

Sports, Politics, & Public Administration

Introduction

Sport has long been central to political life, as a site of national identity, state power, social contestation, and civic belonging. Yet, it remains underrepresented in political science curricula. This collection of reading lists was developed by participants (see below) in APSA's Teaching Sports and Politics Symposium (June 2026) to help bridge that gap, offering instructors concrete resources for bringing sport into undergraduate and graduate courses across the discipline.

The readings gathered here are organized around four thematic modules that reflect some of the most generative intersections between sport and political science. The resources here are designed to be adaptable, useful whether sport is the primary focus of a course or a recurring case study within a broader syllabus. Instructors are encouraged to mix and match readings across modules, and to contribute their own materials to this growing collection.

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Sample Modules

1. Race, Gender, and the Body

For more information on module #1, contact:

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Theory & concepts: legibility, gender, the body

Spillers, Hortense J. 1987. "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17 (2): 64–81.

Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónké. 1997. *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.

Lugones, María. 2007. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System." *Hypatia* 22 (1): 186–209.

Tuchman, Gaye. 1978. "The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media." In *Hearth and Home: Images of Women in the Mass Media*. Oxford University Press.

Bailey, Moya. 2021. *Misogynoir Transformed: Black Women's Digital Resistance*. NYU Press.

Amira Rose Davis - FORTHCOMING - *Can't Eat a Medal: The Lives and Labors of Black Women Athletes in the Age of Jim Crow*

Sex testing & "who counts as a woman?"

Schultz, Jaime. 2016. "So What If Some Female Olympians Have High Testosterone?" *The Conversation*, Aug. 15.

Padawer, Ruth. 2016. "The Humiliating Practice of Sex-Testing Female Athletes." *The New York Times Magazine*, June 28.

Eveleth, Rose (host). 2024. *Tested* [audio podcast, 6 episodes]. NPR *Embedded* & CBC.

Plaza, Mélissa, et al. 2017. "Sport = Male... But Not All Sports: Investigating the Gender Stereotypes of Sport Activities at the Explicit and Implicit Levels." *Sex Roles* 76 (3): 202–217.

Pieper, Lindsay Parks. 2016. *Sex Testing: Gender Policing in Women's Sports*. University of Illinois Press.

Karkazis, Katrina, & Rebecca Jordan-Young. 2019. *Testosterone: An Unauthorized Biography*. Harvard University Press.

Maternity, sport & policy

Felix, Allyson. 2019. "Allyson Felix: My Own Nike Pregnancy Story." *The New York Times*, May 22 (Opinion).

Montaño, Alysia. 2019. "Nike Told Me to Dream Crazy, Until I Wanted a Baby." *The New York Times*, May (Opinion video). — primary-source companion to Felix.

Goucher, Kara, with Mary Pilon. 2023. *The Longest Race: Inside the Secret World of Abuse, Doping, and Deception on Nike's Elite Running Team*. Gallery Books.

Davenport, Margie H., Gyanjot Bains, Melanie Hayman, Chenxi Cai, Nonhlanhla S Mkumbuzi, and Tara-Leigh McHugh. 2025. "Advancing Gender Equity in Sport: A Scoping Review of International Sport Federation Policies for Pregnant, Postpartum and Parenting Elite Athletes." *British Journal of Sports Medicine* 59 (15): 1096.

Davenport, Margie H., et al. 2022. "We're Not Superhuman, We're Human: A Qualitative Description of Elite Athletes' Experiences of Return to Sport After Childbirth." *Sports Medicine* 52.

"Menstrual Cycle, Hormonal Contraception and Pregnancy in Women's Football: Perceptions of Players, Coaches and Managers." 2023 (online 2022). *Sport in Society* 26 (7).

Williams, Joan C. 2000. *Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What to Do About It*. Oxford University Press.

Title IX, equity & the politics of representation

Druckman, James N., & Elizabeth A. Sharrow. 2023. *Equality Unfulfilled: How Title IX's Policy Design Undermines Change to College Sports*. Cambridge University Press.

Lovell, Darrell. 2025. "Neoliberal Policy and Equity on Campus: A Comparative Administrative Study of Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) and College Athletics." *Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration* 3 (1): 99–117.

Women's Sports Foundation. 2022. *50 Years of Title IX* [infographic].

Acosta, R. Vivian, & Linda Jean Carpenter. *Women in Intercollegiate Sport: A Longitudinal, National Study*. <http://www.acostacarpenter.org/>

Brake, Deborah L. 2010. *Getting in the Game: Title IX and the Women's Sports Revolution*. NYU Press.

