

Course Name: *Navigating Social Issues in Sport*

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| Instructor: | <i>Heather Pollock</i> | Year/Term: | <i>Fall 2025</i> |
| Office: | <i>BCAS History 214A (or virtual)</i> | Start Date: | <i>8/26/25</i> |
| Phone: | <i>330-972-7231</i> | Email: | <i>hnp1@uakron.edu</i> |
| Preferred Contact: | <i>I will reply within 2 business days if you email me through UAkron email.</i> | Student Hours: | <i>Optional in person or Teams by appointment</i> |
| Course Format: | <i>In person course (synchronous meetings in MS Teams as needed)</i> | Time Commitment: | <i>3 credit hour class = 6-9 hours per week</i> |
| Meeting Times and Location <i>This course requires students to be active participants in class meetings T/Th 10:45-12pm</i> <i>LEIGH HALL 215</i> | | | |

Course Aim

Sports heroes have the ability to capture our attention immediately. We love them or hate them, intensely; we feel as if we know them intimately. They carry our hopes and dreams on their backs...to the field, the pitch, the court...and beyond.

This course takes a look at how our investment in athletes shapes our views of justice. When they stand up (or take a knee) we notice.

Course Description

This course is designed to explore the role that sports and athletes play in our cultural sense of justice. Historical intersections of sport and society will be investigated.

Sport is a microcosm of society, therefore individuals and groups involved in sport are affected by and can affect broader social ideology and systems of power. What's more, sports figures are among the most influential 'players' in our society; they hold more power than we might acknowledge. In this class, students will develop a better understanding of social issues in sport and change-making. We'll investigate the historical intersections of sports and society; how we build connection to sports figures; and ultimately, how we make them into our heroes as we navigate much of what society gives us to think about: politics, religion, gender, sexuality, race, the environment, the economy, education...and more. Students will explore how individual athletes, sport teams, and sport organizations have engaged in efforts for social change to promote equity, justice, and belonging. Students will harness this power through sport to enact change of their own.

What is unique about Sports Justice is that students *do* social action rather than just learn about it. Students in this course will work in groups to develop their own campaign to create social change in and through sport.

Course Information

This course will be taught in person TTH, comprised of short lectures with some time for group work in class. Weekly assigned readings and activities are to be completed in a timely manner, as each one builds on the last, toward our goals. Students are responsible to work in groups and will schedule group meetings outside of class time, digitally or in-person.

Goals and Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to enable students to research and analyze social issues in American society within sport and social issues beyond sport that may be addressed by athletes and other sports figures, and to develop collaborative strategies to advocate for change regarding these issues.

This course aims to foster intellectual excellence and social responsibility, enabling students to thrive in their chosen careers, flourish in life, and face the urgent challenges of our times.

By engaging in campaign development, students will develop skills (below) to become active, collaborative, members of their communities. Students will expand and deepen their understanding of social issues, via researching an issue of their choice and learning with and from classmates about additional issues. As collaboration is a critical skill in the field of Sport Mgmt, students will develop these skills with team members, and evaluating contributions to the group.

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

- CO1: Identify and explain social issues in the United States, within and beyond sport
- CO2: Research, analyze, and explain how change-makers, including athletes and sports staff/orgs have used their power to advocate for social change, within and beyond sport
- CO3: Conduct research to understand the complexity of a social issue and propose actionable ways to address the social issue
- CO4: Create a research-based campaign plan to advocate for a specific policy change
- CO5: Demonstrate effective collaboration with team members to complete and execute a campaign plan and support one another's skill development.

Additional Course Information

The course meets the General Education – Complex Issues Facing Society requirement, which addresses the following learning outcomes.

Learning Outcome 1: Student articulates a complex problem or issue facing society.

Learning Outcome 2: Student identifies the complex web of contributors and impacts by exploring the issue through multiple, disparate disciplinary lenses.

Learning Outcome 3: Student evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of an approach or solution while considering the inherent complexity of the problem or issue.

Texts and Materials

1. Myers-Lipton, S. (2023). ***CHANGE! A student guide to social action***. Routledge.
2. Additional texts and videos will be required. This content will be posted on Brightspace.

Elements of this course are adapted from Dr. Scott Myers-Lipton's model for teaching Soci.164: Social Action at San Jose State University. Course materials from this model are used herein with his permission.

COURSE COMPONENTS:

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| 1. Attendance and Participation (Engagement) | 5% |
| 2. Unify Challenge (interactive event; short response) | 5% |
| 3. Case Studies (investigative responses to foundational topics <i>choose 2 @ 15% each</i>) | 30% |
| 4. Discussion Topics (each group will lead one class discussion) | 15% |
| 5. Campaign Development (assignments 20%; presentation 10%; binder 15%) | 45% |
| | 100% |

1. Attendance and Participation (5%):

This is an intimate and cooperative class; and our work is the consideration of justice. We will need to be together. You have two absences that are your own business. Your grade will be lowered for each subsequent absence.

2. Unify Challenge (5%): **Dates: 9.23/24/25/30; 10.1/3/6** Due No later than **Fridays 9/26; 10/3; 10/10**

You will register for the Challenge ahead. **The activity will take one hour.** You will *reflect* and then write 25-50 words each in *response* to the following prompts (*if you prefer, this may be 1 short essay as long as all 4 questions are answered*):

- a. What did the challenge feel like while you were doing it?

