**English 341: Women, Sport, and the Body in Literature**

Fall 2018 • Monday/Wednesday • 1:35-3:10 • SCB 325

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Office Hours are Monday, Wednesday from 3:3 – 5:00 and by appointment

Annie Londonderry (born Annie Cohen Kopchovsky) biked around the world in – wait for it – 1894-1895, supporting herself along the way by publishing news articles. Frances Willard—in addition to fighting for women’s rights, the eight-hour work day, equal pay for women (still working on that, huh?), and suffrage (the right to vote)—learned how to ride a bike at age 53 and wrote *A Wheel within a Wheel: How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle* in 1895. These women paved the way for athlete-authors such as Leslie Heywood (elite runner and Professor of Women and Gender Studies) and Maxine Kumin (who, along with being US Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner, was a competitive, college swimmer). These and other great women writers explore their sports and their bodies in ways that both reflect and contest societal restrictions and expectations. This course will use their texts and other essays, articles, short stories, novels, and poetry along with scholarly / theoretical essays on writing, rhetoric, sport, and the body to explore the intersections of women, sport, and the body in literature.

For women, sport has long been a site for progressive transgressions—athletically powerful female bodies disrupt the longstanding patriarchal notion of female frailty. At the turn of the 20th Century, merely riding a bike or swimming challenged gender boundaries. What boundaries are women players, coaches, officials, and fans progressively transgressing today? Challenging the very idea of boundaries?

This course has been approved for the Women’s Studies major and minor. A Women’s Studies course recognizes, analyzes, and evaluates women’s contributions to knowledge, society, and culture. As a result, students enrolled in this course can expect:

• course materials that use recognized and recent writing/scholarship by women, including feminist perspectives that represent current trends in the discipline;

• opportunities to critically/analytically evaluate the diverse situations of women, nationally or globally;

• opportunities to critically examine social forces that change or shape the situation of women;

• opportunities to analyze the effects on women from oppressive systems, e.g., imperialism, racism, sexism, and/or heterosexism;

• discussion of strategies for personal and/or social changes for the improvement of women's situations and status.

**Required Texts (in the order we’ll use them)**

Excerpts from *A Whole Other Ball Game* and other texts, posted in Canvas

Zheutlin, Peter *Around the World on Two Wheels* (non-fiction – history)

Peavy, Linda and Ursula Smith *Full-Court Quest: The Girls from Fort Shaw Indian School, Basketball*

*Champions of the World* (creative non-fiction – history)

Snyder, Carrie *Girl Runner* (fiction – novel)

Heywood, Leslie *Pretty Good for a Girl: an Athlete’s Story* (non-fiction memoir)

Muhammad, Ibtihaj *Proud: My Fight for an Unlikely American Dream* (memoir)

**Assignments**

Each of the assignments can, and in a best case scenario should, lead to the Research Essay. Use each assignment to add more and more inventory, and then shape those into one, smart essay.

10% Writing Inventory (posted in private discussion space on Canvas)

20% Team Timeline (posted in a shared discussion space on Canvas)

20% Slightly More than Midterm Exam

25% Ethnographic or Personal Essay (incorporating an individual story into the larger narrative)

25% Research Project (using archival / contemporary research to pull the threads together)

**How to be in class**

We’re going to take safe space one step further and run a brave space classroom.

Here’s the info on how to be brave in our space:

SAFE SPACE:                                                       BRAVE SPACE:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Agree to disagree | Controversy with civility; edifying disputatiousness |
| Opt out of challenges that make you uncomfortable | If you choose to opt out, ask questions about that. For example:  “How is my daily life affected by the choice to opt out of this challenge?  How is the daily life of the group we’re talking about affected?” |
| No attacks | Acknowledge attack vs. challenge.  Attack: “You’re a jerk.” Challenge: “I find that comment heterosexist.” |
| Don’t take it personally | Own your intentions and your impact |
| Respect | Group-determined norms of what “respect” means to us |

In sum, get ready for some tough and frank conversations about race, sex, class, genders, religion. I’ll periodically ask you for feedback on how we’re doing with Brave Space.  Don’t expect to learn how to do this all at once.  It’ll take time, and we’ll make mistakes along the way, *and that’s ok*. We’re likely a little too detached if we’re not making a mistake now and again. What’s important is what we do *after* we make the mistake: talk, read, research, listen, learn. Learn. **We’re not here to prove we know everything already; we’re here to be open to learn things, possibly things we never knew existed.**

(Note: Information on Safe Space / Brave Space comes from, Dr. Lucia Pawlowski. Dr. P. relied on the article ““From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces: A New Way to Frame Dialogue around Diversity and Social Justice” by Brian Arao and Kristi Clemens.)

