

## **POL 197H1F**

### **Sports and Politics: Identity, Activism, and Political Economy**

Instructor: Professor Kanta Murali

Email: [kanta.murali@utoronto.ca](mailto:kanta.murali@utoronto.ca)

Time: Wednesdays, noon – 2pm

Location: UC A101

Office hours: Wednesdays, 2.30-4pm or by appointment

#### **Land Acknowledgment**

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

#### **Course Overview**

The course aims to introduce first year students to key themes in political science – race, gender, sexuality, colonialism, nationalism, activism, and political economy – through the lens of sports and those who participate in them. Sports are a microcosm for broader political, economic, and societal trends. At the same time, sports and those involved in it impact politics. As such, there is a two-way relationship between sports and politics. This interaction provides fertile and interesting ground to introduce students to key concepts, themes, and issues in political science.

Each week, the course will pair concepts, themes and approaches in political science with examples from the world of sports. The course includes topics on three broad categories – identity, activism, and political economy. Specific topics addressed include race, gender, sexuality, activism, colonialism, nationalism, globalization, and the politics of mega sporting events.

#### **Format and delivery**

This is an in-person, seminar course. The format involves in class discussions, online discussion board tasks, weekly readings, audio and visual material, and assignments. Readings and audio-visual material used are diverse in format, style, content, and discipline. It is extremely important that you review all assigned readings and audio-visual material prior to class each week, and come prepared to discuss the material.

#### **Attendance, participation, and course expectations**

This is a seminar course; sessions will be devoted to class discussion, including group work. I will not lecture but will typically offer remarks to introduce topics and facilitate discussion. The expectation is that the sessions will be student-driven. You are expected to attend each session, and complete assigned readings and review audio-visual materials prior to each class. To help facilitate active discussion, each student must identify and post at least one question or issue raised in the week's assigned material on Quercus by 9am every Wednesday before class. Class participation and attendance are evaluated as part of the overall grade for the course and it is in your best interest to participate actively in each session.

#### **Readings and Audio-Visual Material**

All assigned readings and audio-visual material for a particular week are available electronically under Modules in Quercus (q.utoronto.ca). Audio-visual material will also be used extensively during class sessions. In each week, one or more concept/context readings are paired with examples from sports. You should ideally read the concept/context reading first before reviewing the sports-related readings and audio-visual material. I will also periodically post guiding questions or comments to help you through challenging course material.

I reserve the right to remove or substitute a reading with another if necessary during the term. This is unlikely but I will give you significant advance notice if I do so.

### **Course evaluation and requirements**

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

#### **1) Weekly in-class participation: 10%**

- Attendance and active participation are expected every week, although extenuating circumstances such as illness might require exceptions. You will be evaluated both on the degree of class participation as well as the quality of participation.
- We will have two guest visitors in the course (weeks 5 and 9). I will provide an introduction to the guests prior to their visit. You are required to bring one question or issue to class pertaining to sports and politics that you would like each of the guests to comment on.

#### **2) Weekly discussion board posts: 5%**

- For weeks 2 to 11 (with the exception of week 10), each student must identify and post at least one question or issue that the week's assigned readings or audio-visual material raised. The question/issue has to be posted on the discussion board in Quercus **by 9am every Wednesday before class.** Please note that your question or issue must be from the week's assigned material that will be covered in that Wednesday's class. You may not post a question on a previous week's material.
- These could be any question or issue of your choice pertaining to the assigned material.
- If you post for all required weeks, you will automatically get 5 points added to your final grade. There will be a deduction of 0.5 points (from 5 total points) for each week that you do not post on the discussion board.

#### **3) Critical Reflection Papers (2 x 25%): 50%; Due Feb 8<sup>th</sup> and Mar 15<sup>th</sup>**

- You are required to write two critical reflection papers. Each paper should be 3-4 pages in length. The first paper should cover material from one week of your choice from either week 3 or 4. The second paper should cover material from one week of your choice from either week 6 or week 7.
- In each paper, you are expected to address three aspects: 1) A brief description of the assigned readings and other course material; 2) How are the examples from sport linked to the concept/context for that week?; 3) What did you learn about the link between sports and politics from that week?

#### **4) Film Review: 15%; Due March 1<sup>st</sup>**

- I will post a select list of sports-related movies that are available to stream from the library by February 1<sup>st</sup>. These movies are linked to topics we cover in the course.

- You are required to watch one of these movies and write a 2-3 page review. The review should a) describe the narrative of the movie, and b) develop an argument about the film's treatment of sports and politics.

