

830:421:01
Mark Schuster

Advanced Topics of Social Psychology: The Intersection of Sport and Sexuality

More athletes participated in the last Gay and Out Games than the "mainstream" Olympics, but lesbian, gay and bisexual athletes remain virtually invisible citizens to the general public. Intercollegiate athletics has exploited these athletes as public heroines and heroes, but with little to no private support services and mechanisms to help them remain safe on college campuses. Most elite athletes do not come out until after they retire. LGBT athletes have been harassed, silenced, violated and attacked. There have been "no lesbians allowed" written policies and because of the certain terror and potential harm for men, there is no need for written policies. Most assume that gay male athletes do not even exist at the elite (Division I Intercollegiate, Olympic, and Professional) levels. Heterosexual female athletes are often taunted as lesbians until proven innocent. This seminar explores the psycho-social challenges and issues that surround how gender and sexuality play themselves out in traditional, hypermasculine spaces. The intersection of gender, sexuality, and race will be explored in the context of sport remaining a predominantly male preserve. Course dialectics will include cultural sources of "power over," the body as a contested site, psychological and physical symbolic violence, hyper aggression and athlete social status, and sexual/gender space and surveillance. Discussions will be stimulated by short analysis papers, a class presentation (or alternative project), and a take home exam that evokes critical thinking and cumulative analysis.