

# Blood, Guts, & Glory: Anthropology of Sports

## Anthropology 20301 & 10301

Fall 2021

Tuesday & Thursday - 12:30pm-1:45pm

Geddes B034

### Dr. Tracie Canada

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Office Hours: TuTh 2:30-4 or appointment

[Calendly Link for Appointments](#)

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Twitter: @CaraOcobock

## Course Description

This course will examine the interactions of culture and biology within sports. The anthropology of sports can help us gain valuable insights into broader social and cultural phenomena, the role of ritual in society, and illuminate how sports have been used to bring people together, but also to exclude people. We will begin with studying the evolutionary origins and non-human examples of play. We will then move into the prehistoric and historic foundations for sport. We will also discuss how people change their bodies, in good ways and dangerous ways, for a greater chance at success, and how those bodies are often more harshly judged by society. Finally, we will explore the ways in which contemporary sporting and fan practices are culturally ordered and/or challenge social norms. Drawing on case studies from around the world, we will pay special attention to questions of gender, race, genetics, nationality, health, equality, and human variation. In addition, students will be encouraged to think critically about their own sporting experiences, both as active participants and as fans, and how sports impact their lives.

## Important Things to Know

-  This is a grade-less, test-less class, see details further in this syllabus
-  We are NOT Mrs. or Ms. **We are Dr. Canada and Dr. Ocobock or Professor Canada and Professor Ocobock**
-  We will not typically respond to email between the hours of 6pm-9am.
-  BEFORE emailing us, please first check the syllabus for answers.

## Core Learning Goal Statement

In this course, you will recognize how an integrative approach, one that draws upon and synthesizes multiple disciplines and perspectives, is best for understanding complex topics. Your professors, Dr. Canada and Dr. Ocobock, are both anthropologists who study sports, but their areas of expertise and methodologies do not overlap. By taking this course, you will be provided with two critical perspectives on sport: the cultural and the biological. Culture and human biology are deeply integrated; you cannot understand one without the other. We will approach the study of sports through integrating and synthesizing concepts and theories from cultural anthropology and ethnography, race and racism, women and gender studies, evolutionary studies, human biology, exercise physiology, and human biomechanics. From this, you will gain a greater understanding, both culturally and biologically, of the role sports has played and continues to play in shaping our bodies and society.

## Tips for Success

1. Attend class regularly
2. Take notes in class – handwritten is better!
3. Actively participate
4. Maintain an open mind to our methods – there are likely to be bumps along the way, we would greatly appreciate your patience
5. Maintain an open mind to the topics covered
6. Be engaged and inquisitive
7. Give us feedback! Like we said, we are trying a new style. If something works well, tell us. If something fails miserably, TELL US!
8. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE! Cite everything you use to complete your work – here is a helpful resource on citations: <http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php>

## COVID-19 Statement

- 🏀 These are unprecedented times. We will do our best to approach this situation with flexibility, patience, and compassion. We ask you to do the same
- 🏀 **IF YOU ARE FEELING ILL, DO NOT COME TO CLASS! EMAIL US AND LET US KNOW!!!**
- 🏀 We reserve the right to mandate masks in class
- 🏀 If more than 8 students test positive for COVID-19 at the same time, we will move the class online for a two week period.
- 🏀 If your professors both contract COVID-19, we will move the class online for a two week period

# This class has no grades or tests, but there will be a final grade

## Why Grades Don't Work

- [Listen to an interview here](#)
- Grades make you think less
- Grades make you avoid taking risks
- Grades make you lose interest in learning
- Grades rarely reflect actual learning
- Grades do not reflect life

## Why Tests Don't Work

- Tests really only test your cramming/short term memory
- Tests cannot take into account different learning styles
- Tests produce unnecessary anxiety that prohibit learning engagement

## How This Will Work

- You will develop a goal and plan of action for this semester
  - You will state the grade you would like to receive and how you plan to achieve this grade throughout the semester
  - You will also describe any hurdles you expect to encounter and how you might overcome them
  - You will meet with us during the first two weeks of class to discuss this plan
- You will turn in regular writing assignments via a personal Google Document as well as 3 larger assignments throughout the semester
  - We will provide feedback on each of these assignments
  - But so will you. For each larger assignment, you will write a short assessment that includes the following:
    - what you learned
    - the challenges you faced completing this assignment
    - how you overcame those challenges (if you did)
    - how well you think you did the assignment
    - what you think you could have done better
- Mid-Semester Check-In – if you choose to, you will meet with us to discuss what you have done so far, what you are proud of, and what you could be doing better
- End of Semester Meeting – meet with us to assess the body of work you completed throughout the semester and together decide a final grade to be submitted to Notre Dame.

## Academic Integrity

As a student of the University of Notre Dame, you are expected to abide by its honor code (<https://honorcode.nd.edu/>):

*“As a member of the Notre Dame community, I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to learn and abide by principles of intellectual honesty and academic integrity, and therefore I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty.”*

When you are expected to work alone on an assignment, it will be clearly stated in the assignment guidelines.

