/centre-for-accessibility> or call 604-822-5844.

Please note that academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. It is the student’s responsibility to register with the Centre for Accessibility and to request academic accommodation, if required.

### ***Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)***

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside instructor’s office, the department office, etc. Assignments must be returned to students individually, during class or during the instructor’s office hours; if students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they must provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

### ***Plagiarism***

Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge and requires that the contribution of others be acknowledged. **Accordingly, I regard cheating or plagiarism on any assignment or examination as a serious academic offence.** You are advised to consult the UBC Policies and Guidelines at <https://academic.ubc.ca/support-resources/ubc-policies-guidelines> (specifically, the section called ‘Academic Misconduct + Plagiarism’), which specifies the processes and policies related to these and other important academic matters.

## WEEK BY WEEK OUTLINE & READING LIST

### *Week 1 – January 8 – Introduction to the Course*

### *Week 2 – January 15 – Thinking with/through Theory*

#### **Readings:**

- Wilson, B. (2012). Theory, sport, and peace: Tools and lenses for seeing sport in context. In B. Wilson (Author) *Sport & Peace: A Sociological Perspective*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, pp. 19-39.
- O'Brien, S. & Szeman, I. (2014). Chapter 1: Introducing Popular Culture. In S. O'Brien & I. Szeman (Authors), *Popular Culture: A User's Guide* (3rd Edition). Toronto: Nelson, pp. 1-13. Access through LOCR.

### *Week 3 – January 22 – Mass Media, Culture, Sport, and Politics of Be(long)ing*

#### **Readings:**

- Jackson, S. (2014). Globalization, corporate nationalism and masculinity in Canada: Sport, Molson beer advertising and consumer citizenship. *Sport in Society*, 17(7), 901-916.
- Suzuki, M., Ogawa, T. & Inaba, N. (2017). The Right to Adequate Housing: Evictions of the homeless and the elderly caused by the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. *Leisure Studies*, 37(1), 89-96.
- Kennelly, J. (2015). 'You're making our city look bad': Olympic security, neoliberal urbanization, and homeless youth. *Ethnography*, 16(1), 3-24.

#### **#LOL at Multiculturalism: Reactions to Hockey Night in Punjabi [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2016/10/20/lol-at-multiculturalism-reactions-to-hockey-night-punjabi/>

#### **Challenging the Narrative of #HumboldtStrong: Power, Politics, and Sporting Nationalism [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2018/11/28/challenging-the-narrative-of-humboldtstrong-power-politics-and-sporting-nationalism/>

#### **Don Cherry: A Day of Reckoning Long Overdue [from *Hockey in Society*]**

<https://hockeyinsociety.com/2019/11/11/guest-post-don-cherry-a-day-of-reckoning-long-overdue/>

### *Week 4 – January 29 – Resistance Through Rituals? Subcultures, Leisure, and Sport (Guest Lecture – Nik Dean, School of Kinesiology)*

#### **Readings:**

- Heino, R. (2000). New sports: What is so punk about snowboarding? *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 24(1), 176-191.
- Kelly, D. M., Pomerantz, S., & Currie, D. (2005). Skater girlhood and emphasized femininity: 'you can't land an ollie properly in heels'. *Gender and Education*, 17(3), 229-248.
- MacKay, S. & Dallaire, C. (2013). Skirtboarder net-a-narratives: Young women creating their own skateboarding (re)presentations. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 48(2), 171-195.

**What's in a name? Sexism in Rock Climbing Route Names [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/01/07/whats-in-a-name-sexism-in-rock-climbing-route-names/>

**Inequalities in Media Coverage of Mental Health in Professional Sports [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/02/19/inequities-in-media-coverage-of-mental-health-in-professional-sports/>

**Week 5 – February 5 – Sport and Leisure Spaces**

**Readings:**

- Crockett, M. C., & Butryn, T. (2018). Chasing Rx: A spatial ethnography of the CrossFit Gym. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(2), 98-107.
- Norman, M. (2017). Sport in the underlife of a total institution: Social control and resistance in Canadian prisons. *International review for the sociology of sport*, 52(5), 598-614.
- Kidder, J. L. (2013). Parkour, masculinity, and the city. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 30(1), 1-23.

**Whose History Matters? Diversity and the Canadian Outdoors [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/12/18/whose-history-matters-diversity-and-the-canadian-outdoors/>

**Round Table: Are We Loving Nature to Death? [from *The Rabbit Hole*]**

<http://cszto.blogspot.com/2017/05/round-table-are-we-loving-nature-to.html>

**Week 6 – February 12 – Health(ism), fitness technologies, and the body**

**Readings:**

- Lupton, D. (2013). Quantifying the body: Monitoring and measuring health in the age of mHealth technologies. *Critical Public Health*, 23(4), 393-403.
- Millington, B. (2016). Fit for presumption: interactivity and the second fitness boom. *Media, Culture & Society*, 38(8), 1184-1200.
- Fotopoulou, A., & O’Riordan, K. (2017). Training to self-care: fitness tracking, biopedagogy and the healthy consumer. *Health Sociology Review*, 26(1), 54-68.