- b. What did you learn through this experience?
- c. Can you describe connections to at least two themes from this course?
- d. Should we include this experience in future classes (why or why not?)

3. Case Studies (30%): *assignments detailed in Brightspace*

We will investigate current examples of the intersections of Sport and Justice. Students will discuss in class, make evaluations, use critical analysis, researching, reading, and reflecting. Students will choose from four cases studies, completing two for submission.

4. Discussion Topics (15%): *assignments detailed in Brightspace*

Students will participate in discussion topics lead by classmates grouped 1-5. Each group will take a turn leading thoughtful and critical conversation for the class. Please see doc titled Discussions in Syllabus and Materials.

5. Campaign Development (45%) [assignments 20%; presentation 10%; binder 15% see below]

Much of our time will be devoted to Applications for the kind of understanding we have developed. Students will:

1. identify and explain a social issue within and/or beyond sport
2. research the history of issue; the players involved; the culture's appetite for action
3. engineer and execute a real-world social action campaign that implements sports justice
4. log their actions, present to the class, and create a 'playbook' (binder) detailing/archiving their work – a map for others beyond the class to follow

Some of the major themes we may consider in shaping our paths:

POLITICS/GENDER/SEXUALITY/RACE/RELIGION/ENVIRONMENT/ECONOMY/EDUCATION/BIAS/ABILITIES

Grading Scale

| GRADING SCALE | | | |
|---------------|----------|----------|----------|
| A 100-93 | B 86-83 | C 76-73 | D 66-63 |
| A- 92-90 | B- 82-80 | C- 72-70 | D- 62-60 |
| B+ 89-87 | C+ 79-77 | D+ 69-67 | F 59- |

Course Calendar/Schedule/Topic Breakdown

| Week / Date | Topics | Sports History Connections | Readings | Assignments/ Tasks* |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| Weeks 1+2 8.26/28 9.2/4 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Course Overview 2. Defining Justice 3. Why Sports Folks 4. Social Issue Development | GOAT: Muhammad Ali <i>Race/war/Islam</i> | <p>Maslow's <u>Justice as a Need</u> for 8.28</p> <p>SML Chp.1 for 9/4</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • W1 Intro: Breaking the Ice • Brainstorm Social Issues <i>to share for Thursday! 8.28</i> |
| Weeks 3+4 9.9/11 9.16/18 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose Campaigns 2. Set Tone 3. Change Theory | Billie Jean King/Katherine Switzer <i>Gender/sexuality/ equal pay</i> | <p>SML Chp.2+3 Complete for 9/11</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watch: <u>"Walk the Walk,"</u> in class 9.9 • Choose campaigns by 9/11 • Group #1 Discussion in class 9.16 • CASE STUDIES #1 |

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| | | | | Due 9/18 |
| Weeks 5+6 9.23/25 9.30-10.2 | 1. Building Power | Colin Kaepernick <i>Race/police brutality</i> | SML Chp.4 Complete for 9/23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen: 'Power' ft. Lisa VeneKlasen and Aruna Rao in class 9/23 Group #2 Discussion in class 9/25 Meet with group members. Together, complete Campaign Assignment 1 Due 10/2 <p><i>*Unify Reflection 9/26;10/3</i></p> |
| Weeks 7+8 10.7/9 10.14/16 | 1. Research 2. Group Dynamics | Serena Williams/cf. Caitlin Clark vs. Angel Reese <i>Misogynoir</i> Lia Thomas <i>Trans athletes</i> | SML Chp.5+6 Complete for 10/9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Campaign Assignment 2 individually* Due 10/7 Group #3 Discussion in class 10/9 <p><i>*Unify Reflection 10/10</i></p> |
| Weeks 9+10 10.21/23 10.28/30 | 1. Strategy & Tactics 2. Campaign Kickoff | Ice Breakers and Firsts: Jackie Robinson Jesse Owens 2014 Olympic Refugee Team <i>Intersections, Representation, Activism</i> Peter Norman <i>Allyship</i> | SML Chp.7+8 Complete for 10/23 UN <u>Declaration of Human Rights;</u> <u>UA's Nondiscrimination Policy</u> for 10/28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with group members. Together, complete Campaign Assignment 3 Due 10/23 Group #4 Discussion in class 10/28 |
| Weeks 11+12 11.4/6 11.11/13 | 1. Campaign Plan | Boycotts; <i>Sports as Political Stage</i> <u>Effective Boycotting</u> | SML Chp.9 Complete for 11/6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with group members. Together, complete Campaign Assignment 4 Due 11/6 Group #5 Discussion in class 11/13 |
| Weeks 13+14 11.18/20 11.25/27 | 1. Final Presentation Feedback <i>Thanksgiving TH</i> | <i>Abuse of Trust and Team</i> | SML Chp.10+11 Complete for 11/25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group Presentation Outline/meeting Due 11/18 CASE STUDIES #2 Due 11/20 |
| Week 15 12.2/4 | 1. Complete Campaign Plans and Reflection | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Campaign Presentations in class 12.2 BINDER Due 12.4 |

Note: This schedule may be subject to change. *Assignment descriptions are detailed later in this document and posted separately in Brightspace.