## Course Materials





- Most resources are links to articles on the web
- Articles provided on Canvas
- A notebook
- Handful of colored pens or pencils

## Class Behavior



- This class does cover some controversial topics. We expect each of you to respect your classmates' opinions. If you disagree, do so respectfully so that we can have a discussion about it. We want to promote diversity and inclusion in this classroom (<https://diversity.nd.edu/>)
- We will, therefore, take color conscious (rather than colorblind) approach. As Michelle Alexander states, color consciousness “places faith in our capacity as humans to show care and concern for others, even as we are full cognizant of race and possible racial differences” (pg. 243 from *The New Jim Crow*).

## Assignment Run Down

 Regular writing responses are to be completed once a week and are due **EACH** Friday.

-  A writing prompt will be provided for each week. Your response should follow the prompt, which will typically consist of you synthesizing what you learned from the class readings, discussions, and/or films.
-  You should also include any questions you had that did not get answered from class.
-  These are to be turned in using the individual Google Doc we create for each of you. We will be provide feedback to each of your writing responses, and answer the questions you pose when we can – this, too, will be done within the Google Doc
-  The goal is to demonstrate you have learned something, and as a way for us to be sure you are doing the readings.

 There will be three large assignments due throughout the semester.

-  Assignment Guidelines are posted to Canvas
-  These assignments will be turned on Canvas

Writing Response	Date	Done
1	8/27	
2	9/3	
3	9/10	
4	9/17	
5	9/24	
6	10/1	
7	10/8	
8	10/15	
9	10/29	
10	11/5	
11	11/12	
12	11/19	
13	12/3	
14	12/10	

Large Assignments	Date	Done
Myths & Misconceptions Infographic	9/14	
On the Origin of Sports	11/2	
Un-Essay	12/7	

### Attendance & Participation

We like to run an interactive class which means there is give and take from us **AND** you. You cannot participate in class unless you are physically there. We are fully aware of and sensitive to University sanctioned events as well as life events that may conflict with class. It is your responsibility to discuss potential absences with us ahead of time if possible. If you cannot discuss it with us ahead of time, please make every effort to talk to us as soon as you can.

# Schedule (1 of 5)

## Week 1: August 24 & 26

### Intro and What is Anthropology? What is Sport?

Reading 8/24:

1. [COVID-19 & Athletes](#)
2. [Loving sports when they don't love you back](#)

Assignments: None

Reading 8/26:

1. Starn, 2011 – on Canvas
2. Guttman, 1978 – on Canvas
3. [Anthropology Days 1904](#)

Assignment:  
1) Writing Response #1 on 8/27

## Week 2: August 31 & September 2

### Nature vs. Nurture and Testosterone

Reading 8/31:

1. Tucker & Collins, 2012 – on Canvas
2. [Are Athletes Born or Built](#)
3. [Are Athletes Getting Better, Faster, Stronger?](#)
4. [Japan's Fast Track](#)

Assignments: None

Reading 9/2:

1. Jordan-Young & Karkazis – on Canvas
2. The Trouble with Testosterone – on Canvas
3. [Science of Steroids](#)
4. [I'm Sick and Scared](#)

Assignment:  
1) Writing Response #2 on 9/3

## Week 3: September 7 & 9

### Sexism & Sports I & II

Reading 9/7:

1. [Differences between women and men](#)
2. [Where are the women researchers?](#)
3. [Athletic performance & the menstrual cycle](#)

Assignments: None

Reading 9/9:

1. [Jenn McClearen Interview](#)
2. [Unequal treatment for college women's basketball players has deep historical roots](#)
3. [Sweating through a gym's gender barriers](#)

Assignment:  
1) Writing Response #3 on 9/10

# Schedule (2 of 5)

## Week 4: September 14 & 16 Sexism & Sports III & IV

September 14: MOVIE DAY – League of their Own

Assignments: **Infographic!**

Reading 9/16:  
Possibly none...

Assignment:  
1) Writing Response #4 on 9/17

## Week 5: September 21 & September 23 Transgender Athletes I & II

Reading 9/21:

1. Dubois & Shattuck-Heidorn, 2021 – on Canvas
2. [Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes is Overly Simplistic](#)
3. Harper et al., 2020 – on Canvas
4. Ashley & Xu, 2021 – on Canvas

Assignments: None

Reading 9/23:

1. [The Playing Field](#)
2. [Living Nonbinary in a Binary Sports World](#)
3. [Namibian Teens Vow to Fight Olympics Testosterone Ban](#)
4. [Stop Erasing Transgender Stories from History](#)

Assignment:  
1) Writing Response #5 on 9/24

## Week 6: September 28 & 30 Transgender Athletes III & IV

September 28: MOVIE DAY – Changing the Game

Also, if you have Netflix, you should watch *Transformer*

Assignments: None

Reading 9/30:

Possibly none...

