



GSWS 320-4: Gender and Sport

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Lecture: Mondays 9:30 – 13:20 SWH 10061

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Course Description:

The common sense assumption that sports are a neutral institution for deriving and demonstrating athletic excellence remains relatively intact in western society despite a volume of research that shows that access to sport, and the outcome of sport, is highly biased, consistent with overall social hierarchies, and politically contested. Sport has a long history of naturalizing racial and gender differences in such a way as to reinforce and reflect social inequality more broadly. Racial segregation in sport (at least in formal, legal terms) is no longer considered acceptable in western societies or in the Olympic movement at the global level. But the power of sport in reinforcing and naturalizing racial inequality continues while the naturalness and inevitability of sex segregation in sport remains largely unchallenged.

While Title IX in the United States enforces at least a degree of equity in the funding of sports for men and women, the commonsense notion that boys and girls and men and women are fundamentally different and therefore need to be segregated remains unchallenged. In this course we will examine the underlying assumptions at play in the maintenance of sex segregation in professional, amateur and children's and youth sports. And we will explore the ways in which the "sport nexus" – elite professional and amateur sport – reinforces gendered/raced/sexed inequalities and power dynamics. The role of sport in constructing dominant (white and heterosexual) masculinities will be one focus as will dynamics relating to sexuality and the ideology of the two sex system.

This course will require careful reading of assigned texts, online responses and attendance at designated in-class group presentation meetings.

Course Texts and Courseware:

- Connell, R. (2009) Gender: In World Perspective, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Readings on reserve or electronically accessed via the SFU library

Course Evaluation and Assignments:

10 X 150 word Reading Response Posts (webct)	10% of Final Grade
Cooperative Group Presentation	30% of final Grade (<u>attendance</u> at designated classes is a <u>requirement</u> ; 20% of group project grade deducted for each absence)
Midterm Examination	30% of Final Grade
Take Home Final Exam	30% of Final Grade

Prerequisite: 15 units