Sports History Topics Breakdown

* supplemental materials (reading/films) available in Brightspace

These mini-lectures are designed to illustrate situations of, and persons engaged in, Sports Justice. Students should consider Issues, Approaches, and Change-making evident in each example, critically - via SML lens.

All Due Dates/Points:

| Assignment | Due Date | Category/%Points |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Unify Challenge Reflection Response | *Due by 5pm 9/26; 10/3; 10/10 | UC: 5 |
| Case Study #1 | 9/18 | CS: 15 |
| Case Study #2 | 11/20 | CS: 15 |
| Discussion Group #1 | 9/16 | DG: 15 |
| Discussion Group #2 | 9/25 | DG: 15 |
| Discussion Group #3 | 10/9 | DG: 15 |
| Discussion Group #4 | 10/28 | DG: 15 |
| Discussion Group #5 | 11/13 | DG: 15 |
| CASS #1 | 10/2 | CDP: 5 (20 total) |
| CASS #2 <i>individual work</i> | 10/7 | CDP: 5 (20 total) |
| CASS #3 | 10/23 | CDP: 5 (20 total) |
| CASS #4 | 11/16 | CDP: 5 (20 total) |
| Campaign Presentation | 12/2 | CDP: 10 |
| Campaign Artifact(s): Binder | 12/4 | CDP: 15 |
| Attendance Participation Engagement | Continuous evaluation | APE: 5 |

The Following Sections comprise the Expectations/Assignment Details for this course. They are also loaded into Brightspace under Syllabus and Materials:

1. Social Action Expectations
2. Assessments: Campaign Assignments; Binder and Presentation
3. Discussion Expectations
4. Case Studies

SOCIAL ACTION EXPECTATIONS:

All students will be involved in social action. This will require a minimum of 1½ to 2 hours per week of campaign work (25 hours minimum over 15 weeks, with about one-half of the time DOING something, that is, doing *campaign activities* (e.g., tabling, flyering) or *campaign actions* (marches, rallies, street theater, etc.). FYI: The course reading has been reduced to offset the 25 hours of campaign work.

We will set parameters about the kinds of actions we will take (i.e. campus or non-campus issues) It will likely be possible to do your social action on campus, so all students should be able to work it into their schedules. In addition, some class time will be dedicated to your social action campaign, so you will be able to do some of your organizing in class.

During the second through fourth classes, you will brainstorm various ideas for a social action campaign, and then you will choose one to work on.

The requirements for the campaign are: a) that you have a minimum of 3 students on your team, b) you have passion for the issue, and c) your campaign tries to change some type of policy. The campaign you choose to work on may come from a liberal, conservative, social democrat, or libertarian perspective...or it may have no ideology. Whatever campaign you choose to do, we will learn about democracy, power, and how to bring about change.

All campaigns developed in this course must be non-violent, comply with [UA's Nondiscrimination Policy](#), and uphold human rights as outlined in the [UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#).

Importantly, there is no political indoctrination, as students develop and choose what campaigns to work on, and can change campaigns if it becomes necessary*. Furthermore, my role is to offer guidance about strategy and tactics, and to help students consider the

variety of options available, with the students deciding on how to best move forward.

* If for some reason a student wants to leave a group, please contact the professor. The student and professor will discuss what group student would like to join. Professor will contact the other group; if the group believes there will be little disruption to the group, then the student is able to join. However, if the group feels that there would be a disruption to the group due to possible lack of trust and transparency issues, or negative behavior by the student, that group has the right to say no.

As professor, I am responsible for the classroom environment, and I will base my decision on the impact to the classroom environment.

As C. Wright Mills says, “Personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues - and in terms of the problems of history making.” For example, if in a nation, there is just a small minority of the population in poverty, then it is the individual’s personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of the person and his, her, or their skills. But if in that nation, there are 38 million people in poverty (like in the USA), then that is a social problem, and relief must come from a change in social structure (i.e., the arrangement of society). Mills called this approach to understanding reality the *sociological imagination*, which we will consider throughout this course. (C. Wright Mills, *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 226.)

Campaign Development Plan:

45%

All students will join a group of 3 - 6 members, according to their interest in a specific social issue and related policy that they would like to address. Students will complete individual and group campaign assignments over the course of the semester, that will be incorporated into their Campaign Plan. A group Presentation about their Campaign Plan and a completed Campaign Binder (informed by the Campaign Assignments below) are among the major components culminating in assessment for this course. There are no quizzes or exams.

Assessments:

CAMPAIGN ASSIGNMENTS

Totaling 20%

The following are to be addressed and submitted as a group unless otherwise noted (**cf. #2**). Elect among your group who will submit these assignments. Grade will be the same for members of the group, so members are expected to plan and communicate with one another to ensure that group assignments are submitted.

