

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
School of Kinesiology

Kinesiology 363: *Leisure, Sport, and Popular Culture*

January 2022

INSTRUCTOR: Jesse Couture (he/him) **EMAIL:** jesse.couture@ubc.ca

TAs: Nik Dean (he/him) nik.dean@ubc.ca
Julia McKenna (she/her) julia.mckenna@ubc.ca

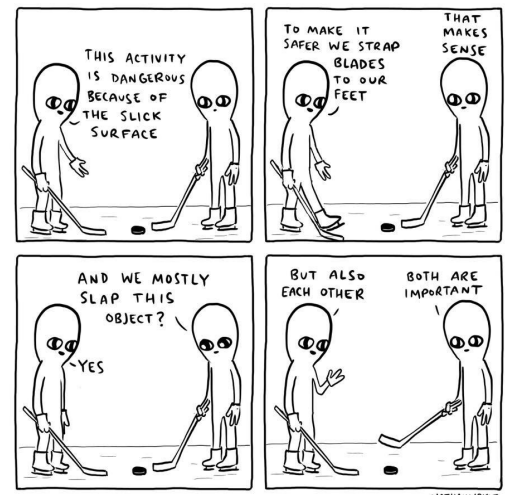
Office Hours: By appointment (via Zoom)

While this term looks a bit different than in years past, we often 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/Səlilwiltulh (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. We also recognize that many students are currently living and working across Canada and, in some cases, in other countries around the world. We invite and encourage you to learn more about the history of the land on which you are currently living and/or working.

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.

"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 (online) 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 in different (in)formal ways in and through your assignments.

CLASS FORMAT:

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

- *Lectures – 45-60min (incl. Video clips, other media)*
- *Tutorial – 45-60 mins*
- *OR (if online) lecture-videos (5-15mins each, often multiple per week)*

COURSE READINGS:

All readings can be accessed through the Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR), located on the main menu of the course on Canvas.

COURSE MATERIAL/WEBSITE:

Materials for the class (i.e., syllabus, lecture-videos, assignment guides) will be made available on Canvas each week under *Modules*. All course communications will be made through Canvas and/or via email.

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

1. Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-assessment of participation (5%) - Timely submissions of assignments (5%) 	10%
2. Reading Assignments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weekly reflections (based on Public Sociology readings) 	10%
3. Midterm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Primarily long answer format, but may also include short answer 	15%
4. Major Research Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research Proposal (5%), due [insert date] - Essay (25%) 	30%
5. Final Exam (long answer format)	35%
TOTAL	100%

EVALUATION PROCEDURES:

Participation (10%): 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 5% of your course grade. Timely submission of weekly written assignments will also be worth up to 5%.

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 the first weeks of the course.

Major Research Project (30%): You will be asked to: (a) identify a socially-relevant (and course-relevant) topic that you are interested in doing your major research project on for the class; (b) indicate why you think this topic is important (e.g., why it has social relevance, how it contributes to the literature); (c) provide an overview of literature that you consider to be most relevant to or topic; (d) identify two or more studies that you think would be *particularly* 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) describe what you propose to do for your study, and how your study relates to existing literature (i.e., what makes it different from and/or similar to previous studies you looked at – does it ‘re-test’ an idea that has been proposed before or does it offer sometime quite novel in your view?).

The research proposal (worth 5%) is designed to help you develop your major research project. Additional details related of the major research project/essay will be discussed over the first few weeks of class and are outlined in detail in the assignment guidelines, which are available on Canvas.

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 content featured in lecture-videos and course readings up to and including the February 12 lecture. 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 follow a similar format to the midterm but may also ask you to analyze one or more media ‘texts’. 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, via Canvas.

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 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.

3. 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.

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 (online) classroom. This means:

1. You have the right to make kind mistakes. We do and *will* make mistakes; it is your responsibility (and mine!) to be as informed as possible when we engage/participate with our classmates and to ensure that our mistakes are kind.
2. It actually *hurts* us, as humans, to hear and read 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). We can all make mistakes but 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. Please always feel welcome to reach out to us via email. We will do our best to address your question(s) in a timely and respectful manner.
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 (yes, even online space!) and ideas with one another.

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

Centre for Accessibility

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, visit the [website](#) or call 604-822-5844.

****Please note that academic accommodation letters need to be provided to 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.

Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication

The Centre for Writing and Scholarly Communication offers a variety of resources and services to assist students with their academic writing skills. The Centre also provides FREE one-on-one appointments with a peer writing consultant to support UBC students' writing projects from September to April. Students can sign up in [online \(Links to an external site.\)](#).

Website: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/improve-your-writing/>

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.

Live Well, Learn Well

Social support, emotional and physical wellbeing, healthy diet, good sleep practices, and a balanced lifestyle each contribute to a student's academic success. The Live Well, Learn Well website includes a number of valuable resources specifically geared towards students' wellbeing. For more information, visit the website at <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/live-well-learn-well>[Links to an external site.](#)

UBC Recreation – Get Active at Home

UBC Recreation is offering various online fitness programming to help you stay active while working from home. At-home workouts, live movements sessions, and a variety of other resources are available on their website, at <https://recreation.ubc.ca/get-moving/active-at-home/>

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 AND READING LIST

Week 1 (January 11-15th) - Introduction: Welcome to ‘Leisure, Sport, and Popular Culture’

Readings:

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 2 (January 18-22) - Thinking with and 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.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS

#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/>

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 3 (January 25-29) – Mass Media, Culture, and Sport

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.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS/LINKS

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/>

The Human Impact of a Sport-Less Society

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2020/07/30/the-human-impact-of-a-sport-less-society/>

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 4 (February 1-5) – Resistance through Rituals? Subcultures, Leisure, and Sport

Guest Lecture: Nikolaus 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.

Wheaton, B. (2007). After sport culture: Rethinking sport and post-subcultural theory. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 31(3), 283-307.

Dean, N. A., & Bundon, A. (In Press). “Helmets aren’t cool”: Surfers’ perceptions and attitudes towards protective headgear. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, DOI:1012690220931736.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS

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/>

Concussion in Canadian Surf Culture [from *Engaging Sports*]

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2020/01/30/concussion-in-canadian-surf-culture/>

Week 5 (February 8-12) – 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.

Couture, J. (2020). Reflections from the ‘Strava-sphere’: Kudos, community, and (self-) surveillance on a social network for athletes. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 1-17.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS

The New ‘Sleep-Friendly’ NBA [from *Engaging Sports*]

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2020/12/17/the-new-sleep-friendly-nba/>

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

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

Gendered Experiences in eSports

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2020/02/10/gendered-experiences-in-esports/>

Week 6 (February 15-19) – Reading Week

Ironically, there are no readings assigned for this week, but this would be a *great* time to revisit earlier readings in preparation for the midterm. ☺

Week 7: February 22-26 – MIDTERM ('take home')

Week 8 (March 1-5) – Sport and Leisure Spaces, and the Politics of Be(long)ing ***(Guest Lecture – Dr. Devra Waldman, Rutgers University - TBD)***

Readings:

- Kennelly, J. (2015). 'You're making our city look bad': Olympic security, neoliberal urbanization, and homeless youth. *Ethnography*, 16(1), 3-24.
- 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.
- Crockett, M. C., & Butryn, T. (2018). Chasing Rx: A spatial ethnography of the CrossFit Gym. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 35(2), 98-107.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS

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>

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 9 (March 8-12) – 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.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS

Accepting or Subverting Norms of Femininity? The Case of Female Bodybuilders [Engaging Sports]
<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2017/06/19/accepting-or-subverting-norms-of-femininity-the-case-of-female-bodybuilders/>

I'm a Marijuana User and a "Good Person": Race and Marijuana Use in Sport [Engaging Sports]
<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2019/09/26/im-a-marijuana-user-and-a-good-person-race-and-marijuana-use-in-sport/>

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

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

Week 10 (March 15-19) – 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.

Kidder, J. L. (2013). Parkour, masculinity, and the city. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 30(1), 1-23.

PUBLIC SOCIOLOGY READINGS

Being a Basketball Fan During the Black Lives Matter Movement and a Global Pandemic

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2020/10/06/being-a-basketball-fan-during-the-black-lives-matter-movement-and-a-global-pandemic/>

The X League: An Illegal Hold on Women’s Sporting Possibilities

<https://thesocietypages.org/engagingsports/2020/03/05/the-x-league-an-illegal-hold-on-womens-sporting-possibilities/>

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

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

Week 11 (March 22-26) Final Research Project Presentations (Day 1)

Week 12 (March 29 - April 2) Final Research Project Presentations (Day 2)

Week 13 (April 5-9) Final Research Project Presentations (Day 3)