

Women in Sports

Course Information

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This course is required for all Women's and Gender Studies Majors and is also an elective for Kinesiology Majors. This is required for all Women's and Gender Studies majors because the sports industry is huge, and the discrimination against women is throughout the whole industry. This is an elective for kinesiology majors to learn how the sports industry has adapted; it will count towards three of the nine elective credits needed.

Course Description

Women in sports will give examples of how women in the sports industry are underrepresented and discriminated against because of their gender. This course will focus on how women compare to men in many aspects of sport: Opportunities, Salary, Media Coverage, etc. It will also focus on Title IX and who made that possible.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: *Equal Athletic Opportunities: Title IX*

BIG Question: How has the athletic industry changed for women since 1972?
Argument of the Unit: In 1972 Title IX was signed; this law gave women equal opportunities within athletics.
Key Words: Sex Discrimination, Educational Amendment, Women, Title IX, Equality, Athletics,
Link to Reading: Getting in the Game
Annotation of Reading: In <i>Getting in the Game</i> , a book written by Deborah Brake, she breaks down the real meaning behind the law Title IX, and how it affected the sports industry. On June 23rd, 1972 the rights of women changed; Title IX was created to prevent sex discrimination in educational institutions. Women of this time period advocated for the athletic programs to be equal between the men and women because before Nixon signed Title IX women at universities had to participate in club sports and payed out of pocket for uniforms, equipment, etc. Brake explains how Title IX changes and creates many opportunities for women all across the country. This book shows how women were not thought of as equals until after 1972, and it shows how Title IX has paved a way for women in all different fields including sports.

Unit 2: How Was Title IX Possible?

BIG Question: Why was Title IX signed?
Argument of the Unit: Groups of female athletes joined together and pushed for equal rights because they were tired of being treated as inferiors.
Key Words: “Original Nine,” Tomboys, Implementation, “Failing to prepare is preparing to fail,” ladylike
Link to Reading: Sisterhood
Annotation of Reading: In “Pioneering Female Athletes Laid the Foundation,” a chapter from <i>Sisterhood in sports: how female athletes collaborate and compete</i> , Joan Steidinger argues that women have been underrepresented in the sports industry all throughout history. She claims that one of the reasons Title IX was passed was because of a group of female tennis players called the “Original Nine.” They fought for equal rights for female athletes in all levels competition, but they mainly focused on the professional level. The professional level was not affected as much as the high school and collegiate levels, because more federal funding goes toward the lower levels. This text is important because without women who were brave enough to stand up for what they believed women’s athletics may not exist. This shows that women are strong enough to make a difference even though they are not taken seriously in a male dominated industry.

Unit 3: How Women View Themselves: Inspiring Women that Push the Boundaries

BIG Question: How can women in the sports industry create respect for themselves?
Argument of the Unit: Eight women expose their bodies to show strength and independence.
Key Words: Body Image, Body Issue, Openly Gay, Self-Conscious, Legacy
Link to Reading: Lauren Chamberlain , Breanna Stewart , Charlotte Flair , Crystal Dunn , Jessie Diggins , Tori Bowie , Sue Bird and Megan Rapinoe (All one source; I just provided the links to the women’s articles)
Annotation of Reading: <i>ESPN Body Issue 2018</i> is a magazine produced by ESPN’s senior writer, Alyssa Roenigk, and she focuses on eight female athletes that break the boundaries of the “norm” in society. All eight of these women agreed to put their nude bodies on a very famous magazine for the entire world to see. They show that women should be confident in their own skin, and to not conform to society’s thought of a perfect body. In the article, “Rapinoe on Body Issue cover: ‘Visibility is important,’ Sue Bird and Megan Rapinoe are open about their gay relationship; This is the first openly gay couple to be on ESPN’s Body Issue. ESPN chose these eight women because they are strong, independent and love to challenge society’s way of thinking. This Magazine is important because it shows that women in the sports industry do not give up when faced with gender barriers.