**Game Notes: Appreciation, Apology, Aha!**

At the end of many classes, we’ll have about 5 minutes to share something we appreciated, something we want to apologize for, and/or something that turned on the proverbial lightbulb. I’ll ask for five volunteers and/or will call on five folks to share an appreciation, an apology, or an aha! moment.

**Class Attendance** is required. Just like you wouldn’t miss a practice, don’t miss class. If you miss more than four classes, your grade will suffer significantly. If you miss more than six classes, you are in danger of failing the class. Why? Because writing is not just product, it’s also process. I don’t want you here to prove that you already know how to read and write and think; I want you in here so that you do all of that much, much better than you imagined possible. Also, we are a community of scholars. If you are gone, we’ll miss you. If you miss class, f**irst, ask a classmate** about missed information. Then, if you need further clarification, come to office hours with specific questions. Be proactive.

**Special Circumstances?**

**Military veteran or in the military reserves?** Please let me know if you have any particular time / space / learning accommodations, and I’ll do my best to create a navigable classroom and schedule for you.

**First Gen?** Well, right on, friend! Let me know if I can help you figure out any higher ed craziness… because there will definitely be some situations that feel weird and crazy.

**Missing class because of UST sports?** I’d much appreciate an official coach’s note with dates you’ll be missing class.

**LGBTQ / gender-nonconforming?** If you have a pronoun preference, please let me know so I can address you in the way you’re most comfortable.

**Everyone –** please email or stop by office hours if you’re having trouble learning, reading, writing, discussing, researching, or just being in class. Learning can be and sometimes should be uncomfortable, but only in a way that prompts growth and not ever in a way that makes you feel diminished.

A note on electronics: use them to supplement rather than distract from your learning. If it seems to me that your phone or laptop is hindering your full presence in class, I’ll email you, and we’ll chat.

**Late Papers / Missed Team or Solo Presentations**

Notify me as soon as you know something will be missed / late. I will be as fair as possible to you and to your classmates in an attempt to hold everyone to the same high standards. Life sometimes interrupts learning, so there is some flexibility. The structure I use for writing, revising, and turning in formal essays allows for a little bit of pressure to get drafts in (for workshop days) and some pressure release to accommodate a variety of writing processes (revise at your own pace until the end of the semester).

**Finally…even if you’re pressed for time and really tempted to take the “easy” way out, don’t cheat**. Don’t have your parent (or anyone else) write or edit your papers. Don’t forget to cite all of the sources you consult. You are scholars and therefore are required to hold yourselves to high academic standards. Be proud of yourself & the work you accomplish; don’t steal someone else’s stuff.

* ***Missing more than four classes could significantly lower your grade for this course.***
* ***Missing more than six classes could result in failure*.**

**Need Some Assistance?**

**Consult the Center for Writing**   
The Center for Writing (JRC 361, right beside my office) is for any writer at any level who wants some qualified, one-on-one input on any writing issue for any class. I’m quite fond of the Center for Writing.

Make an appointment or walk in. Contact info: [writing@stthomas.edu](mailto:writing@stthomas.edu) OR 651-962-5601

**Disability Resources**

Get in touch with Kim and Katy in MHC 110 or call @ 651-962-6315; they are great and helpful folks. Further information: [www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/](http://www.stthomas.edu/enhancementprog/).

**Grading Scale: A=superior; B=above avg.; C=average; D=below avg.; F=far below avg.**

94-100 = A 90-93 = A- 87-89 = B+ 84-86 = B 80-83 = B- 77-79 = C+

74-76 = C 70-73 = C- 67-69 = D+ 64-66 = D 60-63 = D- < 60 = F

**Assignments—detailed explanations**

**Writing Inventory (10%)**

* 7-minute writings done outside of class used to jumpstart your participation in discussion.
* Informal, typed in Discussion link in Canvas (each of you have a private Discussion link w/ me)
* Graded almost entirely in terms of quantity (i.e. # of total entries, not necessarily length of entries), but bonus points for citing passages that you are responding too. Plus, citing passages may prove useful later in the semester as you figure out your ethnographic and research papers.
* **Write** reactions to the prompt and / or the reading—*reactions* rather than *summary*.
* **Days that you are responsible Writing Inventory are clearly marked on our schedule.**

