

McGill University
 McGill Institute for the Study of Canada
**CANS401: Contemporary Issues in Canadian Sport:
 Labour, Harm, and Abuse**



Instructor:	Derek Silva, Ph.D.	Year/Term:	Fall 2023
Office:	TBD	Phone:	N/A
Email:	Derek.silva@mcgill.ca	Office Hours:	Office hours held Monday 10AM-11AM (Office TBD)

Course Information

Contemporary Issues in Canadian Sport: Labour, Harm, and Abuse

Sport is perhaps the most popular form of culture in society today. For many, sport provides an outlet for pleasure and relaxation and can function as an ‘opiate’ to negotiate the rigors of everyday life. Yet, although sport can provide fans and onlookers with meaning, pleasure, and emotional investment, how is it experienced by those whose labour and participation are used to produce and sustain the spectacle? Indeed, the contemporary lifeworld of Canadian sport is rife with stories of harm, abuse, and exploitation by those who participate in it. Look no further than the recent Safe Sport in Canada Parliamentary hearings or the very current calls for a national judicial inquiry into abuse in Canadian sport by scholars and athletes alike. In this seminar, students explore the familiar realm of contemporary Canadian sport from a perspective that underlines the ways in which ‘play’ is transformed into work in the world of elite sport and, thus, the political economy of contemporary Canadian capitalist society. Through case-study analysis and critical engagement of scholarship within various Marxisms, postcolonial studies, labour studies, intersectionality, and gender and women’s studies, students will gain a deep, critical, appreciation for the role that athletic labour plays in broader systems of racialized, gendered, and class-based exploitation. Students will thus simultaneously develop a new critical approach to the working and participatory conditions of Canadian sport and the systems, institutions, and people that make up sporting culture. Our exploration of sport and labour will be guided by a series of questions. What is exploitation and how does it relate to sport? What is athletic labour and how might it differ from other work? What is the role of injury, trauma, violence, and abuse in athletic labour and participation? What is the role of fandom in perpetuating and sustaining athletic exploitation and other forms of harm? How is harm in Canadian sport gendered and racialized? These are but a sample of the key questions to be explored in this seminar on Contemporary Issues in Canadian Sport.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Define and describe the different forms of abuse in Canadian sport, including physical, emotional, sexual, and verbal abuse.
2. Identify the factors that contribute to the prevalence of abuse in Canadian sport, such as power dynamics, cultural and historical norms, and social attitudes towards athletes and participants.
3. Analyze the impact of abuse on athletes' physical and mental health, performance, and overall well-being.

4. Develop strategies for preventing and responding to abuse specific to Canadian sport, including creating safe and inclusive environments for athletes (SafeSport), reporting mechanisms, and athlete-centered policies and procedures, policing strategies, and national inquiries.
5. Critically evaluate current research and best practices in addressing abuse in sport and apply this knowledge to the Canadian sport apparatus.

Instructor Contact and Reply Policy

My preferred method of contact is via email – any course related question must be directed to derek.silva@mcgill.ca. I respond to emails within 48 hours. In the unlikely event you don't receive a response within that time frame then please send a follow-up email and make sure that it's the correct address. Please check the syllabus first as it may provide the answer to your question.

Please also treat email correspondence more formally than you would a text message to your friend (i.e., include something in the subject line; start with "Hello Professor" or "Dear Professor Silva" rather than "hey, I'm missing class").

You are responsible for checking the learning management system and your email account daily and responding to course-related queries in a timely manner. I always aim to return graded student work within 2 weeks and will try to expedite this to 1 week for this course.

Grading Scale

A+	$\geq 90\%$
A	80-89.99%
B	70-79.99%
C	60-69.99%
D	50-59.99%
F	$\leq 50\%$

Grades in the A+ range represent performance that is **above and beyond expectations, excellence with distinction**. I wish I produced work in the A+ range. Excellence refers to the combined results and not simply effort. While there is merit to hard work and long hours, it does not always guarantee success. Grades in the A range represent **very good work at this level – work superior to peers**. Grades in the B range represent performance that **meets expectations and is considered good work at the level**. Grades in the C range represent performance that is **satisfactory at this level**. Grades in the D range represent performance that is **unsatisfactory, but effort has been thoroughly demonstrated**. Grades in the F range represent performance that is entirely **unsatisfactory for this level of university**. Grades will not be up for negotiation.