Unit 4: *Equal job Opportunities Require Hard Work When You are a Woman*

BIG Question: Do women have the same opportunities in a male-dominated industry?
Argument of the Unit: Women have the same opportunities in male-dominated industries, but they have to work harder to prove themselves.
Key Words: Diamonds, Minor League, Male-Dominated Industry, MLB, Career Struggles
Link to Reading: Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend
Annotation of Reading: “Diamonds are a Girl’s Best Friend,” a documentary, by Sara Knight, focuses on a woman named Nicole Sherry McFadyen; she defied the odds and became the head groundskeeper for the Baltimore Orioles, a Major League Baseball team. The sports industry is more focused on the men, but the MLB is definitely based around men, and it was a struggle for McFadyen to rise to the top. She knew that to be the best she would have to prove herself, and she also knew that being a woman would set her back, but she did not let this stop her. She did not let the men stand in the way of her goals. This documentary shows us how equal opportunities are out there for women, but obstacles are definitely going to come up, and most of them will be because of gender. Women will have to work harder to become represented in the sports industry.

Unit 5: *Media Coverage of Women in Sports*

BIG Question: If and when women are covered by the sports media, how are they portrayed?
Argument of the Unit: Women in the sports field are always oversexualized and never seen as the true athlete they are because “Sex Sells.”
Key Words: Gender Equity, Bitch or Butch, Sex Sells Sex, Coverage, Homophobia, Sexualized
Link to Reading: Media Coverage of Women's Sports
Annotation of Reading: The documentary, “Media Coverage and Female Athletes,” created by, University of Minnesota Tucker Center, argues how women are not covered in the sports media, and if they are, they are over sexualized. It is proven that there is little interest in watching female athletes because “They don’t look pretty in the uniforms,” and when there is no interest the media will not cover the events. This is why when we see female athletes on magazines, television, and social media, we see them in highly sexualized ways. The media believes that “sex sells,” and that is the only way that women will receive interest. Compared to the men’s sports, women only receive 4% of the media coverage and this has declined in recent years because women are being portrayed as the athlete they are and not models. This video shows how women have to use their bodies in oversexualized ways to receive society’s attention. This is important because it shows that women are not thought of as equals, and how they have to provide “fake” media for their sport to receive interest and coverage.

Unit 6: Pay Gap

BIG Question: Is there truly a pay gap between men and women sports?
Argument of the Unit: It is proven that women in the sports industry are underpaid, even though they have the same success as men.
Key Words: Pay Gap, Underpaid, Pay Parity, Commercialization, Perspective, Gender Blind, Systematic Barriers
Link to Reading: Gender Pay Gap
Annotation of Reading: In the article, “Sport has a Huge Gender Pay Gap,” Rosamond Hutt argues that female athletes have significantly lower salaries than the male athletes. Hutt claims that this pay gap will not improve because, “The sport industry is governed by men.” Male athletes receive higher sponsorships, contracts, endorsements, etc. because there is more interest in their sports. Hutt says that the sport industry is more focused on the sponsorships and this is where the pay gap comes from; the athletes are paid the same for playing their sport, but the third party is paying more for male athletes. This text shows how female athletes are just passed by; the big third-party corporations are more focused on making a profit more than supporting all athletes. This is important because it shows how low representation of women's sports effects the athlete in all aspects.

Unit 7: Female Sport Journalists

BIG Question: Are women also treated unfairly in sports media?
Argument of the Unit: The sports media field is a very male-dominated field, and the percentage of female journalist is microscopic compared to men journalists.
Key Words: Hegemonic Masculinity, “Toy Department,” Equity, Discrimination, SA & SD
Link to Reading: Women Sport Journalists
Annotation of Reading: In “The Current State of Women Print Journalist: An Analysis of the Status and Careers of Females in Newspapers Sports Departments,” a peer reviewed article written by, Kimberly Miloch, she argues how the sports media field is based around males, and how women do not get opportunities. Women have excelled in this industry when given the chance, but this success does not shine bright enough to level the playing field with the men. If a female is given the chance to prove herself in this field, there has been many reports of sexual harassment. Women are being pushed away from working in this field because the sports media industry is male-dominated. This text is important because it shows that not just the athletes receive discrimination, but all females in this industry.