

FALL SEMESTER 2009
College of Applied Health Sciences
Department of Kinesiology and Community Health
KIN 199, Sport, Play and Ethnography, 3 credits

CRN 51837, sec. D3
Tuesdays 6:00-8:50 PM, 224 Freer

Instructor: Dr. Synthia Sydnor
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Course description

This course, a First Year Discovery Program *and* Ethnography of the University Initiative (EUI), has two major interrelated aims:

1. the course introduces students to cultural ethnographic method/theory and criticism related to the study of contemporary sport and play. This is accomplished by sampling both older “classic” works and recent significant projects in the area of study.
2. throughout the semester, students are engaged in group work that conducts original primary research/ fieldwork/ethnography¹ centered on skateboarding and the University of Illinois community. The work of the semester is not so much on a final “polished” ethnography, but rather upon ongoing reflection of issues such as:
 - What are the key terms, questions, data, and significance of my unique project?
 - Is sport a unique cultural formation? What about the anthropology of skateboarding and skateboard culture?
 - What links can be made between my work and others ideas/experiences?
 - How can we make a difference with my project? What conflicts, issues, etc. may begin to reach resolution through the contribution of my work?
 - In what genres/forms can we communicate the above to others?

More details

We will use MOODLE (a course management system and community) to manage and communicate our ongoing work in the course.

For the first 7 weeks of the semester, students will create/submit individual work. For the next 9 weeks, students will work in groups. Each group will conduct research and engage in the process of creating an ethnography. All student groups will be responsible for short (5 minute), informal presentations or the creation of unique professional posters for December 3 2009 EUI's Student Mini-Conference. All groups must also submit a final document of their semester-long ethnographic work. The final ethnographies will be preserved in IDEALS (Illinois Digital Environment for Access to Learning and Scholarship), for future students, and others, to draw upon.

Required readings

Kyle Kusz, *Revolt of the White Athlete: Race, Media and the Emergence of Extreme Athletes in America*.
New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007

¹ “Because EUI involves sustained ethnographic inquiry and research on human subjects, all data collection are carried out in compliance with carefully defined research protocols approved by the Institutional Review Board. Students will be responsible for EUI consent forms, intellectual property forms, and research summary forms. Towards the end of the semester, EUI student submit research summaries to the IRB, documenting the number of subjects interviewed (including their demographic profiles), where interviews took place, and how subjects were recruited to participate” accessed at http://www.eui.uiuc.edu/resources_board.html

Other readings are available on E-reserve, accessed through the Library gateway:

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/>

Online tutorial for E-reserves:

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/ipm/reserves.html>

See also Applied Health Sciences Library

<http://www.library.illinois.edu/alx/>

Other readings will be distributed in class or accessed through the internet.

Classroom policies

To insure that disability-related concerns are properly addressed from the beginning, students who require assistance to participate in this class are asked to contact me as soon as possible.

Attendance, academic integrity, etc.: All rules, rights and responsibilities as outlined in the most recent UIUC Student Code will be followed in this course; see

<http://www.admin.illinois.edu/policy/code/index.html>

Please take note of these specific class policies:

Class attendance, preparation, discussion, and participation in the online portion of the class are expected. There are no opportunities for extra credit in the course and late work will not be accepted. To get credit for work, students must be on time and present for the entire class meeting on the due date.

Assignments and grading

MOODLE entries	20%	
Individual in-class work		20%
Group work		20%
EUI's Student Mini-Conference presentation or poster ²		20%
Final project		20%

Grade Scale

91-100	A
81-90	B
71-80	C
61-70	D
0- 60	F

² The EUI conference gives students a chance to present their findings in a professional conference environment, expand their connections with fellow researchers, discover different ways of approaching their topics, and make connections to new lines of inquiry. These student projects will soon become part of EUI's IDEALS Archives and serve as resources for future student research on the university.

Semester Schedule

August 25

Introduction to the course and EUI

September 1

Enroll in Moodle, add yourself as participant, and contribute to the "About the Author" block (found under "Student Research Projects" then "Add entry")

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus*, Fall 2005, Vol. 134, No. 4, pp. 56-86. Originally published *Daedalus*, Winter 1972. Article available at

<http://www.communication.illinois.edu/csandvig/classes/Geertz.pdf>

or

<http://www.si.umich.edu/~rfrost/courses/MatCult/content/Geertz.pdf>

In-class screening: *Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism*; and selections from Seinfeld, "The Little Jerry" (original air date December 1996).

