HTS 3089 QUP – SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, & SPORTS

Early Short Summer Session 2018

Instructor: Dr. Matt Ventresca
Email: matt.ventresca@gatech.edu
Skype ID: matt.ventresca

Proctor Requirement: None

Course Description
Sport is viewed by some scholars as socially constructed, and, therefore, a product of society. This idea has prompted considerable attention from researchers across the globe working within a wide array of scholarly disciplines and sub-disciplines. The sociology of sport is perhaps the most prominent, largest, and best established of the sub-disciplines studying sport in an academic context. Additionally, it was first to be a focus of study and have dedicated courses taught in institutions of higher education. The sociology of sport draws on a variety of theoretical and methodological perspectives to critically examine social processes as they shape, and are shaped by, the realm of sport, health, and physical activity.

Underpinned by sociology of sport perspectives, this course critically explores the intersection of science, technology, and sports. Course discussions will examine:

- what constitutes a “sport,” science, technology, and performance.
- sociological phenomena relevant to the intersection of science, technology, and sports.
- literature concerning debates on the role of technology in supporting and contesting social inequalities through sports.
- how scientists describe and interpret perceived human differences (e.g., race, sex/gender) as they are related to sport performance.
- literature on the impact of science and technology on athletic performance.
- literature regarding safety, risk, and the role of medicine in sports.
- debates surrounding cyborg athletes and the future of sports.

Area E Approved Learning Outcome
- Students will demonstrate the ability to describe the social, political, and economic forces that influence social behavior.

*Explain how the course satisfies the Area E approved learning outcome:* This course will focus on how sports are socially constructed and examine how the relationship between sports, science, and technology is shaped by social, political, and economic forces. Students will be able to describe how social issues impact scientific understandings of sports, identify contemporary debates regarding the role of technology in sports, and analyze the social construction of sports and athletic performance. To demonstrate that they have met the Area E learning outcome, students will critically engage with course readings/lectures and complete research papers/online presentations.
Learning Objectives

- Students will apply sociological theories and methods to analyze the intersections of sports, science, and technology.
- Students will compare and contrast major debates influencing the role of science and technology in sports cultures.
- Students will analyze how social, political, and/or economic forces shape the impact of sports-related scientific research and technological innovation.

Course format

This course will be offered entirely online via T-Square. Students will be expected to commit the same amount of time engaging with course materials as they would for an on-campus Early Short Summer Session course – i.e. 2½ hours 3 times per week, plus time allocated for completing course readings and assignments.

The course is structured around two major content modules, each with a final assessment (Module 1: Cyborg Tournament; Module 2: Literature Review). In addition, there is a final assessment (State of the Field Three Minute Thesis presentation) that asks students to connect their majors to course content. Course materials and assessments also include online lectures (VoiceThread), podcasts, readings (articles and book chapters), short topic assignments, a blogging assignment, and a self-tracking project.

The course’s “weeks” generally follow a Wednesday to Tuesday schedule to facilitate a longer orientation period at the beginning of the course and to better accommodate summer work schedules.

- Module 1 will take place during weeks 1 (May 16 - 22) and 2 (May 23 – 29).
- Module 2 will take place during weeks 3 (May 30 – June 5) and 4 (June 6 - 12).
- The course conclusion and final project will take place during an abbreviated week 5 (June 13-15).

Most course assignments are due by the end of the course week – midnight each Tuesday. The common weekly deadline is intended to create a fluid course structure best suited to individualized online engagement. The following week’s content, however, won’t become available on T-Square until the beginning of each week (Wednesday) allowing course sessions to be completed in order.

This is an intensive five week course. Students should spend some time during week one, and the beginning of each week thereafter, setting up an approach that will best ensure the timely completion of each week’s requirements. Keep in mind that assignments can be submitted to T-square anytime during the week they are due, and session-specific assignments will be most easily completed while engaging with that session’s content.