**Team Timeline (20%)**

* Using TimeToast (a very easy online timeline tool), three teammates will choose a topic and create a timeline of significant events related to our readings and to women, sport, and the body more generally. Examples: Women’s Basketball; Women’s Olympic Marathon; Women Athletes and Gender Testing; Women in Professional Coaching and Team Ownership; Women Sports Reporters
* Each team member will contribute five or more significant entries to the timeline. These entries will include a few paragraphs of historical information, pictures and video as they are available and relevant, and short assessment of the importance of the moment to the overall timeline narrative.
* Each team member will include at least one poem or passage, from our readings (you may have to look ahead) or from their own library or archival searches. It should be appropriate to the topic of the timeline. And, each team member, within the text block in which the poem / passage is added, offer a two paragraph close reading and explanation of the chosen poem / passage. Additionally, include commentary on how this choice reflects or refutes the emerging narrative of the timeline.
* The team will write a synopsis of what their timeline shows us. That is, what story does it tell; what visible or invisible narrative about women, sport, and / or the body does this help to create for us today? Write about where we have been and where, it seems, that we might be going.
* Each team will post their timeline to our Canvas site and will show and explain it to the class.

**Slightly More than Midterm Exam (20%)**

Eschewing “Fight vs. Flight” and embracing “Tend & Befriend,” we will be conducting our exam in a somewhat novel way. I’ll give you the exam questions one class day before test turn in day, and you’ll have the majority of the class period to consult with each other about your answers. Yep, help each other out. Talk through possible essay responses. Then, at the end of class, you’re on your honor to spend no more than two hours total polishing up your essays on your own before turning in the exam at the beginning of the following class. Essays are open book, as well. Enjoy collaborative edification.

**Ethnographic or Autoethnographic Essay (25%)**

Where do we find women at work or at play in the world of sport? This assignment asks you, in creative and interesting ways, to bring together what you know and what you’ve learned about women, sport, and the body by observing or participating in the culture of women’s sports. Observe or experience a place, a game, an event—the actions, the people, the site; do some research on it; and write about it. Examples include volunteering for Girls on the Run 5k, attending a Minnesota RollerGirls bout or a Minnesota Twin Cities Amazons Rugby match. Visit a mostly male sports space, or, visit a mostly female sports space. More details to come, but this assignment asks you to weave together information you’ve acquired from our readings, from your historical research, from your contemporary research, and from your personal experience and observation. Autoethnography is a way to make ethnography first-person personal.

**Research Project (25%)**

**~7 page Literature and / or Theory focused Research Essay (25%)**

* Inspired by class readings and assignments, expand / reshape / revise your writing and research to create a ~7-page literature and / or theory focused essay
* Use the assignments you’ve completed thus far as building blocks for the Research Essay. Use all three to explore one important topic. Examples: women’s dress reform; bicycling and social and political reform; female gendered words as sports pejoratives; the fight to allow women in the Olympic games (or some particular sport within the games); sport and the procreative body, etc.
* Include at least one close reading analysis of a passage from our course texts.
* Reference one or more of our theoretical or historical texts
* A very rough draft of your essay will be due during that last month of the term so I can give you some feedback, but feel free to pop in to office hours anytime to talk over ideas

**All schedules may be altered. *Check with classmates* if you miss class.**

**Women, Sport, History, and Agency (*or* Women are Change-Making Badasses)**

**Questions to Consider**: What makes a person an athlete? How does sport reflect society? How does sport create society? Do we tend to categorize women’s sport as participatory and men’s sport as competitive—historically and / or in present day? What normalized narratives has sport created?