Campaign Assignment 1:

Part One:

Decide the following: Group Name, Issue, Community Stakeholder, and Target

Part Two:

Create List of Demands – list should be short, concrete, attainable; 1-2 can be given away; one must be a deal-breaker (see text)

Part Three:

Organizational Rap: Who, What, Why, Where, When, (and How) you will share this in class

Campaign Assignment 2: (*individual* - independent from group members*)

Part One:

Stakeholder Interview – 2 Students *see Chapter 1, portfolio assignment 1.9, p.17*

Part Two:

Stakeholder Interview – Member of a Community Organization *see Chapter 1, portfolio assignment 1.10, p.17*

Campaign Assignment 3:

Part One

Create Flyer and Social Media Post - stir up interest about your Campaign, creating buzz.
See p.55

Part Two:

Recruitment Plan & Commitment Card – concrete means of getting community buy-in
p.103

Campaign assignment #4:

As outlined in chapter 5 (using portfolio questions at the end of the chapter), create your:

1. historical analysis
2. your power map/analysis
3. your target analysis

CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT:

Your *evaluation* will be based on how well your team demonstrates knowledge gained about social action - and executing it - illustrated in your Campaign Binder and Presentation.

BINDER

(15%)

As the semester comes to a close, your group will conduct an evaluation of your campaign in order to design your final Presentation and create your Campaign Binder.

Your group will produce a Campaign Binder that is a summation of your group's experience, and will provide a record of your campaign to be used by future social action students. You will turn in a hard copy, using a [3-ring binder](#) and [dividers](#). There are 9 sections to this evaluation (Binder):

1. **Issue identification.** State your demands and target. What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding issue identification?
2. **Leadership.** State if you your group used a traditional definition of leadership, or the newer definition offered. What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding leadership?
3. **Change theory.** Did your group use the women-centered approach to community change or the Saul Alinsky approach, or both? What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding change theory?
4. **Building power.** Name the new members your group recruited and the allies you built. How successful was your group in recruiting new members and building allies? What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding building power?
5. **Research.** Include your historical analysis, target analysis, and power map, from chapter 5. What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding research?
6. **Group dynamics.** How were your team's group dynamics? What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding group dynamics?
7. **Campaign activities:** What campaign activities did your group conduct (ex. flyering, tabling, petitions, dry-erase boards, commitment cards, etc.) What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding campaign activities?
8. **Campaign actions:** What campaign actions did your group conduct (ex. campaign kickoff, a 2nd or 3rd action)? What suggestions do you have for the next group regarding campaign actions?
9. **Lessons learned.** If your group won or lost the campaign, what are the major lessons you learned? If the campaign is not complete, what are three recommendations you can provide to the next group?

Note: For each section above, you may have slides, and/or artifacts (like flyers, handouts, commitment cards, surveys, etc.) Please include them in a section at the end of the Binder.

In grading this "playbook", I will also take into account whether your group has completed the Campaign Assignments, meant to channel your semester's work, reflected in part herein.

PRESENTATION

(10%)

Your Binder will guide you to design your Presentation. I will collect the Binder *after the Presentations* so that your group may update any elements due to constructive feedback from the class.

Your group will design a 10-15 minute Presentation* that explores what you learned from designing and implementing social action. In your Presentation, you might highlight several of the topics from the Campaign Binder, or consider experiences that stood out to you. Presentation should be highly informative, engaging, and filled with excitement on how your group, and its members, got out of the Cave, and moved your campaign forward. (Please Note: this is *not* a live reading of your binder!)

**Presentation may be Ppt, TedTalk, [Pecha Kucha](#), or other creative option approved by me.*

DISCUSSION EXPECTATIONS

(15%)

You have been randomly divided into groups. Beginning in **Week 4**, each group will take the lead for one theme-based discussion. **All students will be expected to participate in every discussion.** The group that is leading the discussion for the week is the group that will receive a grade that week.

In the week that you are leading the discussion, you are expected to:

- Read all of the material for that week's module. (Hint: these topics are largely from the Social Action Portfolio questions at the end of each chapter.)
- Each member of the group will be expected to participate in the Theme discussion for the week.
- I encourage your group to meet at least once to discuss the theme and decide how you will divide up the conversation.
- Your goal in class is to start a *conversation*. Explain your responses to the week's reading and topic prompt. Ask one or more thought-provoking questions.
- Keep in mind that this is **15%** of your grade. I need to see evidence that you put serious thought into the class discussion.
- You may use visual aids: ppts; videos; handouts, whatever helps you make it rock.

Grading for your Participation

This class is heavily dependent on class discussion. Rather than assign numerous discussions throughout the class, I am asking you to prepare deeply and thoroughly and to be prepared to lead one discussion. Your goal is to help the class understand the topic better based on your resources, observations, and questions that you discuss with your group. **The assigned reading materials are all that's required to lead this discussion; if you choose additional sources, be sure they are from valid publications that you can cite and defend academically.**

Expectations for the Class Discussion Participants

If it is not your week to lead the conversation, you are expected to read, participate, and learn from the discussion.

students will select two of the four to complete in accordance with syllabus dates

In these assignments, we will practice looking at recent scenarios from the sports world, asking ourselves how these situations developed, considering their impact, and how we might arrive at (re)solutions for each.

What's the Goal Here?

Though this assignment has very specific instructions, it does not have to be a lengthy response. In a 1-3 page essay, **students should be able to view the issue they have identified from a 360° view.** In order to do that, you will look at who or what helps to create the issue and the impacts it has, from at least two angles [lenses]. (You needn't be a scientist to see the science angle; you needn't be an artist to see the arts view.) Do your best to evaluate what you've exposed as you try to offer possible and practical solutions.