E-mail Guidelines

As this is an abbreviated online course, I will do my best to respond to student emails in a timely fashion. I will check and respond to email frequently during normal work hours.
(Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm), but please allow for a 24 hour turn-around on most email correspondence. I will work to reply to emails promptly around major course deadlines, but cannot guarantee a quick response in the evenings and/or on weekends except in the most extenuating circumstances. Please plan your correspondence accordingly; in other words, please don’t wait until the evening an assignment is due to email me about it!

**Course Resources**
Course resources (PDFs or links to free internet content) will be available via T-Square. Students will also, however, be expected to rent access to the following two documentaries:

**Grading and Requirements**
The following is an overview of course assignments and their contributions to the final course grade. Please see T-Square for complete descriptions and criteria for each of the course assessments.

- **Participation: 10%**
  In lieu of in-class participation points, students will be responsible for commenting on *VoiceThread* lectures.
  - Students are expected to leave at least 2 comments per lecture. Comments should engage the content delivered by the instructor in the lecture or respond to another peer’s comment about the lecture content.

- **Topic Assignment: 10%**
  Students must choose **ONE** of the following assignments associated with a specific session topic:
  1. Russian Doping Scandal response (Due: May 22)
  2. Sports Prosthetics response (Due: May 29)
  3. Sports Brassiere podcast response (Due: June 5)
  4. Autoethnographic injury narrative: (Due: June 12)

- **Cyborg Tournament: 15%**
  Following Howe’s (2011) definition of a cyborg as “a hybrid body resulting from fusion of a live organism and man-made technology” (p. 868), students will be randomly assigned a cyborg identity from the world of sport. Students will apply Module 1 content to prepare a biography and election-style write-up explaining why their individual provides the best insight into the potentials and limits of the sports cyborg. Students will post these documents to T-Square where classmates will vote on their favorites in a head-to-head online Cyborg Tournament.

- **Literature Review: 15%**
  Students will complete a 5 page (typed, double-spaced) review of academic literature that expands upon one of the course topics from Module 2. Students will be expected to locate, compare, and synthesize the arguments from **two**
academic sources in addition to assigned course readings and additional topic resources provided by the instructor.

- **Quantified Self Project: 15%**
  Students will undertake a body-focused Quantified Self Project during Weeks 3 and 4 of the course. Mirroring the Quantified Self movement, students will engage with digital self-tracking apps and write weekly reflections.
  For more on the Quantified Self movement, visit: [www.quantifiedself.com](http://www.quantifiedself.com).
  ***Self-tracking can still be selected as a possible Literature Review topic.

- **State of the Field Blog: 20% (5% per week)**
  To prepare for their Three Minute Thesis presentations, students will be expected to set up a daily Google alert ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) to seek out media coverage that connects their specific major discipline of study to course topics (e.g. “sports, technology, engineering” or “sports, genetics”). Students will then write short weekly blogs about the results of their Google alert while also commenting on classmates’ blogs each week (weeks 1-4).

- **State of the Field “Three Minute Thesis” Presentation: 15%**
  Students are required to prepare and record a “Three Minute Thesis” (3MT) presentation in VoiceThread that will be uploaded to T-Square. This presentation will summarize the results of their Google alerts and content of their blog, while making an argument about the future of their field using the tools. Students are expected to apply (at least) one major course concept that helps us better understand the social, political, and/or economic forces that are currently shaping their field.

**Grading Scale:**
- A: 90-100%
- B: 80 - 89%
- C: 70 - 79%
- D: 60 - 69%
- F: 59% and below

**Academic Honesty:**
Students in this class will be expected to abide by the Georgia Tech honor code. Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. All students are responsible for understanding and complying with Georgia Tech rules. For further information, go to: [www.honor.gatech.edu](http://www.honor.gatech.edu)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:**
If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. Students may also contact the Office of Disability Services at 404-894-2563.
The course schedule is subject to change. Please refer to T-square for the most up-to-date schedule, lectures, readings, and assignments. Unless otherwise noted, assignments are due by midnight on the Tuesday marking the end of the course week.