**5) Note-taking assignment: 5%; Due March 29th**

- A documentary will be screened in class on week 10. You are required to write and submit notes (1 page in length) that address two aspects: 1) What was it about?; 2) What issues did the documentary raise on sports and politics?

**6) Group podcast: 15%; Due April 5th**

- You will each be randomly assigned to a group. Each group will be tasked with producing a 7-10 minute podcast about one athlete, sporting event or issue related to the course.
- The group will be asked to collectively choose one athlete, event or issue related to themes in the course. You should also have a backup choice. You should preferably choose an athlete/event/issue not covered in the assigned readings/audiovisual material. Each group should communicate your choice(s) to me by March 8<sup>th</sup> (the sooner the better).
- Once a group's choice is approved by me, you may begin to research and work on your podcast. It is up to you to decide what to highlight in the podcast but ideally the podcast should have both a description of the athlete/event/issue and what the athlete/event/issue tells us about the relationship between sports and politics. We will listen to all group podcasts collectively in the last class.
- Additional details on the logistics for the podcast will be posted on Quercus.

**Course policies and procedures**

**Emails:** I will attempt to respond to all emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays).

Questions on course material cannot be adequately addressed via email. I will discuss course material or address substantial questions in class meetings, during office hours or by appointment.

**Quercus, student email, and course information:** This course will use Quercus to disseminate all course-related information and assignments. Please ensure you have a valid U of T email. It is your responsibility to log on to Quercus regularly and obtain relevant information. To login, please go to: [q.utoronto.ca](http://q.utoronto.ca)

**Submitting written assignments:** All written assignments and responses have to be submitted through Quercus.

**Rough drafts and electronic copies of papers:** Students are strongly advised to keep rough/ draft work and electronic copies of their papers before handing it in. These should be kept until marked assignments have been returned to you and the grades posted on ROSI.

**Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:** Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Please familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at the U of T, and you are expected to know the rules. Failure to understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic integrity at U of T will not be accepted as an excuse.

Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

Papers:

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Copying material word-for-word from a source (including lecture and study group notes) and not placing the words within quotation marks.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Including references to sources that you did not use.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including
  - working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work,
  - having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing".
- Lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission.

Tests and exams:

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers
- Letting someone else look at your answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation:

- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes.
- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact me. For further information on appropriate research and citation methods and plagiarism, please see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>. If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work in this course, please speak to me and seek the advice of your college registrar.

**Plagiarism Detection Tool:** Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

The course will be using Ouriginal. The use of Ouriginal is voluntary. Should you choose to opt out, please speak to me about alternate procedures. Typically these will involve turning in all notes and rough drafts in addition to the final paper.

**Absence declaration:** Students who are absent from academic participation for any reason (e.g., COVID, cold, flu and other illness or injury, family situation) and who require consideration for missed academic work should report their absence through the online absence declaration. The declaration is available to

students through ACORN under the Profile and Settings menu. For updates, please reference the *University policy for absence declaration*. In addition to filling out the online absence declaration, please advise me of your absence. Please note that I am not automatically alerted when you use the online absence declaration. It is, therefore, your responsibility to let me know that you have used the Absence Declaration so that we can discuss any needed consideration, where appropriate.

**Extensions:** Extensions will only be granted in extenuating circumstances that could not be anticipated ahead of time.

**Late penalty:** Assignments handed in any time after the specified deadline will be treated as late. There will be a penalty of 4% per each late day or fraction of a day for late papers and online tests (including weekends and holidays). The cut off time for the determination of each late day is 5pm.

**Appealing grades:** If you would like to appeal your grades, please submit a written grade appeal to me within a week of receiving the graded paper. To submit a grade appeal, please email me a detailed written statement explaining why you believe your grade should be changed. Please note decisions on appeals are at my discretion. Once an appeal is submitted, I will examine the entire assignment (and not specific questions/parts). Please note that your grade may go down, go up or remain unchanged after this process.

**Code of Conduct:** The University of Toronto expects all its members to behave responsibly and with courtesy and respect for others at all times. The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. Students should make sure to read the University's Student Code of Conduct (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-student-conduct-december-13-2019>) and the University's policy on the Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology (<https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/planning-policy/information-communication-technology-appropriate-use/>).

**Accessibility:** Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please contact Accessibility Services ([studentlife.utoronto.ca/as](http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as)); Phone: 416-978 8060.

**Registrar Support:** Students are encouraged to contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodations.

**Health and Wellness:** Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Many of these programs are listed at:  
<https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/health-wellness/uoft.me/myssp>

**Crisis support:** If you feel distressed, please know that you are not alone and please reach out for help. For further resources, please see: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>

## Reading List

### Week 1 (Jan 11<sup>th</sup>): Introduction: Sports and Politics

- No assigned readings
- In class: Not Just a Game (we will watch part of the documentary in class).