Evans, Michelle, & Hillary J. Knepper. 2023. "Women's Sports and Public Administration: Intertwined Paths to Social Equity." *Administrative Theory & Praxis* 46 (4): 383–404.

Media, the body & historical policing

Stromberg, Joseph. "The 19th-Century Health Scare That Told Women to Worry About 'Bicycle Face.'" 2014. Vox, July 8.

Schultz, Jaime. 2014. *Qualifying Times: Points of Change in U.S. Women's Sport*. University of Illinois Press.

Cooky, Cheryl, Michael A. Messner, & Michela Musto. "It's Dude Time!': A Quarter Century of Excluding Women's Sports in Televised News and Highlight Shows." *Communication & Sport*.

2. Sports and Public Administration Theories

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Equity/Equality and Social Equity

Acosta, R. V., & Carpenter, L. J. (2000). Women in intercollegiate sport: A longitudinal study twenty three year update 1977-2000. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 9(2), 141-144.

Allison, R., & Barranco, R. (2021). 'A rich white kid sport?' Hometown socioeconomic, racial, and geographic composition among U.S. women's professional soccer players. *Soccer and Society*, 22(5), 457-469. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2020.1827231>

Evans, M. D., & Knepper, H. J. (2024). Women's sports and public administration: Intertwined paths to social equity. *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, 46(4), 383-404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10841806.2023.2282920>

Hextrum, K., & Cameron, Z. (2022). (In)equity in athletics: U.S. antidiscrimination law and the white, middle-class advantage. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 17(2), 136-160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19357397.2022.2060699>

Ortega, A. (2022). *What the Women's World Cup Says About Gender Equality*. Inter-American Development Bank. Retrieved 12/29/2022 from <https://www.iadb.org/en/improvinglives/what-womens-world-cup-says-about-gender-equality>

Pickett, M. W., Dawkins, M. P., & Braddock, J. H. (2012). Race and gender equity in sports: Have White and African American females benefited equally from Title IX? *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 56(11), 1581-1603. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764212458282>

Documentary - "[LFG](#)" (U.S. Women's National Soccer Team's fight for equal pay). HBOMax.

Social Construction & Identity

Cooky, C. (2009). "Girls Just Aren't Interested": The Social Construction of Interest in Girls' Sport. *Sociological Perspectives*, 52(2), 259-283.

Cooky, C., Messner, M. A., & Musto, M. (2015). It's dude time!: A Quarter century of excluding women's sports in televised news and highlight shows. *Communication and Sport*, 3(3), 261-287. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479515588761>

LeCouteur, A., & Yong, A. (2022). Television commentary on women's and men's Australian Rules football: A thematic analysis. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 57(5), 693-714. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902211033221>

Ohikuare, J. (2013, July 29). How Sheryl Swoopes's Pregnancy Changed Professional Sports Forever. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/sexes/archive/2013/07/how-sheryl-swoopess-pregnancy-changed-professional-sports-forever/278168/>

Kane, M. J., LaVoi, N. M., & Fink, J. S. (2013). Exploring Elite Female Athletes' Interpretations of Sport Media Images: A Window Into the Construction of Social Identity and "Selling Sex" in Women's Sports. *Communication and Sport*, 1(3), 269-298.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479512473585>

Krane, V. (2001). We Can Be Athletic and Feminine, But Do We Want To? Challenging Hegemonic Femininity in Women's Sport. *Quest (National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education)*, 53(1), 115-133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00336297.2001.10491733>

Transgender Athletes

Barnes, K. (2023). *Fair Play: How Sports Shape the Gender Debates*. St. Martin's Publishing Group.

Druckman, J. N., & Sharrow, E. A. (2026). The Politics of Social Categorization: The Case of Transgender Women's Athletic Participation in the United States. *Political Research Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10659129261433979>

Meyer, S. J., Evans, M. D., & Irizarry, J. L. (2025). Public Administration and Sports(Ball): A Social Equity Approach. *Public Integrity*, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10999922.2025.2554410>

Travers, A. (2006). Queering Sport: Lesbian Softball Leagues and the Transgender Challenge. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41(3-4), 431-446.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690207078070>

3. Sport and Social Movements

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Foundations: Sport as a Site of Political Contestation

Edwards, Harry. 1969 [2017]. *The Revolt of the Black Athlete*. 50th Anniversary Edition. University of Illinois Press.