**Aly Raisman and Rhetorical Activism: Complicating the “Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Conundrum” [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2018/03/21/aly-raisman-and-rhetorical-activism-complicating-the-sports-illustrated-swimsuit-conundrum/>

**East Asian Fat Shaming: Neither thin enough nor white enough [from *The Rabbit Hole*]**

<http://cszto.blogspot.com/2017/06/east-asian-fat-shaming-neither-thin.html>

**Are esports the next Major League Sport? [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/05/31/are-esports-the-next-major-league-sport/>

**Week 7 – February 19 – Reading Week**

Ironically, there are no readings assigned for this week.

This would, however, be a great time to revisit earlier readings in preparation for the midterm.

**Week 8 – February 26 – MIDTERM**

## **Week 9 – March 4 – Risky & Disciplined Bodies**

### **Readings:**

- Jette, S. (2006). Fit for two? A critical discourse analysis of *Oxygen* fitness magazine. *Sociology of Sport Journal* 23(4), 331-351.
- Couture, J. (2019). “Protecting the Gift”: Risk, parental (ir)responsibility, and CrossFit Kids Magazine. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 36(1), 77-86.
- Szto, C. & Gray, S. (2015). Forgive me Father for I have Thinned: Surveilling the Bio-Citizen through Twitter. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 7(3), 321-337.

### **I’m a Marijuana User and a “Good Person”: Race and Marijuana Use in Sport [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/09/26/im-a-marijuana-user-and-a-good-person-race-and-marijuana-use-in-sport/>

### **Beyoncé and the Racial Politics of Swimming [from *The Rabbit Hole*]**

<http://cszto.blogspot.com/2016/02/beyonce-and-race-politics-of-swimming.html>

### **“Stick to Sports”: Politics and Sports Media in the Digital Age [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/01/25/stick-to-sports-politics-and-the-sports-media-in-the-digital-age/>

## **Week 10 – March 11 – Deviant & Resistant Bodies**

### **Readings:**

- Carrington, B. (2017). Raced bodies and black cultural politics. In M. Silk, D. Andrews, & H. Thorpe (Eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge. pp. 130-141.
- Cooky, C., & Dworkin, S. L. (2013). Policing the boundaries of sex: A critical examination of gender verification and the Caster Semenya controversy. *Journal of Sex Research*, 50(2), 103-111.
- Banet-Weiser, S. (2018). Chapter 2: Love Yourself and Be Humiliated. In S. Banet-Weiser (Author), *Empowered: Popular Feminism and popular Misogyny*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 56-72.

### **Accepting or Subverting Norms of Femininity? The Case of Female Bodybuilders [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/06/19/accepting-or-subverting-norms-of-femininity-the-case-of-female-bodybuilders/>

### **Sport Behind Bars: Social Control, Resistance, and the Physical Culture of Prisons [from *Engaging Sports*]**

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/07/05/sport-behind-bars-social-control-resistance-and-the-physical-culture-of-prisons/>

## **Week 11 – March 18 – Critique and Intervention in the Age of Bullshit**

### **Readings:**

- Barton, C. C. (2019). Critical Literacy in the Post-Truth Media Landscape. *Policy Futures in Education*, 17(8). 1024-1036

Moore, T. (2013). Critical thinking: Seven definitions in search of a concept. *Studies in Higher Education*. 38(4). 506-522.

Sagan, C. (1996). The Fine Art of Baloney Detection. In C. Sagan and A. Druyan (Authors) *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. New York: Random House.  
Available at: <http://www.inf.fu-berlin.de/lehre/pmo/eng/Sagan-Baloney.pdf>

**Engineering Fandom: Audience Building in Women's Professional Soccer** [from *Engaging Sports*]  
<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2018/09/11/engendering-fandom-audience-building-in-womens-professional-soccer/>

**Sexism and the Super Bowl: What can we learn from female sports fans?** [from *Engaging Sports*]  
<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/02/02/sexism-and-the-super-bowl-what-can-we-learn-from-female-sports-fans/>

**From Kenya to Canada: Some Critiques of the Tim Hortons Commercial "The Away Game"** [from *Hockey in Society*]  
<https://hockeyinsociety.com/2018/10/17/from-kenya-to-canada-some-critiques-of-the-tim-hortons-commercial-the-away-game/>

***Week 12 - March 25 – Final Research Project Presentations - Day 1***

***Week 13 – April 1 – Final Research Project Presentations - Day 2***

***Week 14 – April 8 – Final Research Project Presentations - Day 3***