### Week 2 (Jan 18<sup>th</sup>): Race and Sports: Breaking Barriers

#### Concepts and context

- Marx, Anthony. 1996. "Race-Making and the Nation-State." *World Politics* 48(2): 180-208

#### Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Baseball

- Tygiel, Jules. 2002. *Extra Bases: Reflections on Jackie Robinson, Race, & Baseball History*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press {Chapter 1: "Introduction to the Jackie Robinson Reader", pgs. 3-14}
- Williams, Yohuru. 2021. "I've Got to Be Me: Robinson and the Long Black Freedom Struggle" in Long, Michael G.. *42 Today: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*. New York, USA: New York University Press, 2021 {pgs. 113-127}
- Watch: "Obama on connection to Jackie"; mlb.com; January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 (2 minutes)

#### Willie O'Ree

- Watch: CBC News: The National. "Willie O'Ree, the NHL's first Black player, on racism in hockey"; November 27, 2020 (9 minutes);

### Week 3 (Jan 25<sup>th</sup>): Race and Sports: Civil Rights Movement, Black Power and Activism in the 1960s

#### Concepts and context

- Morris, Aldon. 2021. "The Power of Social Justice Movements". *Scientific American*, 324(3), pp.24-37.

#### Sports and Activism in the 1960s

- Remnick, David. 2016. "The Outsized Life of Muhammad Ali". *The New Yorker*. June 4, 2016.
- Watch: Vox, 2021. "The Story Behind This Iconic Olympics Protest" (9 minutes);

- Longman, Jere. "53 Years Later, A Pioneer of Protest Finally Gets Her Due". *The New York Times*. June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- Hartmann, D., 2019. The Olympic "Revolt" of 1968 and its Lessons for Contemporary African American Athletic Activism. *European Journal of American Studies*, 14(14-1): 1-24

#### **Week 4 (Feb 1<sup>st</sup>): Race and Sports: Black Lives Matter and Activism; Continuing Obstacles**

##### Taking the Knee: Athletes and Black Lives Matter

- Zirin, Dave. 2021. *The Kaepernick Effect: Taking a Knee, Changing The World*. New York: The New Press. {Introduction, pgs. 1-8}
- Streeter, Kurt. "Kneeling, Fiercely Debated in the NFL, Resonates in Protests". *The New York Times*. June 5, 2020.

##### Continuing obstacles and issues

- Destin, Y & Dyer, E. 2021. The Legacies of Tennis Champions Althea Gibson, Arthur Ashe, and the Williams Sisters Show the Persistence of America's Race Obstacles. *Race and Social Problems*, 13(3), 195–204
- Russell, Bill. 2020. "Racism is Not a Historical Footnote." *The Players' Tribune*. September 14, 2020.
- Watch: Joe's Basketball Diaries, Episode 3: The Model Minority (27 minutes)

#### **Week 5 (Feb 8<sup>th</sup>): Race and Sports: South Africa, the Apartheid Boycott and the Prospects for Reconciliation; Guest: Professor Bruce Kidd**

##### Concepts and context

- Lieberman, Evan S. 2022. *Until We Have Won Our Liberty : South Africa after Apartheid*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. {Chapter 4: Before Democracy: Shaky Foundations; pgs. 69-101}

##### "The Boycott that Worked"

- Kidd, Bruce. 2021. *A Runner's Journey / Bruce Kidd*. Toronto ;: Aevo UTP {"Chapter 17, "The Boycott that Worked", pgs. 231-250}
  - Listen: CBC - The Current. 2021. "Bruce Kidd on his running career and the ties between sports and politics" (23 minutes)

##### Sports after Apartheid

- Höglund, Kristine, and Ralph Sundberg. 2008. "Reconciliation through Sports? The Case of South Africa." *Third World Quarterly* 29 (4): 805–18.

## **Week 6 (Feb 15<sup>th</sup>): Gender and Sports: The Practice of Sex Testing**

### Concepts and context

- Hawkesworth, Mary. 2013. "Sex, Gender, and Sexuality: From Naturalized Presumption to Analytical Categories" in *The Oxford Handbook of Gender and Politics / edited by Georgina Waylen, Karen Celis, Johanna Kantola and S. Laurel Weldon*. Oxford University Press. **{Read the first six and a half pages until the section "Exploring the Connections among Sex, Gender and Sexuality"}**.
- Sikink, Kathryn. "CHAPTER 1. Introduction: Anger, Hope, and the Belief You Can Make a Difference". *Evidence for Hope: Making Human Rights Work in the 21st Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018, pp. 3-21.

