8th Annual
Physical Cultural Studies Graduate Student Conference:
“Bodies, Science and Technology”

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This event is funded in part by your Graduate Student Activities Fee and the Department of Kinesiology
Physical Cultural Studies (PCS) – housed within the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Maryland – will host their 8th Annual Graduate Student Conference on Friday April 17th, 2015 at the School of Public Health Building on the College Park campus. This one-day conference will consist of a series of student presentations commenced with a keynote by Dr. Jennifer Sterling, PCS alumnus and current postdoctoral fellow at Georgia Tech University. Dr. Sterling’s research focuses on how science and technology studies can inform and extend critical examinations of sport and the kinesiology field.

This year, the conference will be organized around the theme, “Bodies, Science, and Technology.” Science and Technology Studies (STS) scholarship reveal the intricate ways social, political, economic, and cultural values dialectically affect science and technological developments. Such theories, methods, and approaches provide useful inroads for advancing a myriad of research on the construction, and disruption, of bio-medical and technological understandings of health and human performance. We seek to expand the definitional boundaries of science and technology as scholarly areas of inquiry, utilizing this year’s conference to explore and examine the complex and often contradictory intersections encompassing science, technology, and the human body.

These papers that reflect upon these and other relevant questions, especially that research and those researchers working in dialogue with an empirical basis. Presentations at this conference oriented around, but not limited to, the critical study of the [in]active body, physical culture, constructions of sociocultural practices implicating the body, and the intersection of science, technology, and embodiment more generally.

The conference aims to promote an inter- and trans-disciplinary dialogue, and as such is a space for work that develops from within or across multiple academic disciplines. We welcome all submissions from a multitude of disciplines on a multitude of related topics, but encourage submissions interrogating physical cultural practices.
**Friday April 17th, 2015**  
**Conference Schedule of Events**

**ALL Speaking Events WILL TAKE PLACE in the FRIDGEN STUDENT LOUNGE in the SCHOOL OF PUBIC HEALTH**  
Lunch will be in the Faculty/Staff Lounge

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
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<td>8:00 - 9:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Opening Reception &amp; Registration</td>
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| 9:15 - 10:30 a.m. | **Keynote:**  
Dr. Jennifer Sterling                                                        |
| 10:45 - 11:45 a.m. | **Presentation Session 1:**  
Movement Beyond Sport                                                            |
| 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. | **Presentation Session 2:**  
Spaces of Physical Culture                                                        |
| 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. | **LUNCH**  
FACULTY/STAFF LOUNGE                                                             |
| 2:15 - 3:15 p.m. | **Presentation Session 3:**  
The “Social Responsibility” of Science  
Methods, Politics, and Crisis                                                    |
| 3:30 - 5:00 p.m. | **Faculty Panel Discussion**                                                   |

**5:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Closing Reception**

Mulligans Grill & Pub, Maryland Golf Course Clubhouse  
University Blvd and Stadium Dr  
College Park, MD 20740  
(301) 314-6630
Introduction by Stephanie J. Cork

DR. JENNIFER STERLING (PhD, The University of Maryland)
Postdoc in the Sports, Society, and Technology program Georgia Tech

VISUALIZING SPORT:
The Art, Science, and Technology of Active Bodies

Sports, and physically active bodies, have been adopted as significant sites of research in a wide range of academic disciplines – from the humanities and social sciences, to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). However, there is a lack of research that critically examines how the study of sport produces differentiated understandings of the human body across, and at the intersections of, these fields. The myriad ways active bodies are made visible provides an empirical meeting point to examine these knowledge productions, and the integration of science and technology studies provides a framework to understand them.

Moving from art to the state-of-the-art, my talk will be divided into three major (inter)sections: art, science, and technology. Each section will first situate the relationship within socio-historical and disciplinary contexts, then provide a closer examination of the visualization of sport through specific case studies – namely, the Champions exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, the Body Worlds exhibitions, and sporting data visualizations. Finally, each section will close with a look forward to the ways art, science, and technology could work together to conceptualize new sporting visualities, and disrupt existing formulations. I will conclude with some thoughts on how sport studies and kinesiology can engage in empirical, theoretical, and methodological technoscientific futures to reimagine sport.

BIOGRAPHY
Jennifer Sterling is a postdoctoral fellow working with the Sports, Society & Technology (SST) program. She recently completed her Ph.D. in Kinesiology (Physical Cultural Studies) at the University of Maryland, following research posts at Loughborough University (UK) and the Smithsonian National Museum of American History. Her research interests revolve around the disciplinary intersections of sports studies, science and technology studies, and visual culture. In particular, her research explores how visualizations of physically active bodies (e.g. medical imaging, personal data tracking, exhibition technologies) shape understandings of the body, and affect inequalities.
**Paper 1:** “The role of health professionals in making leisure pursuits available to women in prison”  
**Julie Maier**, PCS, UMD, College Park ([jmaier@umd.edu](mailto:jmaier@umd.edu))

Incarcerated women are one of the most marginalized populations in America. They are likely to come from impoverished communities, face a disproportionate number of deleterious physical and mental health outcomes, have little to do freedom once incarcerated, and experience stigma and a lack of resources once released. From an intersectional, health disparities perspective, the reasons women are incarcerated, and the poor health experienced by this population, are not due to individual shortcomings. Instead, systemic injustices that make it difficult for women who face the intersection of oppressions related to race, class, gender conformity, and sexuality to meet their basic needs in ways that are safe and legal can be seen to play a bigger role. Once incarcerated, such women face myriad barriers to getting their health needs met. Researchers and health professionals such as nurses and social workers have increasingly turned their attention to the role of leisure pursuits in providing incarcerated women with a holistic, humanizing way to enhance their well-being. In this presentation, I discuss the role of leisure in improving the health of women in prison, with particular attention to how health professionals can act as advocates, working to enhance the accessibility of leisure for this marginalized population.

