



Course Name: Sociology of Sport

Course Number: SOC* E251

Credits:

Catalog description: Sociology of sport is an area of sociology that focuses on sport as a social phenomenon and on the social structures, patterns, and organizations or groups engaged in sport. The course critically examines common sense views about the role, function and meaning that sport has in society. For example, it is one way that people communicate their perception of their own identity and the groups they belong to in society. Often sport is used to maintain and communicate cultural identity, and as a catalyst for or reflection of social change. An in-depth consideration of popular issues in sport includes race, drugs and deviance, gender, competition and "success emphasis," violence, fantasy and heroes, status acquisition, economy and politics. Issues are considered from the perspective of different sociological theories and history.

Prerequisite, Corequisite, or Parallel: none

General Education Competencies Satisfied:

HCC General Education Requirement Designated Competency Attribute Code(s):

none

Discipline-Specific Attribute Code(s):

BHEL Behavioral Science elective

Course objectives:

General Education Goals and Outcomes:

none

Course Specific Objectives:

- understand theory and practice of sociological perspective and the sociological imagination
- apply such theories as functionalism, structural strain, and symbolic interactionism to social problems and to sport



- understand sport as an agent of socialization and its impact on society
- apply overarching sociological themes such as stratification, deviance, bias, status and privilege to sport
- understand how sport is reflective of cultural norms in both productive and destructive ways
- use critical thinking to articulate an understanding of the sociological significance of sport, conflict resolution, civility, and problem solving.

Course Content:

1. Introduction & Overview

- What is Sociology
- What is Sport
- What is Sociology of Sport
- Sport as a Social Phenomena
- The Domains of Sociology
- History of Socialization of Sport in North America

2. Perspectives on Society and Sport

- The Nature of Theories
- Opposing views of social reality
- Functionalism
- Success Emphasis & Crowning Achievement Theory
- Critical Theory
- Symbolic Interaction Theory

3. Socialization through Sport

- The process of socialization
- Sport and an individual's "character"
- Sport and Body Image Ideal
- The Athlete vs. the Jock
- Competition and the American value system
- Sport as an agency of socialization
- Functionalist and conflict views on sport and socialization
- Alternation views of sport and socialization

Socialization: How the Family Influences Values and Behaviors

- Emotional support
- Monitor participation in groups
- Sport as "distraction"



- Regulate and control interactions with others
- Serve as role models

Socialization: Gender Differences

- Male Stereotypes
- Female Stereotypes
- Title Nine & Other Relevant Laws

4. Sport on American Campus

- The history of School-based sport, including British influence, "Muscular Christianity, The American Connection
- The growth of American School Sports and Athletics
- High school sports: Exchange or Exploitation?
- New Standards for Assessing Academic Performance
- Other Concerns of College Student-Athletes
- Amateur Sport in America
- Unlike other nations, amateur sport is associated with formal education

5. Aggression and Violence in Sport

- What is Aggression
- Folk Beliefs Linking Sport and Aggression
- Defining Aggression
- Any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment." (Baron, 1977)
- Types of Aggression in Sport
- Spectator aggression
- Game reasoning and aggression
- Athletic performance and aggression

Criteria for Aggression

- Hostile versus Instrumental
- Reactive or Hostile Aggression (Antisocial)
The primary goal is to inflict injury or psychological harm on another
- Instrumental Aggression (Prosocial)
Aggression occurring in the quest of some nonaggressive goal

Instinct Theory

- Aggression is an innate biological drive
- Aggression results in a purging or venting of pent-up emotions



- Sports provide a safe and socially acceptable outlet for aggression

Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

- Aggression is a natural consequence of frustration
- The strength of the tendency to aggress is related to the strength, degree and number of frustrations
- Overt aggression may act as a catharsis or release against further aggression

Social Learning Theory

- The need for aggression is a learned response
- Aggression begets further aggression
- Aggression does not serve as a vent or catharsis against further aggression
- Contagion Theory
 - Builds through tension, uneasiness, excitement, fans, players
- Convergence Theory
 - Commonality of interests and goals
 - Proper arena/forum for such behavior, it is fueled by the sport or action
- Increasing Levels of Violence; Smith (1986) differentiates between four levels: Body contact; Borderline Violence; Quasi-Criminal Violence; Criminal Violence

6. Violence in selected Sports

- Boxing
- Football
- Hockey
- Professional Wrestling

7. Social Beliefs and Behavior

- Imposed on individuals until they are learned and become habit
- Reinforced by all major social institutions including the family, education, politics, religion, and even sports
- A person's generation, race, gender, geographical area where they live or were raised influences socialization
- Bandura's Social Imitation Theory: (1) Observe --> Imitate --> Internalize; (2) We observe and imitate the behavior, attitudes, and values of others, especially significant others

8. Concept of Competition

- Competition is a process through which success is measured



- Competition sets the rules for distributing rewards and influences relationships between people
- Noncompetitive Reward Structure:
- (1) Cooperation is a process through which success is measured by the collective achievements of a group of people working together to reach a particular goal
- (2) Individual standards are used to measure success and to earn rewards, there is no direct dependence on other people
- Cooperation within Competition: Intergroup cooperation (playing schedules and rules); Intragroup cooperation: each players on a team yields to the superordinate goal, the team goal; to win

9. Morality in American Sport

- Drugs
- Violence
- Cheating

10. Comparative Value Positions in Sport

- The Lombardian Ethic
- -*"Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing"*
- The Counterculture Ethic
- -*"It matters not that you won or lost, but how you played the game"*
- The Radical Ethic
- -Both the means (playing) and the end (winning) are important in competition

11. Deviance in the World of Sport

- When an act is considered deviant?
- Types of Deviance
- Deviance is situation specific
- How does one become deviant?
- Approaches to Studying Deviance in Sport

12. Kid's Play and Youth Sports

- Text, Context, and Transformation in Games
- Pros and Cons of Organized Youth Sports
- Kid vs. Adult Needs in Youth Sports
- Alternative Models for Children's Sports

13. Health & Physical Fitness

- Body Image & Psychological Disorders



- Weight & Strength Training
- Commitment to Healthy Lifestyle Through Sport
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