**Week 1: May 16 - 22**

**Session 1: Course Introduction**

**Resources:**
- Lecture 1: Course and Instructor Introduction (VoiceThread)
- Emory University (2017). “Emory Sport Medicine Complex Grand Opening.” YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MgHrVITXEPY
- Epstein, D. (2014). “Are athletes really getting faster, better, stronger?” TED Talk. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8COaMKbNrX0

**Assignments:**
- Student bios and comments posted by midnight, Tuesday, May 22
- Create State of the Field Google Alert and blog

**Session 2: Introduction to Module 1**

**Resources:**
- Sapien (2017), “How a reporter uncovered widespread Russian meddling — In the Olympics” [podcast]
- ABC News (2017), “Icarus: How an amateur cyclist fell into secret world of Russian doping” YouTube. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mk0NWKUySIQ

**Assignments:**
- Topic Assignment Option #1: Russian Doping Scandal response due by midnight, Tuesday, May 22.

**Session 3: Module 1, Topic 1 – Modifying Athletes from Within**

**Resources:**
- Lecture 2: Modifying Athletes from Within (VoiceThread)

**Assignments:**
- Ongoing Assignment Requirements (due by midnight, Tuesday, May 22):
  - Week 1 State of the Field blog entry
Session 4: Module 1, Topic 2: Performance Enhancement from Without

Resources:
- Lecture 3: Performance Enhancement from Without (VoiceThread)
- Fouché (2017), “Gearing up for the game”

Assignments:
- Topic Assignment Option #2: Sports Prosthetics response due by midnight, Tuesday, May 29.

Session 5: Module 1, Topic 3: The Quantified Self

Resources:
- Lecture 4: The Quantified Self (VoiceThread)

Assignments:
- Cyborg Tournament Bios (due by midnight, Tuesday May 29)
  - Cyber Tournament Voting (closes at midnight, Friday June 1)
- Ongoing Assignment Requirements (due by midnight, Tuesday, May 29)
  - Week 2 State of the Field blog entry

Session 7: Introduction to Module 2 – Rendering the Athletic Body

Resources:
- Lecture 5: Rendering the Athletic Body (VoiceThread)

Assignments:
- Literature Review Topic (submit by midnight, Friday, June 1).
- Begin self-tracking on Thursday, May 31 for Quantified Self project.

Session 8: Module 2, Topic 1 - Deconstructing the “Natural” Black Athlete

Resources:

Session 9: Module 2, Topic 2 - Inspecting Gender Verification

Resources:
- Fountain Ink Magazine (2016). “Dutee Chand: Blazing a new trail.” *YouTube* Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-AqXjj3caQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-AqXjj3caQ)
Assignments:
- Topic Assignment Option #3: Sports Brassiere podcast response due by **midnight, Tuesday, June 5**.
- Ongoing Assignment Requirements (due by **midnight, Tuesday, June 5**):
  - Quantified Self Week 1 screenshots and reflections
  - Week 3 State of the Field blog entry

**Week 4: June 6 - 12**

**Session 10: Module 2, Topic 3 – Damaged Selves: Risk, Injury, and Pain in Sport**

**Resources:**
- King et al. (2014). “When is a drug not a drug?”
- Vice Sports (2015). “Painkillers in the NFL: Nate Jackson on ‘hurt’ vs. ‘injured’”
  - YouTube. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Plx6g6G6wI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Plx6g6G6wI)
- Assignments:
  - Topic Assignment Option #4: Autoethnographic injury narrative (due by **midnight, Tuesday, June 12**).

**Session 11: Module 2, Topic 4 – The “Concussion Crisis”**

**Resources:**
- Bachynski, K.E. & Goldberg, D.S. (2014). “Youth sports and public health”

**Session 12: Assignment Work Day**

**Assignments:**
- Ongoing Assignment Requirements (due by **midnight, Tuesday, June 13**)
  - Literature Review
  - Quantified Self Project – Week 2 screenshots and reflections
  - Week 4 State of the Field blog entry

**Week 5: June 14 - 16**

**Session 13: Course Conclusion**

**Resources:**
- Lecture 7: State of the Field – Current Controversies and Future Directions

**Sessions 14 & 15: Three Minute Thesis**

**Assignment:**
- Three Minute Thesis Presentations (uploaded by **midnight on Friday, June 16**).