### The practice of sex testing

- Padawer, Ruth. "The Humiliating Practice of Sex Testing Female Athletes". *New York Times*. June 28, 2016.
- Kidd, Bruce. 2021. "Sex Testing at the Olympics Should Be Abolished Once and For All". *The Conversation*, July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

\*\*\*\*Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>: Reading Week; No Class\*\*\*\*

## **Week 7 (Mar 1<sup>st</sup>): Gender, Sexuality and Sports: The Fight for Equal Opportunity and Pay; Transgender athletes**

### Concepts and context

- Collins, Patricia Hill and Sirma Bilge. 2020. *Intersectionality*. 2nd ed. Newark: Polity Press. **{Chapter 1; Read the following sections only: "What is Intersectionality", "Using Intersectionality as an Analytical Tool"; and "Power Plays: The FIFA World Cup"}**.

### Title IX and the Fight for Equal Opportunity

- Listen: "Title IX revolutionized female athletics but advocates say it's been a constant fight", NPR, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 (7 minutes); \*Click on '7 minute listen'

### The Fight for Equal Pay in Women's Sports

- Ware, Susan. 2011. *Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press {Prologue, pgs. 1-14; Epilogue, pgs. 207-214}
- Kuper, Simon and Stefan Szymanski. 2022. *Soccernomics: Why European Men and American Women Win and Billionaire Owners are Destined to Lose*. New York: Bold Type {Chapter 7, Unbanned: The Case for Reparations for Women's Soccer, pgs. 118-129}

### Transgender Athletes

- Powell, Michael. 2022, "What Lia Thomas Could Mean for Women's Elite Sports." *New York Times*, May 29, 2022.

## **Week 8 (March 8<sup>th</sup>): Colonialism, Nationalism and Sports**

### Concepts and context

- Kohli, Atul. 2022. *Greed and Guns: Imperial Origins of the Developing World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. {Chapter 2, "Why Imperialists Imperialize", pgs. 6-33}
- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London: Verso {Pgs. 5-8}

### Colonialism and the Diffusion of Sports

- Alegi, Peter. 2010. *African Soccerescapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game*. London: Hurst and Company. {Chapters 1; pgs. 1-13}

### Anti-Colonial Movements, Nationalism and Sport

- Alegi, Peter. 2010. *African Soccerescapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game*. London: Hurst and Company. {Chapters 3; pgs. 36-53}

## **Week 9 (Mar 15<sup>th</sup>): The Politics of Mega-Events and 'Sportswashing'; Guest: Professor Joseph Wong**

### Concepts and context

- Nye, Joseph. 2017. "Soft Power: The Origins and Political Progress of a Concept." *Palgrave Communications* 3 (1): 1–3.

### The Politics of Mega-Events

- Sullivan, Becky. "Why Qatar is a Controversial Host for the World Cup", NPR, November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Bokart-Lindell, Spencer. "The Qatar World Cup Is Peak 'Sportswashing.' But Will It Work?". *The New York Times*. Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022.
- Zimbalist, Andrew S. 2020. *Circus Maximus : the Economic Gamble Behind Hosting the Olympics and the World Cup / Andrew Zimbalist*. Third edition. Washington, District of Columbia: Brookings Institution Press {Chapter 1, pgs. 1-8}.
- Grix, Jonathan, and Donna Lee. "Soft Power, Sports Mega-Events and Emerging States: The Lure of the Politics of Attraction." *Global society* 27, no. 4 (2013): 521-536.

## **Week 10 (March 22<sup>nd</sup>): Settler Colonialism and Sports**

- No readings
- In class: The Australian Dream (you will watch the documentary in class; note-taking assignment on The Australian Dream due on March 29th)

## **Week 11 (March 29<sup>th</sup>): Globalization, Development, and the Business of Sports**

### Concepts and Context

- Ravenhill, John. 2008. *Global Political Economy*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. {Page numbers TBD}

### The Business of Sports

- Foer, Franklin. 2004. *How Soccer Explains the World : an Unlikely Theory of Globalization*. 1st ed. New York: HarperCollins. {Chapter 7, "How Soccer Explains the New Oligarchs"}
- Kuper, Simon and Stefan Szymanski. 2022. *Soccernomics: Why European Men and American Women Win and Billionaire Owners are Destined to Lose*. New York: Bold Type {Chapter 3, The Worst Business in the World, pgs. 60-82}

## **Week 12 (April 5<sup>th</sup>): Conclusion**

- No readings
- Groups will present their podcasts