Assignment:  
1) Writing Response #6 on 10/1

# Schedule (3 of 5)

## Week 7: October 5 & 7 Human Evolution and Sports

Reading 10/5:

1. [Five Ways Humans Evolved to be Athletes](#)
2. Longman et al., 2020 – pdf on Canvas
3. [Evolution of Bipedalism](#)
4. Bramble & Lieberman, 2004 – pdf on Canvas

Assignments: None

Reading 10/7:

1. [Evolution of Throwing](#) – pdf also on Canvas
2. [Evolution of Punching](#)
3. Lombardo & Deaner, 2018 – pdf on Canvas

Assignment:

1) Writing Response #7 on 10/8

## Week 8: October 12 & October 14 Performance & the Body I & II

Reading 10/12:

1. [The First Bodybuilding Show](#)
2. Abrisketa, 2013 – on Canvas
3. [Forcing women out of clothing is just as violent as forcing them into it](#)

Assignments: None

Reading 10/14:

1. [Police, Protest, Pandemic, & the end of the 9/11 era](#)
2. [Sunisa Lee is representing America](#)
3. Brown, 2015 – on Canvas

Assignment:

1) Writing Response #8 on 10/15

## Week 9: FALL BREAK NO CLASS OCTOBER 19 & 21

## Week 10: October 26 & 28 Race & Sports I & II

Reading 10/26:

1. [We need to talk about whiteness](#)
2. [In the NBA, Zip Code Matters](#) – also on Canvas
3. [Football Island](#)

Assignments: None

Reading 10/28:

1. [Race, Genetics, & Pseudoscience](#)
2. [Speaking of Race](#)
3. Darwin's Athletes Chapter 10 – on Canvas
4. Darwin's Athletes Chapter 12 – on Canvas

Assignment:

1) Writing Response #9 on 10/29

# Schedule (4 of 5)

## Week 11: November 2 & 4 Race & Sports III & IV

Reading 11/2:

1. Thangaraj, 2015 – on Canvas
2. [Shalini Shankar Book Talk \(first 46 minutes\)](#)

Assignment: **Origin of Sports**

Reading 11/4:

1. [The Olympics rely on, but don't support Black girl magic](#) – also on Canvas
2. [NFL's Racist "Race Norming"](#)
3. [Now it's the penalty kick test](#)
4. [The Plantation](#)

Assignment:

1) Writing Response #10 on 11/5

## Week 12: November 9 & 11 Race & Sports V & VI

November 9: MOVIE DAY – Black Ice

Assignments: None

Reading 11/11:  
Possibly none...

Assignment:

1) Writing Response #11 on 11/12

## Week 13: November 16 & 18 Fit, but Fat and Body Image

Reading 11/16:

1. [Issues with BMI](#)
2. [Fit, but Fat the Controversy Continues](#)
3. [The Racial Language of Fat Phobia](#)

Assignments:

Writing Response #12 on 11/19

**NOVEMBER 18 NO CLASS! CANADA AND OCOBOCK AT A CONFERENCE**



# Schedule (5 of 5)

## Week 14: November 23 & 25 Sports Nutrition

Reading 11/23:

1. [Not a Day for Salads](#)
2. Evolution of Athlete Diets – pdf on Canvas

Assignments: None

**NOVEMBER 25 NO CLASS!!!! THANKSGIVING**

## Week 15: November 30 & December 2 High Altitude & Baseball

Reading 11/30:

1. Beall, 2005 – pdf on Canvas
2. [What happens when you climb Everest](#)
3. [Chaos at the Top of the World](#)

Assignments: None

Reading 12/2:

1. Butterworth, “Ritual in the Church of Baseball” – pdf on Canvas

Assignment:

- 1) Writing Response #13 on 12/3

## Week 16: December 7 Mental Health & Sports

Reading 12/7:

1. [Simone Biles & Black Sportswomen are amazing but not unbreakable](#)
2. Bachynski, 2021 – pdf on Canvas

Assignments:

- 1) Writing Response #14 on 12/10
- 2) **Unessay on 12/7**

# Other Notes

## Personal Notes

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing or faces a catastrophic event (death or illness in the family for example) and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Undergraduate Studies (574-631-7098) of University Health Services (574-631-7497) for support. Furthermore, please notify us if you are comfortable doing so. This will enable us to provide any resources that we may possess.

## Privacy Statement

Course materials (videos, assignments, problem sets, etc.) are for use in this course only. You may not upload them to external sites, share with any person outside of this course, or post them for public commentary without our written permission. We are recording class meetings to support remote students and to provide everyone in the class with useful study aids. These recordings will be available for review through Canvas. The University strictly prohibits anyone from duplicating, downloading, or sharing live class recordings with anyone outside of this course, for any reason.

## Disability Services

Any student who has a documented disability and is registered with Disability Services should speak with the professor as soon as possible regarding accommodations. Students who are not registered should contact the Office of Disability Services -

<https://sarabeadisabilityservices.nd.edu>

## Disclaimers

1. You should take some time and make friends in this class. We DO NOT give out our notes if you miss class. It is your responsibility to get notes from a friend.
2. As this class is not being run in a traditional way, we reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time. We will actively seek your feedback and include it as we move through the semester. As such, it would behoove you to give us that feedback so that we can improve this class and your learning experience along the way.