The Scenarios: Investigate each of the topics below using further information provided at the end of this assignment page. (See below.)

The 2024 Paris Olympics were dynamic in many ways. Let's unpack the following cases:

1. The kerfuffle about the Opening Ceremonies. Many were upset by what they believed to be a mockery of The Last Supper.
2. Rachael Gunn a.k.a. Raygun. The Australian breakdancer garnered most of the attention given to this first year Olympic sport.
3. Imane Khelif, Algeria's Gold Medalist in boxing, has filed defamation suits in response to accusations and harassment about her gender.
4. Stephen van de Velde's participation in the 2024 Summer Olympics sparked significant controversy due to his prior conviction for child rape.

Before you begin, take a moment to consider the following list as you identify the issue you mean to explore. Common factors we find ourselves navigating include:

- gender, sexuality, race, social class, religion, politics
- money, promotions, branding, compensation
- abuse, mental health, physical health
- art, culture, literature
- data, research, statistics

Now that you've selected your scenario and had time to think of some of the things we navigate in our society, you're ready to begin.

PART ONE:

1. **Student will articulate a complex problem or issue facing society.** Point out how the scenario you've chosen poses a complex problem. Be specific, reflect on the list above

PART TWO:

2. **Student will identify the complex web of contributors and impacts by exploring the issue through multiple, disparate disciplinary lenses***

- a. **Lenses:* Pick **at least two** of the following and illustrate how this intersects **b.(contributors)** and **c.(impacts)** below. Be specific.
 - **Scientific** (biology, chemistry, physics, geoscience, environmental science), medical, technical or engineering

- **Social and behavioral sciences** (sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, public health, public policy, etc.)
 - **Cultural, Humanities, the Arts**
 - **Economics and business**
- b. *Contributors*: What persons/orgs/nations/rules, etc. have put this issue in motion? Who or what has produced it and who or what has perpetuated it?
- I. **What caused this problem?** Be specific. What led to it being a complex issue? Choose at least two of the lenses listed above to view the contributors. You can choose more than one view within a lens, but you must also include a view from at least one other lens. For instance, social (gender and race) and social wellbeing (mental health).
 - II. **Try to show some steps or a timeline leading to this problem.**
- c. *Impacts*: How does this issue shape things moving forward? How are we seeing this issue play out in society at large? In a particular sports environment? Community? Region? Choose at least two of the lenses listed above to view the impacts.
- I. Consider **who is being hurt by the actions** of the contributors above and how. Be specific. What do these actions mean for the community most closely affected as they try to move on?
 - II. **How are people/orgs that are not directly hurt by this issue affected?**
Consider this example: Residents of Flint, MI do not have clean water. We can see how those people are affected; but discuss how non-residents of Flint (people like you and me) are affected by knowing about this? Are people outside of Flint taking action? Becoming allies? Ignoring the problem? Who is engaging them in this issue? How's it going?

****Bonus Round:** Go a little further in your analysis: Sketch out accountability: **to whom are apologies/reparations due?** From whom? Do these apologies make real change? How?

How do you look at the problem through the two lenses you've chosen? Let's consider the Flint, MI problem again:

- i.e. Explore the issue of Flint's water by discussing how **environmental scientists** approach it. (*the first lens I have chosen from the list above is the Scientific lens*) Have they done things to cause this problem? To solve it? How is the field of environmental science affected by this issue? Then discuss how folks in the **business sector** (*my second lens from the list above is Business and Economics*) have contributed. How did their practices impact people in Flint? What impact has the water issue had on business in and around Flint? (can businesses support themselves in a city with no clean water?)

PART THREE:

3. **Student will evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of an approach or solution while considering the inherent complexity of the problem or issue.**
 - a. How is *justice* possible? What would it look like for these situations to feel more *just*? (Do we need allies? What will they provide? Are there issues of legality and laws that need to be addressed/changed?)
 - b. *Our localized view*: What can people here at UA do to engage this issue and try to implement justice? What would we need and what would it cost?

Please read carefully Parts 1-3, then prepare your thoughtful, well-written, essay. The materials below are designed to help you; if you choose additional sources, be sure they are from valid publications that you can cite. **If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask before the assignment is due.**

****Further details and materials on each of the four Case Studies to be explored****

#1: The Paris Olympics Opening Ceremony: A Controversial "Last Supper" Tableau

The opening ceremony of the 2024 Paris Olympics sparked significant controversy due to a segment that evoked Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, "The Last Supper." While the organizers intended to celebrate diversity and French gastronomy, the tableau was interpreted by many conservative Christians as disrespectful and offensive.

Key Points:

- **Controversy:** The segment featured a DJ and drag artists at a long table, reminiscent of the Last Supper. This led to accusations of mocking Christian imagery.
- **Organizer Response:** The organizers issued an apology, stating that there was no intention to disrespect any religious group. They defended the concept as a celebration of community and tolerance.
- **Ongoing Debate:** Despite the apology, the controversy continued, with some arguing that the segment was insensitive and inappropriate for a global event.