**Primary Texts**: *Around the World on Two Wheels* and *Full-Court Quest*

**Primary Assignment**: Interactive, Online Timeline

**Video**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5d80Rxefh4> (The Schimmel Effect)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Reading due:**  **Come to class having read the following…** | **Writing due:**  **Come to class having written…** | **In Class Activities:**  **This is how we’ll use that reading and writing for better learning** |
| Wednesday  September 5 |  |  | •Syllabus and description of assignments  •intro to compost writing  **writing prompts**:  What is the function of sport in society? What is the function of sport for women? What is the function of sport for men? What is the function of sport for you? How does playing a sport shape your relationship with your body?  **poetry readings**: “The Springboard”; “Skating After School”; “Competition”; “Sports Field”; “To Swim, To Believe”; “Poem for my Youth/ Poem for Young Women”  •Poetry exercise as a class and then again with poem of your choice in  teams  •Get to know each other in teams |
| Monday  September 10 | •“I Promise I Won’t Say *Her*story” by Jessica Valenti  •“Riding High” by Lynn Peril  •“Swimming as Spectacle” by Lisa Bier  •“Revenge” (1895) by Abbe Carter Goodloe  (all on Canvas) | **writing prompt**: (t**his is what you respond to for seven minutes in your Canvas Discussion)**  Make connections between one of the non-fiction articles and the short story “Revenge” written in the late 1800s | •Feminism and the Waves – lecture / discussion  •Explain Timeline Assignment  •Meet in teams  \*discussion on short stories – use  Writing Inventory  \*discuss ideas for Timeline, play  around with TimeToast |
| Wednesday September 12 | *Around the World on Two Wheels* Prologue – Chapter 3 | **writing prompt:** What surprised you? What did you learn? What connections do you make between these first chapters and our previous  readings? | •Looking forward to semester assignments….  Opportunities for autoethnographic research: MNRG, Women’s Wellness Lab @ St. Kate’s, UST Wellness 5k, Girls on the Run  •Lecture: Republican Womanhood, the True Woman, the New Woman •Discussion on reading, using Writing Inventory |
| Monday  September 17 | •*Around the World on Two Wheels*  Chapter 4 – Chap. 7  • “Golf Lullaby” (Canvas)  • Excerpt from *A Wheel Within a Wheel* by Frances Willard (Canvas) | **writing prompt**: How do these readings show us the image of what a woman was (is?) “supposed” to be and how women pushed back against that image? | • Discussion on readings, using Writing Inventory  • Team meetings for Timelines |
| Wednesday September 19 | *Around the World on Two Wheels* Chapter 8 – Appendix | **writing prompt**: Is Annie an athlete? | • Discussion on reading, using Writing Inventory  • Terry Bicycles video |
| **Monday**  **September 24** |  |  | **Archival Research in the Library** |
| Wednesday September 26 | • *Full-Court Quest* Prologue – “‘Basket Ball for Women’ 1894”  • “Yellow Woman and the Beauty of the Spirit” Leslie Silko (Canvas) | **writing prompt**: Is sport a vehicle for assimilation? How does sport reflect the values of a society? | • Discussion on readings, using Writing Inventory  • Watch beginning of *Playing for the World* |
| Monday October 1 | *Full-Court Quest* “Elusive Dreams 1895-1896” – “Gateway to a World’s Fair 1900” + pictures | **writing prompt**: choose a topic and relate it to sports / the reading – clothing; family; identity; education | • Discussion on readings, using Writing Inventory  • Lecture on Indian Boarding Schools, sports, Carlisle, Jim Thorpe, etc. |
| Wednesday  October 3 | *Full-Court Quest* “School Spirit 1900-1901” – “’Like Lambent Flames… across the Polished Floor’ Winter 1903” | **writing prompt**: what role does news coverage have in creating narratives about gender, ethnicity, etc. | • Discussion on readings, using Writing Inventory  • Take a look at NDNSports.com; talk about Native sports stars today, esp. Shoni Schimmel (but also Sam Bradford, Bronson Koenig, etc.) |
| Monday October 8 | *Full-Court Quest* “’Like a Wall of Fire through a Cane Break’ Winter 1903  – “Showcase Season February – April 1904” | **writing prompt**: how has your narrative about Native peoples, Native athletes, or women athletes changed? | • Discussion on readings, using Writing Inventory  • Meet with teams to work on Timelines |
| Wednesday October 10 | *Full-Court Quest* “’Open Ye Gates! Swing Wide, Ye Portals!’ April 30  1904 – “The Years Thereafter” (a lot of reading!) | **writing prompt**:  what’s notable for you from the section “The Years Thereafter…”? | • Discussion on readings, using Writing Inventory  • Legacy of Native Basketball  • “The Schimmel Effect” on YouTube |
| Monday  October 15 |  |  | Presentations of Timelines  “Joan Benoit: Olympic Marathon Gold Medalist, 1984” |

Detailed schedules are forthcoming for the next groups of readings and assignments. In short they are:

**Women, Sport, and Many Variations of Body**

Approximate Dates: October 17 - 31

Texts: a variety of poems and short stories, *Girl Runner*, *Strong!* (a documentary)

Assignment: Slightly More than Midterm Exam

**Bodies in Action**

Approximate Dates: November 5 – 21

Texts: a variety of poems and short stories, *Pretty Good for a Girl*

Assignment: Ethnography or Autoethnography

**Sport and Social Change**

Approximate Dates: November 26 – December 10

Text: *Proud*

Assignment: Research Project

On Wednesday, December 12, we’ll have a writing retreat to help with the Research Project and any revision of the Ethnography / Autoethnography. Final drafts of both of those writing assignments will be due at the end of Finals Week, on December 21st. I’ll be available for conferences throughout the week.