Grade Distribution

Description	Points	Percentage of Final Grade	Due Date
Participation	150	15%	Weekly
Critical Issue Analysis	250	25%	October 30 th
Weekly Reflection & Questions	150	15%	Weekly
Final Expert Brief Presentation	100	10%	December 4 th
Final Expert Brief Written	350	35%	December 4 th
TOTAL	1000	100%	

Language of Submission

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. This does not apply to courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives. (Approved by Senate on 21 January 2009)

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue).

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). *L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site <http://www.mcgill.ca/integrity>).*

Tentative Course Outline:

September 11: Introduction to Abuse in Canadian Sport

- Definitions and types of abuse in sport
- The prevalence of abuse in sport
- The importance of addressing abuse in sport
- Readings:
 - [Stirling, A. E., Bridges, E. J., Cruz, E. L., & Mountjoy, M. L. \(2011\). Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine position paper: Abuse, harassment, and bullying in sport. *Clinical journal of sport medicine*, 21\(5\), 385-391.](#)
- **Case Study (read):** [The 1990 Dubin Inquiry](#)
- **Podcast (listen):** ["Abuse and Harm in Canadian Sport," The End of Sport](#)

September 18: No class – professor at academic conference

September 25th: Power Dynamics in Sport

- The role of coaches, athletes, and other stakeholders in the sporting context
- The influence of power and authority in creating an environment that enables abuse
- Understanding the dynamics of abusive relationships
- **Readings:**
 - [Kerr, G., Kidd, B., & Donnelly, P. \(2020\). One step forward, two steps back: the struggle for child protection in Canadian sport. *Social Sciences*, 9\(5\), 68.](#)
 - [Raakman, E., Dorsch, K., & Rhind, D. \(2010\). The development of a typology of abusive coaching behaviours within youth sport. *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 5\(4\), 503-515.](#)
- Podcast: [Talking Gymnastics with Jessica O'Beirne of GymCastic](#) OR [History and Harm in Gymnastics with Georgia Cervin](#) OR [How to End Abusive Coaching: A Discussion with Dr Amy Saltzman, Dr Jennifer Fraser and Mitch Lyons](#), Changing The Game Project

October 2nd: Physical Abuse in Sport & Sport in the Residential School system

- Understanding physical abuse in the context of sport

- The impact of physical abuse on athletes
- Prevention and response strategies for physical abuse
- **Readings:**
 - [McKee, T., & Forsyth, J. \(2019\). Witnessing painful pasts: Understanding images of sports at Canadian Indian residential schools. *Journal of Sport History*, 46\(2\), 175-188.](#)
 - [Te Hiwi, B., & Forsyth, J. \(2017\). "A rink at this school is almost as essential as a classroom": Hockey and discipline at Pelican Lake Indian Residential School, 1945–1951. *Canadian Journal of History*, 52\(1\), 80-108.](#)
- **Case Study:** Sport & Abuse in The Residential School System
- **Guest Speaker: Janice Forsyth (TBC)**

October 16th: Emotional and Verbal Abuse in Sport

- Defining emotional and verbal abuse in sport
- The impact of emotional and verbal abuse on athletes
- Prevention and response strategies for emotional and verbal abuse
- **Readings:**
 - [Kavanagh, E., Brown, L., & Jones, I. \(2017\). Elite athletes' experience of coping with emotional abuse in the coach-athlete relationship. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 29\(4\), 402-417.](#)
 - [Stirling, A. E., & Kerr, G. A. \(2008\). Defining and categorizing emotional abuse in sport. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 8\(4\), 173-181.](#)
- **Case Study:** [2022-23 Standing Committee of the Status of Women in Sport Hearings](#)

October 23rd: Sexual Abuse in Sport

- The prevalence of sexual abuse in sport
- The impact of sexual abuse on athletes
- Prevention and response strategies for sexual abuse
- **Readings:**
 - [Brackenridge, C. \(1997\). HE OWNED ME BASICALLY...! Women's Experience of Sexual Abuse in Sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 32\(2\), 115-130.](#)
 - [Demers, É., Lessard, G., Parent, S., & Paradis, H. \(2023\). Athlete victims of sexual violence: links to conformity to the sport ethic. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 20\(2\), 101-117.](#)
 - ["Sex offences against minors: Investigation reveals more than 200 Canadian coaches convicted in last 20 years," by Lori Ward and Jamie Strashin](#)
- **Case Study (WATCH):** [The Kyle Beach Case & Chicago NHL Franchise](#)
- **Podcast (LISTEN):** ["Rick Westhead on Sexual Abuse in Hockey."](#) *Burn It All Down Podcast*
- **Guest Speaker:** Rick Westhead (TBC)

