Throwing Like a Girl: Sport as a Model for Teaching Gender, Sexuality, and Patriarchy Across the Curriculum

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What does it mean to you to “teach gender”?
The Genderbread Person v3.3

Gender is one of those things everyone thinks they understand, but most people don’t. Like Inception. Gender isn’t binary. It’s not either/or. In many cases it’s both/and. A bit of this, a dash of that. This tasty little guide is meant to be an appetizer for gender understanding. It’s okay if you’re hungry for more. In fact, that’s the idea.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Identity</th>
<th>Woman-ness</th>
<th>Man-ness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How you, in your head, define your gender; based on how much you align (or don’t align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Gender Expression</th>
<th>Feminine</th>
<th>Masculine</th>
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<td>The ways you present gender through your actions, dress, and demeanor, and how those presentations are interpreted based on gender norms.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Biological Sex</th>
<th>Female-ness</th>
<th>Male-ness</th>
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<td>The physical sex characteristics you’re born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair, hormones, chromosomes, etc.</td>
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Sexually Attracted to
- Nobody
- (Women/Females/Femininity)

Romantically Attracted to
- Nobody
- (Women/Males/Masculinity)

For a bigger bite, read more at http://bit.ly/genderbread

by Samuel Klierman at www.tspronouncedmetrogaysexual.com
Some other Terms

- **Intersectionality**: Systems of inequality overlap and reinforce each other. Various aspects of our identity intersect and become more prominent in different moments, for example, race, class, religion, national origin, sexuality, and gender.

- **Gender Difference**: It’s not very controversial that people with different gender identities have different qualities, preferences, and attributes; when we, as a society, value some of those qualities more than others and, especially, institutionalize them, that leads to **Gender Inequality**, which is a social injustice.

- **Patriarchy**: Patriarchy is the social and political structure that consistently places men in positions of power over women, mostly through a value system known as **Masculinism**, the over-valuing of attributes such as aggression, competitiveness, and violence. Both women and men are complicit in the maintenance of Patriarchy.

- **Misogyny**: Hating women or behaving in a way that devalues or marginalizes women and/or attributes associated with femininity.
We encourage investigating the creation of gender categories, gender differences and gender inequality in all areas of study.

Every discipline at Loyola has something to contribute to understanding why and how gender affects what sports are or have been played in the US, who has or does play them, what rules have or do govern them, what instruments are or have been used to play them, how they are or have been funded, whether they can function as employment, what role they have or do play in politics and how this is a matter of gender inequality not just gender difference.
Throwing Like a Girl

• Men throwing with their non-dominant hand (1:00)
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=huqBT50U914

• Softball pitcher scares Pro Baseball catcher (:50)
  https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/a-softball-pitcher-threw-so-hard-she-scared-a-major-league-catcher_us_5953a19ce4b05c37bb7adb24

• Baseball vs softball pitching (7:40):
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_de3HJvO-N8

• Myth busters throw like a girl (3:40):
  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LD5Xm5u7UDM
How much does biology contribute to outcomes in sport? How can you test this?

• What makes an athlete a “woman”? Exploring historically evolving criteria for comparison:

• Comparing performance differences between untrained and trained men and women.
STEM: Biology: “nurturing” sport

What produces an “athletic” body? Evolving training regimes:


Title IX brought girls and women into sport and increased the intensity of training and competition. Associated with that, injuries have increased among girls and women.

STEM: Chemistry/Biochemistry

What evidence supports the argument that hormones play a significant role in elite physical performance: running, throwing, catching?

Endocrine system and athletic performance:

Are elite women athletes successful because they are more like men?