September 8

Michael L. Silk, "Sporting Ethnography: Philosophy, Methodology and Reflection," in David L. Andrews, Daniel S. Mason and Michael L. Silk, eds., *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005, pp. 65-103. (e-reserve)

Catherine Palmer, "'Shit Happens': The Selling of Risk in Extreme Sport," *The Australian Journal of Anthropology*, 2002, 13/3, 323-336. (e-reserve)

In-class screening: *Wrestling with Manhood: Boys, Bullying and Battering* (2002, Media Education Foundation).

September 15

IRB and EUI course orientation from the EUI Directors

Belinda Wheaton, "Windsurfing: A Culture of Commitment," in Robert E. Rinehart and Synthia Sydnor, eds., *To the Extreme: Alternative Sports, Inside and Out*. State University of New York Press, 2005, chap. 5, pp. 75-101. (e-reserve)

September 22

Iain Borden, *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body*. New York and Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001, Chapter 1. (e-reserve)

In class screening (selections) of *Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2002, Columbia TriStar).

September 29

Iain Borden, *Skateboarding, Space and the City: Architecture and the Body*. New York and Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2001, Chapters 5 and 7. (e-reserve)

In-class screening of *Chlorine: A Pool Skating Documentary* (2003, Chlorine Films);

October 6

Rachel Dilley, "Climbing Tales: Gendered Body Narratives and Stories of Strength," Centre for Interdisciplinary Gender Studies, Conference Proceedings—"Thinking Gender—the NEXT Generation. UK Postgraduate Conference in Gender Studies, 21-22 June 2006, University of Leeds, UK, e-paper no. 14. (e-reserve)

Holly Thorpe, "Foucault, Technologies of Self, and the Media: Discourses of Femininity in Snowboarding Culture," *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* May 2008 32, 199-229. (e-reserve)

In-class screening: *Playing Unfair: The Media Image of the Female Athlete* (2002, Media Education Foundation, 2006).

October 13

Kyle Kusz, *Revolt of the White Athlete: Race, Media and the Emergence of Extreme Athletes in America*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007, Preface, pp. 1-104.

October 20

Kyle Kusz, *Revolt of the White Athlete: Race, Media and the Emergence of Extreme Athletes in America*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2007, pp. 105-187.

In-class screening of selections from *Murderball* (2005, Velocity/Thinkfilm) and *Dogtown and Z-Boys* (2002, Columbia TriStar).

October 27

David J. Leonard, "To the White Extreme: Conquering Athletic Space, White Manhood, and Racing Virtual Reality," in Nate Garrelts, ed., *Digital Gameplay: Essays on the Nexus of Game and Gamer*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2005, pp. 110-129. (e-reserve)

Maureen Margaret Smith and Becky Beal, "'So You Can See How the Other Half Lives': MTV 'Cribbs' Use of 'the Other' in Framing Successful Athletic Masculinities," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 31/2, May 2007, 103-127. (e-reserve)

November 3, 10, 17, 30

Ethnographic and archival research

December 1

Practice group project presentations

December 3, 3:00-8:00 PM

Student presentations at the EUI campus-wide conference

December 8

Important final class meeting: DEADLINE for all IRB and EUI consent forms to be turned in
ICES evaluations

Friday December 18, 10:00 PM

Submission deadline for final group ethnography projects (upload to Moodle and submit (email attachment or hard copy) to Sydnor.

Draft questions for group research

1. Attempt to create a history(s) of skateboarding at UIUC. Sources/Evidence? methods? How does such local history mirror, contest, etc., the mainstream histories of skateboarding that are reproduced in global skateboard genre films, videography, print media, blogs, etc.? Reflect on your evidence/history using Kyle Kusz, *Revolt of the White Athlete: Race, Media and the Emergence of Extreme Athletes in America*, other class material, and previous EUI projects (IDEALS).
2. Tell us about present-day UIUC skate leaders, innovators, subcultures and/or groups at UIUC. Reflect on campus/societal/ legal issues related to skateboarding on campus. Use previous EUI projects (IDEALS) to inform your project. Interpret your evidence using Kyle Kusz, *Revolt of the White Athlete: Race, Media and the Emergence of Extreme Athletes in America* and other class material.
3. Use a specific chapter and/or a particular idea from Ian Borden's *Skateboarding Space and the City: Architecture and the Body* to design and carry through a mini ethnography of skateboarding on UIUC property. To carry out this project, obtain ideas from class material and previous EUI projects (IDEALS).