Here are some articles that delve deeper into the topic:

- **CBS News:** <https://m.facebook.com/CBSNews/posts/the-organizers-behind-the-paris-olympics-apologized-to-anyone-who-was-offended-b/888684116456767/>
- **America Magazine:** <https://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2024/07/29/olympics-last-supper-ceremony-248467>
- **AP News:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7pqERdAOkU>

These articles provide more context, analysis, and perspectives on the controversial "Last Supper" tableau and its impact on the Paris Olympics.

- <https://apnews.com/article/olympics-2024-opening-ceremony-last-supper-criticism-9dd5fc5f1849ce9b0720fa997f38ed27#>
- <https://apnews.com/article/olympics-2024-opening-ceremony-audacious-analysis-49f9885ff2b95b9b7ccc51ca195e84e1#>
- <https://apnews.com/article/olympics-2024-ceremony-last-supper-complaint-3e99aefe9e5e739afcee9818906c2ae8#>
- <https://www.newsweek.com/vatican-holy-see-respond-last-summer-opening-paris-olympic-games-1934237#:~:text=In%20a%20long%2Dawaited%20move,the%202024%20Paris%20Olympics%20opening>

Questions for us:

1. What are Paris's obligations to the visitors and viewers when planning an event like this?
2. What could be done to prevent this kind of confusion in the future?
3. How do global events ensure they have a global lens?

#2: A Controversial Figure in Breakdancing: Rachael Gunn

Rachael Gunn, also known as **Raygun**, is an Australian breakdancer who has garnered significant attention and controversy due to her participation in the 2024 Paris Olympics. Her unique style and performance during the competition sparked a heated debate within the breakdancing community and among sports enthusiasts.

Here are some articles that delve into the controversy surrounding Rachael Gunn:

- **The woman who single-handedly destroyed Olympic breakdancing:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqxEx_b6CSU
- **Australian breakdancer Rachael Gunn faces backlash over selection | Paris Olympics 2024:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqxEx_b6CSU
- **Young Aussie woman says what many are too afraid to say about Raygun:**
https://www.reddit.com/r/Professors/comments/1erokh9/what_is_everyones_thoughts_on_raygun_aka_rachael/

These articles discuss the criticism Gunn faced for her selection, the impact of her performance on the perception of breakdancing in the Olympics, and the broader implications of her participation.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/rachael-gunn-breaking-paris-olympics-australia/#:~:text=Australian%20breakdancer%20Rachael%20Gunn%2C%20also,her%20viral%20performance%20at%20the>

https://en.as.com/olympic_games/how-did-rachel-gunn-qualify-to-the-2024-paris-olympics-n/#

The question of whether Rachael Gunn's academic approach to breaking appropriation is a complex one, with varying perspectives.

Some argue that her academic work, which includes research and teaching on breakdancing, is a positive contribution to the culture. They believe that her academic perspective can help to elevate and legitimize breakdancing as a form of art and sport.

Others, however, contend that her academic approach may be seen as a form of cultural appropriation. They argue that she, as a white woman, is benefiting from the cultural capital of breakdancing without fully understanding or respecting its roots. This perspective suggests that her academic work could potentially reinforce stereotypes or marginalize the experiences of Black and brown communities, which have historically been central to the development of breakdancing.

It's important to note that the debate surrounding Gunn's work is ongoing, and there is no definitive answer. Ultimately, whether her approach is considered appropriation depends on individual interpretations and perspectives.

#3: Imane Khelif's Defamation Suit: A Spotlight on Online Harassment

Imane Khelif, the Algerian Olympic boxing champion, has filed a defamation suit following a wave of online harassment and false claims about her gender identity.

The allegations, which surfaced after her victory in the Paris Olympics, have sparked discussions about the toxic nature of online discourse and the need for greater protection for athletes.

Here are some articles discussing her case:

- **AP News:** <https://thehill.com/homenews/ap/ap-top-headlines/ap-olympic-boxing-champion-imane-khelif-filed-a-legal-complaint-for-online-harassment-against-her/>
- **Global News:** <https://globalnews.ca/news/10698491/imane-khelif-cyberbullying-complaint-lawsuit/>
- **ITV News:** <https://www.itv.com/watch/news/jk-rowling-and-elon-musk-named-in-a-cyberbullying-lawsuit-brought-by-olympic-boxer-imane-khelif/zwznlxl>
- <https://apnews.com/article/imane-khelif-olympics-boxing-harassment-b23090d77a89dc59ed074e6bbc189173#>

These articles provide details about the allegations against Khelif, the legal action she has taken, and the broader implications of the case for online safety and the protection of athletes.

#4: Stephen van de Velde Controversy: A Complex Case

Stephen van de Velde is a Dutch beach volleyball player who was convicted of child rape in 2016. He was 19 years old at the time of the crime, which involved a 12-year-old British girl.

His conviction and subsequent participation in the 2024 Summer Olympics sparked significant controversy, with many criticizing the decision to allow him to compete despite his past actions.