What’s normal? Are IFFA rules that require individuals who identify as women to suppress testosterone fair?
- https://www.wired.com/story/testosterone-ruling-for-athletes-fuels-debate-over-natural-ability/
- https://www.wired.com/story/testosterone-ruling-for-athletes-fuels-debate-over-natural-ability/

Is there a difference in the hormones in men’s and women’s bodies that make softball and baseball different?
- Rayvon Fouché, “I know one when I see one: Sport and Sex Identification” in Game Changer: The Techno-Scientific Revolution in Sports (Batimore: JHU, 2017)
To what extent are observed differences in player performance a product of equipment? How are observed “gender differences” material and structural and not biological?


How much do differences in equipment - balls, bats, gloves, and uniforms - factor into performance differences?

- Russel, Daniel. How are Baseball and Softball bats different? Graduate Program in Acoustics, The Pennsylvania State University, last modified 05/16/05.

To what extent are observed differences due to differences in technique?

- Nathan, Alan. M. 2011. Analyzing Fastpitch Softball from the 2011 WCWS Powerpoint slides. One goal of the presentation was to compare and contrast these data from MLB baseball data. University of Illinois.
Pitching machines are used for training. Radar is used to track the speed of pitches. How are machines developed to measure quality? How are machines chosen to measure performance? Why was a strike force plate chosen to test the baseball and softball pitches? Do men’s performance parameters guide decisions made by engineers and they develop analytic approaches?

• In 2015 an engineering masters student sought to create a better softball glove that acknowledges how women actually use their equipment: https://www.imse.iastate.edu/files/2015/04/Heidi-Laabs-Thesis.pdf
Softball and Baseball are games in which performance statistics are very important in evaluating players. With respect to considering gender differences in performance, we might also consider assessing these variables:

- Investment in baseball and softball as recreation activities.
- Investment in baseball and softball as pro sports.
- Levels of women’s and men’s participation in baseball and softball leagues (pro and recreation).
- Levels of girls and boys participation in baseball and softball leagues.
- Development of recreation leagues/time.
What differential rewards and challenges does sport pose for women and men?

- Social and personal identity
  - Men athletes generally experience congruence between general ideals of masculinity (appearance and behavior) and sports’ ideals
  - Women athletes may experience a contradiction between general ideals of femininity and sports ideals

- The stigmatized association of female athletic competency with lesbianism:
Social Science: Sociology: Sport and identity

What differential rewards and challenges does sport pose for women and men?

• Girls and women’s lack of role model coaches persists and has intensified:
Social Science: Psychology:
Gender Difference or Similarity

Are we asking the wrong question about gender differences and sport?

Social Science: Psychology: Sport and mental health

• Are athletes’ struggles to meet contradictory expectations for appearance and performance gendered? Disordered eating, steroid use, etc.
What is the importance of the congressional baseball game (Republicans versus Democrats) and a Congressional Women’s Softball Game (bipartisan representatives vs the press corps)? What about other charity matches?

- The congressional football game: “The biennial showdown features Members of Congress and former NFL players facing off against U.S. Capitol Police” 20 years, technically coed - 2 women in 2018.

Sports can be a site of and political protest and a venue for mobilizing the vote.

Social Science: Political Science: sports, patriotism, racism and gender

The Star Spangled banner was first performed at a baseball game in 1862 in Brooklyn., NY, but became a regular event in the 1910’s.:  


Racism, gender and sport:  
- Development of the Negro Leagues and crossing the color line. [need citation]  
- Messner, “Center of Attention: The Gender of Sports Media” in *Taking the Field* (Minnesota, 2002)
Education: Gender socialization

Has institutionalized physical education played a role in the gendering of sport, such as baseball and softball?

Is educational policy conducive to gender equity.

- Title IX has opened a space for college women to participate in competitive sports, but high schools lag.
- Title IX has increased access to “women’s sports” not women’s access to “men’s” sports.
- Title IX has not increased women’s leadership in sports governance.
  - Joshua A. Senne. 2016. Examination of Gender Equity and Female Participation in Sport. The Sports Journal. 02/26/16
Are the economics of pro baseball and softball gendered?

