COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
“Sport is a women’s issue because on playing fields, male athletes learn to talk about and think about women and women’s bodies with contempt...It’s a women’s issue because the media itself cheers for men’s sports and rarely covers women’s, thereby reinforcing the notion that men are naturally more athletic...And it’s a women’s issue because female sport participation empowers women, thereby inexorably changing everything.” (excerpt from The Stronger Women Get, The More Men Love Football, Nelson, 1994, p. 9).

Much of mainstream feminist theory has not considered sport and physical activity a critical area of inquiry. This course begins from the assumption that sport is a key element of culture that plays a significant part in the construction and representation of our social identities. Drawing upon analyses from cultural studies, sociology and sport studies, we will examine women’s involvement and experiences in this realm of social life. We will consider both popular and theoretical sources in our interrogation of the historical and contemporary social contexts in which women participate and make sense of their sporting experiences. Some of the topics that we will address include sport and the media, homophobia, racism, sexual harassment, as well as the cultural politics of sporting celebrity. The course format includes lectures, presentations, small group discussions and media viewing (e.g., print and television media as well as the film “Bend It Like Beckham”). One of the goals of this course is to enhance students’ awareness of the complex relationship between women, sport and society so that we can become more critical sport “consumers” and participants.

COURSE TEXT
This course will use a reader which contains all of the relevant readings. It can be purchased from the bookstore.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING STRUCTURE
- ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION: 20%
- IN CLASS MIDTERM: 25%
- MEDIA REPORT: 15%
- FINAL PAPER: 40%

PREREQUISITES
60 credit hours