Here are some articles that delve into this complex issue:

News Articles:

- **Sporting News:** <https://apnews.com/article/2024-olympics-convicted-rapist-beach-volleyball-b90c5652e620cf355c28b97a36a5566b>
- **The New York Times:** <https://apnews.com/article/2024-olympics-convicted-rapist-beach-volleyball-b90c5652e620cf355c28b97a36a5566b>
- **The Guardian:** <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/article/2024/aug/14/dutch-beach-volleyball-player-raped-child-breaks-silence-over-olympics-steven-van-de-velde>
- **CBS news:** <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/dutch-volleyball-steven-van-de-velde-paris-olympics-child-rape-conviction/#>

Analysis and Opinion Pieces:

- **The Independent:** <https://www.sportingnews.com/us/olympics/news/steven-van-de-velde-dutch-volleyball-player-rapist-2024-olympics/0687523ccb0ffb0820090486>
- **The Telegraph:** <https://www.sportingnews.com/us/olympics/news/steven-van-de-velde-dutch-volleyball-player-rapist-2024-olympics/0687523ccb0ffb0820090486>

These articles provide in-depth discussions about the ethical implications of allowing a convicted child rapist to compete in the Olympics, the arguments for and against his inclusion, and the broader societal debate surrounding second chances and redemption.

COURSE, UNIVERSITY, and STATE/FEDERAL POLICIES

Covid and Masks

We will abide by University policies where mask wearing is concerned. Please don't come to class when you are sick, but please do keep the instructor and your group members aware of your condition and absences. Remote access for some activities is possible, and group members may request access via Teams if they are unable to attend because of health reasons. Instructor reserves the right to require masks at any time.

Attendance Policy

Attendance refers to being present during scheduled class sessions, whether they are held in person or virtually. It's the foundation for active learning but is separate from participation. Here's what is expected:

Participation

As a college student, you most likely have multiple roles and commitments to juggle. In addition to being a student, you may be an employee, an athlete, a parent, a community leader, or a caregiver to a family member. If you are a full-time student, you are working to learn a wide variety of new skills and to meet the expectations for multiple courses.

You are expected to participate in this course as follows:

- You are responsible for viewing all course content posted to the Content tab in Brightspace unless that content is clearly labeled as optional.
- You are responsible for checking your UAKRON email regularly for any communication from instructor.
- You are responsible for reading all Announcements items posted on the course home page. Each time you log into the course, check the Announcements page for any new content.
- You are responsible for reading all posts in the course discussion in Brightspace. You are responsible for all information posted to the course discussions.
- You are responsible for completing and submitting all assignments to the course assignment box before the due date. You are responsible for clearly labeling your documents so I can identify your submission. For example, use your first and last name in the file name along with the assignment name/number. Failure to place your name on assignments results in an automatic zero for the assignment. No exceptions. You are also responsible for submitting files in a format that I can open such as .doc, .docx, .pdf, .ppt, pptx, or .txt. Note

that the University provides a Google Apps account to all students, and you can use Google Apps to create files in these file types.

- Technical challenges are not an acceptable excuse for missing deadlines. You must ensure that you always have access to a working computer. Please do not wait until the deadline to submit assignments. If you do experience any technical issues, please [contact the I.T. Help Desk](#) and ensure that the issue is tracked through the ticketing system.

Please remember that while attendance sets the stage for learning, participation brings learning to life. Both are essential to your success in this course, and you are encouraged to approach both with commitment and enthusiasm.

If you have any concerns, questions, or need accommodation related to attendance or participation, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Instructor Contact and Reply Policy

If you wish to contact me, **Email communication** must be addressed with **SUBJECT line: “SPORTS JUSTICE FALL25-Last Name”**. Pay attention to the content of your assignments and all emails. Be sure to utilize proper grammar and capitalization. The first person to email me with their favorite holiday will receive bonus points. Finally, be pleasant and polite. Emails that are not written properly will not be answered in a timely manner. I will respond to emails M-F within 24 hours. On weekends or holidays, you can expect no more than a 72-hour turnaround time. If you wish to meet in person, email me with dates and times you are available as well as the reason and we can schedule a time either in person or virtually via MS Teams.

In the unlikely event that you are unable to reach your instructor based on the guidelines using the provided contact and expected response time, please contact the department chair for this course via email at jaj52@uakron.edu or via phone at 330-972-6273.

Online Etiquette

Online etiquette, sometimes called Netiquette, takes special attention because it lacks the visual cues that we rely on to give meaning to communication.

1. **Avoid language that may come across as strong or offensive.** Language can be easily misinterpreted in written communication. If a point must be stressed, review the statement to make sure that no one would be offended; then post the statement. Humor and sarcasm may easily be misinterpreted, so try to be as matter-of-fact and professional as possible.
2. **Keep writing to a point and stay on topic.** Online courses require a lot of reading. When writing, keep sentences focused and brief so that readers do not get lost in wordy paragraphs and miss the point of the statement.
3. **Read first, write later.** It is important to read all posts or comments before personally commenting to prevent repeating commentary or asking questions that have already been answered.
4. **Review, review, then send.** There's no taking back a comment that has already been sent, so it is important to double-check all writing to make sure that it clearly conveys the exact intended message.
5. **An online classroom is still a classroom.** Though the courses may be online, appropriate classroom behavior is still mandatory. Respect for fellow classmates and the instructor is as important online as it is in the classroom.
6. **The language of the Internet.** Do not write using all capital letters, because it will appear as shouting. Also, the use of emoticons can be helpful to convey nonverbal feelings (example: :-) or :-(), but avoid overusing them.
7. **Consider the privacy of others.** Ask permission prior to giving out a classmate's email address or other information.
8. **No inappropriate material.** Do not forward virus warnings, chain letters, jokes, etc. to classmates or instructors. The sharing of pornographic or insensitive material is forbidden.

