KIN 101 :: Sport in America

Why Study Sport?
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Stop and Think…

In groups of four or five, as comprehensively as you can:

List all the ways that sport & physical activity impact:

- Your personal life
- Society
- Culture

Sports are Pervasive

- USA Today devotes ¼ of its coverage to sports
- Almost 1/5 of major television network time is devoted to sport
- Big Business! Total revenue of U.S. sports industry was 213 Billion (2005) – Look at all the zeros ↓
  - $213,000,000,000.00
  - Twice the auto industry and 7X the movie industry!
- Between 18.9 Billion on ‘legal’ sports gambling
  - Including Pari-mutuels, internet, and sports books

Million Dollar Baby (2004)
4 Academy Awards. $100,422,786
Sport is Connected to Major Spheres of Social Life

- Sport and the family
- Sport and the economy
- Sports and the media
- Sports and politics
- Sport and education
- Sport and religion

Sports are Important!

- Integral part of the social and cultural world that we live in.
- Can have an important impact on both the individual and society.
  - Development of behavior and actions
  - Personal relationships
  - Occupations $$

More Than Games...

- More than games – they are Social Phenomena:
  
  “Events involving social relationships and collective action and having relevance in the social lives of particular collections of people.”

Microcosm of Society?

- Do sports mirror society or does society mirror sport?
- A little of both…
- Can be argued that many of the same issues in society are also present in our sporting institutions: Racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, ageism, etc.
Sports are important (cont.)

- Connected with important ideas and meanings in social life (ideology)
  - Ideologies: Sets of interrelated ideas that we use to give meaning to our world
  - No one "right" way to view the meaning of sport BUT certain perspectives are often considered 'common sense'
  - Often, sport reinforces and reproduces the ideologies of people who have the most influence and power (more on this later)

Peeling Back the Layers

- We are concerned with the "deeper meaning" of sport – peeling back the layers of meaning.
- Researchers try to investigate sport to help better understand:
  - The societies in which sports exist
  - The social worlds that are created around sports
  - The experiences of individuals and groups associated with sports
  - The possibility of sport to facilitate social change