Hartmann, Douglas. 2003. *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 African American Olympic Protests and Their Aftermath*. University of Chicago Press.

Hartmann, Douglas. 1996. "The Politics of Race and Sport: Resistance and Domination in the 1968 African American Olympic Protest Movement." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19: 548–566.

Athlete Activism and Social Change

Boykoff, Jules. 2014. *Activism and the Olympics: Dissent at the Games in Vancouver and London*. Rutgers University Press.

Boykoff, Jules, and Ben Carrington. 2019. "Sporting Dissent: Colin Kaepernick, NFL Activism, and Media Framing Contests." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 55 (7): 829–849.

Hartmann, Douglas. 2025. "Sports, Race, Social Movements, and Social Change." *Annual Review of Sociology* 51: 271–290.

Gender, Sport, and Social Movements

Cooky, Cheryl, and Michael A. Messner, eds. 2018. *No Slam Dunk: Gender, Sport and the Unevenness of Social Change*. Rutgers University Press.

Turbino Torres, Luisa. "Shifting the Game: Soccer Feminist Fandom Activism as a Catalyst for Sporting Innovation in Brazil." In *Soccer, Globalization, and Innovation*. Routledge, 2025.

4. Sport and Soft Power

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Soft power – concepts

Marlin-Bennett, R. (2022). Soft power's dark side. *Journal of Political Power*, 15(3), 437–455.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2022.2128278>

Wu, I. S. (2024). *Measuring soft power in international relations*. Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.
[https://www.rienner.com/title/Measuring Soft Power in International Relations](https://www.rienner.com/title/Measuring+Soft+Power+in+International+Relations)

Sports and soft power in international relations

Alrababa'h, Ala'; William Marble; Salma Mousa; Alexandra A. Siegel. (2021). "Can exposure to celebrities reduce prejudice? The effect of Mohamed Salah on Islamophobic Behaviors and Attitudes." *American Political Science Review*. 2021: 1-18.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055421000423>

Butcher, A. (2012). Students, soldiers, sports, sheep and the silver-screen: New Zealand's soft power in ASEAN and Southeast Asia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 34(2), 249–273.
<https://doi.org/https://muse.jhu.edu/pub/70/article/483674>

Grix, J., & Houlihan, B. (2014). Sports Mega-Events as Part of a Nation's Soft Power Strategy: The Cases of Germany (2006) and the UK (2012). *British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 16(4), 572–596. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-856X.12017>

Rose, A. K., & Spiegel, M. M. (2011). *The Olympic effect*. *The Economic Journal* 121(553), 652–677. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41236997>

Wu, I. S. (2023b, June 1). Goal! Soft power at the Women's World Cup for Soccer ANZ 2023. *SPARC Lighthouse Views, Macquarie University*. <https://www.mq.edu.au/research/research-centres-groups-and-facilities/centres/soft-power-analysis-and-resource-centre/lighthouse-commentary/commentary>

Arts events and organizations and soft power in international relations

Kaplan, A. Y. (2012). *Dreaming in French: The Paris years of Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy, Susan Sontag, and Angela Davis*. University of Chicago Press.
<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/D/bo8503445.html>

Singh, J. P. (2011). *Globalized arts: The entertainment economy and cultural identity*. Columbia University. <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/globalized-arts/9780231147187/>

Wu, I. S. (2015). *Forging Trust Communities: How Technology Changes Politics*. Johns Hopkins University Press. Chapter 2, "Blogs, wikis, and international collective action: the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami" <https://www.press.jhu.edu/books/title/11288/forging-trust-communities?srsId=AfmBOorC7w5FWjdB3bAu3cGroV-AAYgyNoxO5c0vnPJwT8UphrFsCsV0>

Wu, I. S. (2023a). The Smithsonian Institution's contribution to US soft power: Applying the Soft Power Rubric. *Journal of Political Power*, 15(3), 415–436.
<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1080/2158379X.2022.2127281>

Military organizations and soft power

Allen, M. A., Flynn, M. E., Machain, C. M., & Stravers, A. (2020). Outside the Wire: U.S. Military Deployments and Public Opinion in Host States. *American Political Science Review*, 114(2), 326–341. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055419000868>

Atkinson, C. (2014). *Military soft power: Public diplomacy through military educational exchanges*. Rowman & Littlefield. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/military-soft-power-9781442231283/>