Required Technologies, Technology Skills, and Support

This course utilizes the [Basic Software for UAkron Online Learners](#).

Resources

1. [UAkron Online Technical Skills Resources](#) provides a list of the general technical skills you must have to succeed in this course.
2. The [Diving into Online Learning course](#) in Discover is recommended for any student taking a UAkron Online course and can be reviewed at any time.

Technical Support

Technical difficulties can happen to the best of us. How do you know whether to contact the Support Center or your instructor? If you need help with the course subject matter such as writing a paper, contact your instructor. If you need help submitting the paper you wrote to that instructor, or you cannot log in, use the Brightspace UA virtual Assistant/ Need Help chat or contact the [IT Help Desk](#).

AI Policy

You are not permitted to use any work product or submit any assignment that has been created in whole or in part using artificial intelligence (unless specifically required in an assignment). While these tools may be revolutionary to our industry in the future, the purpose of this class is to teach you how to critically think as a professional. Allowing AI to do the work for you will only harm the development of your own skills. Using AI in this course is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and can result in administrative removal from the course, entry of an F for the course, and referral to the Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards. The Code of Student Conduct is a university rule that provides the framework for the student conduct process at the University of Akron and defines student misconduct and the process that the University will use to address student misconduct reported to the Department of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Students at the University of Akron are responsible to know and abide by the Code of Student Conduct and all University rules, regulations, and policies. A link to these policies is in the syllabus under University Policies.

Ethical use of AI tools is allowed in this course. I define ethical use as follows:

- **Permitted Use:** AI tools may be used for brainstorming ideas or refining drafts of written work, provided their use is disclosed in your submission.
- **Prohibited Use:** AI tools may not be used to generate complete responses for assignments, exams, or projects unless explicitly allowed by the instructor.
- **Academic Integrity:** Undisclosed or inappropriate use of AI tools will be treated as a violation of course and university policies.

Other Policies: *Federal and State Guideline Resources*

As a public institution receiving both federal and state funding, The University of Akron is obligated to follow all applicable laws. The University, led by the Office of General Counsel and supported by other campus departments, is actively tracking relevant legislation and government guidance. Recognizing the need for accessible and up-to-date information, UA has developed this webpage to offer a range of resources and will continue to update it as new details emerge.

One key piece of legislation currently being monitored is Ohio Senate Bill 1 (SB1), also known as the “Advance Ohio Higher Education Act.” This law introduces several policy changes that directly affect higher education institutions across the state, including requirements related to curriculum transparency, institutional neutrality, and student access to foundational American government and history courses. UA is committed to ensuring compliance with these provisions and to providing clear, accurate information as implementation progresses.

As the academic and professional home to a diverse global community, UA is dedicated to keeping students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders informed with timely and essential updates. For more information see [Federal and State Guideline Resources](#)

University Policies and Resources

Academic, Technical, and Student Support Services

The University of Akron provides personal ongoing educational support to its learners. From your first inquiry about a program to your final semester, student services staff members are consistently on hand to guide, advise and assist you. These UAkron Online pages can help guide you to various resources:

- **[UAkron Online Academic Support](#)**
 - For more information about course registration, academic advising, tutoring, testing services, university libraries, first day course materials and other academic support resources offered through the University that can help you to be successful in every course.
- **[UAkron Online Student Support](#)**
 - For more information about zip assist, financial aid, career services, student perks, counseling services, and other campus organizations and Ziptastic programs and services that are designed to assist our diverse student body and maximize opportunities for academic, social, cultural, personal and physical growth and development outside of class.
- **[UAkron Online Technical Support](#)**
 - How do you know whether to contact the Support Center or your instructor? If you need help with the course subject matter such as writing a paper, contact your instructor. If you need help submitting the paper you wrote to that instructor, or you cannot log in, contact the IT Help Desk. The UAkron Online Technical Support page offers access to the IT Help Desk and information related to The UAkron Online Promise, technology requirements, privacy policies, and an optional course for students to practice using electronic learning tools.

This overview summarizes types of **[technical, academic, and student support services](#)** we offer and describes how those services can help you achieve your educational goals.

Accessibility Services

Pursuant to University policy #3359-38-01, The University of Akron recognizes its responsibility for creating an institutional atmosphere in which students with disabilities have the opportunity to be successful. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility at 330-972-7928 or access@uakron.edu. The office is located in Simmons Hall Room 105.

After the student's eligibility for services is determined, their instructors will be provided a letter which will outline the student's accommodations

University Policies

Detailed information on the University of Akron's policies, including the Student Code of Conduct, academic misconduct rules, ethical use of AI tools like ChatGPT, add/drop/withdrawal and refund policies, inclusive excellence, Title IX, sexual harassment and violence policies, disability accommodations, religious accommodations, support programs like ZipAssist, and first-day course materials fee can be accessed here: <https://www.uakron.edu/oaa/faculty-affairs/What-students-need-to-know>

You can also access this information directly through the Brightspace homepage on the top left "UA Policies"