October 30th: Labour Exploitation and Financial Abuse in Sport

- **Case Study:** The Case of Canadian Soccer Association
- **Readings:**
 - [Kalman-Lamb, N. \(2019\). Athletic labor and social reproduction. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 43\(6\), 515-530.](#)
 - ["A Horrific Canadian Soccer Story" by Ciara McCormick](#)
 - ["In the silence ahead of Women's World Cup, Canada Soccer continues to fail women's national team" by Shireen Ahmed](#)
 - ["Canada's National Women's Soccer Team Wants Equal Pay" by David Moscrop](#)
- **Guest Speaker:** Ciara McCormack
- **Podcast (LISTEN):** [The End of Sport with Ciara McCormack](#)

November 6th: The Canada Hockey Debacle

- Abuse in Hockey Canada
- The toxicity of Hockey Culture
- Hockey and Canadian national identity
- Readings:
 - [Allain, K. A. \(2014\). 'What happens in the room stays in the room': conducting research with young men in the Canadian Hockey League. *Qualitative research in sport, exercise and health*, 6\(2\), 205-219.](#)
 - ["Hockey Trouble: Can the Sport Overcome its History of Neglect and Abuse," by MacIntosh Ross](#)
- **Case Study:** [The Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage Parliamentary Hearings on Hockey Canada \(WATCH\)](#) or [READ](#)
- **Guest Speaker:** Kristi Allain
- **Podcast (LISTEN):** [What Is Hockey Culture? With Kristi Allain](#) and/or [Harm and Hockey with Rick Westhead](#)

November 13th: Creating Safe and Inclusive Environments

- Developing policies and procedures to prevent abuse
- Fostering a safe and inclusive environment for athletes
- Empowering athletes to report abuse and access support
- **Readings:**
 - [Johnson, N., Hanna, K., Novak, J., & Giardino, A. P. \(2020\). US center for SafeSport: Preventing abuse in sports. *Women in sport and physical activity journal*, 28\(1\), 66-71.](#)
 - [Breger, M. L., Holman, M. J., & Guerrero, M. D. \(2019\). Re-norming sport for inclusivity: How the sport community has the potential to change a toxic culture of harassment and abuse. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 13\(2\), 274-289.](#)
- **Case Study:** [AthleteCAN, SafeSport, and Gymnasts for Change Canada](#)
- **Guest Speaker:** Kim Shore
- **Podcast (LISTEN):** [Institutional Failure and Harm in Canadian Gymnastics with Kim Shore](#)

November 20th: Responding to Abuse in Canadian Sport

- Strategies for responding to abuse in Canadian sport
- Restorative & Transformational Justice Approaches
- Legal and ethical considerations in responding to abuse
- Supporting athletes in the aftermath of abuse
- **Readings:**
 - [Kerr, G., Kidd, B., & Donnelly, P. \(2020\). One step forward, two steps back: the struggle for child protection in Canadian sport. *Social Sciences*, 9\(5\), 68.](#)
 - [Willson, E., Kerr, G., Battaglia, A., & Stirling, A. \(2022\). Listening to athletes' voices: national team athletes' perspectives on advancing safe sport in Canada. *Frontiers in sports and active living*, 4, 107.](#)
- **Case Study (READ):** [Calls for a national inquiry into abuse in Canadian sport](#) AND ["Instead of another judicial inquiry, we should use restorative justice to make sports safer"](#) by Gretchen Kerr
- **Guest Speaker:** MacIntosh Ross

November 27th: Best Practices and Future Directions in Canadian Sport

- Current research and best practices in addressing abuse in sport
- Future directions for preventing and responding to abuse in sport
- Applying knowledge and skills to real-world scenarios
- **Readings:** TBD based on class interest
- **Case Study:** Canadian Sport

December 4th: Expert Brief Presentations