- Ranjit Dighe, SUNY-Oswego. The economics of major league baseball.
  - Syllabus.
  - Powerpoint

Is recreational youth softball an unappreciated economic engine?


How is steroid use in professional men’s baseball related to its status as an industry?
Business: Economics

Why has the representation of women in college level coaching declined in the last 20 years?

- Sabo, et. al. “Beyond X’s and O’s: Gender Bias and Coaches of Women’s College Sports” (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2016)
Business/Communications: Marketing

Can marketing counteract gender inequality in sport?

• Evaluate the Always Campaign:
  • #LikeaGirl (Run like a girl, hit like a girl, throw like a girl): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjJQBjWYDTs
  • Obstacles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhB3l1gCz2E
  • Keep playing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N433aXwj59E

• Evaluate Volkswagen Passat: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxAo8_JySkM

Evaluate the effectiveness of the following campaign strategies to increase game attendance for ProFastPitch.com: “girl power,” “natural sport – drug free,” feminization of uniforms.
Humanities: Communications:
sport and stereotype development

• How are ideas about masculinity, femininity and sport transmitted?
  • Why do we know what it means to “throw like a girl”?
  • How do we develop a sense of the value of baseball and softball?

Projects:
• Evaluating the representation of baseball and softball in children’s and YA fiction/literature.
• Evaluating representations of women and men in baseball (and softball) focused films.

Resources:
• David Nylund, Beer, Babes, and Balls: Masculinity and Sports Talk Radio (Albany: SUNY, 2007)
Humanities: Philosophy: Ethics and sport

Baseball and softball raise questions of equity and fairness

Is it “good” that men’s sports (baseball) get more attention, money and prestige than women’s sports?

- Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, Book II: Chapter 5 - “… it seems every one possessed of skill avoids excess and defect, but seeks for and chooses the mean, not the absolute, but the relative.”
- Plato, *Laws*: Book VIII - “The next thing we must bear in mind about any athletic contest is this …” preparation for war/women and men competing in events. [In *Complete Works*: L 8.832d-8.835b]

Who do drug bans protect?

Humanities: Philosophy: Aesthetics and sport

What are the aesthetics of sport?
How are our current perceptions gendered?
Do baseball and softball vary?

The gendering of sport

How did organized baseball become a boy’s and men’s game and organized softball become a women’s game?

When and why were women actively pushed out of baseball?


How did softball, invented in 1887, initially advertised as an indoor off season outlet for baseball players, and popularized in among servicemen in WWII, become a sport identified with women?


How have war and the Olympics shaped women’s presence in sport, specifically baseball/softball?

• Ken Burns, Inning 6: The National Pass time (1940-1950) The All-American Girl’s Professional Baseball League

Humanities: Literature and Film:
The characterization of gender in sport

Considering Gender in Casey at the Bat

• **Casey At the Bat** (Ernest Thayer 1888)
• **Walt Disney** (1946) (cartoon adaptation with musical accomp.)
• **James Earl Jones** recitation

Sports Metaphors and Gender Identity: “Throw Like a Girl”

• Jean Thompson, *Throw Like Girl* (Simon and Schuster, 2007)
• **Bend it Like Beckham** (Film: 2002)
• **A League of Their Own** (Film: 1992)
• **Guys and Balls** (German Film: 2004)
Google Search Terms:
baseball paintings
softball paintings
The social importance of the games and the people associated with them is associated with their representation in popular music:

Lyrics.com searches:

- “Yee yee! We've found 1,054 lyrics, 1 artist, and 11 albums matching **baseball**”
- “Yee yee! We've found 37 lyrics, 1 artist, and 0 albums matching **softball**.”

How music is used to represent players can be explored through their selection of”walk up / walk out” songs:

- baseball: [https://ftw.usatoday.com/2017/04/mlb-walk-up-songs-list-best-nelly](https://ftw.usatoday.com/2017/04/mlb-walk-up-songs-list-best-nelly)