**Paper 2:** “This Pain in my Ass: An Embodied Narrative”  
**Shaun Edmonds**, PCS, UMD, College Park ([seedmond@umd.edu](mailto:seedmond@umd.edu))

Dealing with the stressors of academia is a daily struggle. Every day is a seemingly endless attempt to prioritize a constellation of ambiguous expectations, looming deadlines, and yet still find the space to provide sufficient personal care to rise again the next day and do it all over again. It is far from unusual for disruptions in one form or another to upend a given day, but arguably we often have the agency and choice to make our prioritizations our own. We decide what is important and what can be shelved for another day. When that power is wrestled from us through injury, it can be debilitating in often unconsidered ways. Through this paper I will explore the ways in which chronic pain from a lower back injury created conflict between different aspects of identity that caused my normally cohesive person to splinter into warring
factions. Unlike Newman’s exploration of the pain in his neck, a resultant physical manifestation of the dissonance between his social justice values and his privileged existence (2013), I will instead attempt to trace the impact of the pain in my back to the creation of dissonance between body, mind, and social networks. This mapping will explore how multiple dimensions of personhood are imbricated within the body, and how those imbrications are revealed (and perhaps unraveled) through instances of injury.

Paper 3: “A Corporeal Counterpoint: Cheerleading and the DCC”  
Stephanie J. Cork, PCS, UMD, College Park (scork@umd.edu)

Country Music Televisions’ (CMT) reality television series “Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders: Making the team” showcases the long and painful journey of 500 potential team members down to the elite forty to fifty women that will be permitted to wear the blue stars and white boots. Though cheerleading has often be viewed as a spectacle for the male gaze the lack of male bodies within this reality show illuminates the complexity of female agency in relation to physical cultural spaces. The women showcased in this series conform to hyper feminine performance but also exemplify concerted commitment and dedication to this professional sporting realm. This questions the unidirectional comprehension of cheerleading as merely reifying traditional and oppressive gender norms. However, the women themselves articulate this experience as a site of empowerment “worth” the struggle. Through utilizing theoretical frameworks to analyze some of the discursive activities in this space this paper looks to contrast typical readings of both reality television and the sport of cheerleading.

Student Presentation SESSION 2: Spaces of Physical Culture  
12:00 - 1:00 p.m.  
Moderator: Shaun Edmonds

Paper 1: “Risky environments or risky individuals?: A systematic review of academic literature on obesogenic environments”  
Katie Esmonde, PCS, UMD (kesmonde@umd.edu)

Within the academic literature on the “obesity epidemic”, there has been a proliferation of discussion of the obesogenic environment, which Swinburn, Egger and Raza (1999) define as “the sum of influences that the surroundings, opportunities, or conditions of life have on promoting obesity in individuals or populations” (p. 564). Drawing on the work of scholarship that critically examines the production of scientific and social knowledge, including the assumptions that underpin particular
lines of inquiry (Gard & Wright, 2005; Latour, 1987), we conducted a systematic review of journal articles containing the phrase “obesogenic environment” using the database Scopus, with a focus on the articles that had over fifty citations. We were particularly interested in how the discourse of risk (Lupton, 1995) was mobilized within the articles and, more specifically, if the environment or individuals were positioned as posing a risk. Despite the presumed focus on the environment that the term “obesogenic environment” would suggest, we nonetheless found a substantial and sustained focus on individual lifestyle as well as recommendations that individuals alter their lifestyles in order to prevent obesity. We position this finding in relation to existing discussions pertaining to the neoliberal governance of bodies in Western society.

**Paper 2: “Physical Culture and Development: An on-field analysis of DC United’s ‘United for DC’ inner-city youth development program”**

Meir Lewin, PCS, UMD, College Park

This presentation will provide an analysis of D.C. United’s community outreach program called United Soccer Club, which is partnered with First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! campaign. The program intends “to address childhood obesity and promote healthy lifestyles to youth in urban under-served communities.” I will draw upon my experiences coaching for the program in the Spring of 2012, and argue that certain issues of ‘governmentality’, as employed by Jette, Bhagat, and Andrews (2014) in a critique of Let’s Move!, make United Soccer Club a program that unintentionally governs and disciplines participants rather than helping them address “healthy lifestyle” issues. In this sense, the program, by way of political and corporate partnerships, biopolitical positions, and lack of articulating systemic disadvantages present within the served communities, is largely ineffective towards its stated mission and potentially damaging towards the collective D.C. area.

**Paper 3: “Physical Cultures and Affect: Leaning in to the Affective Turn”**

Dr. Jacob J. Bustad, Towson University
Dr. Oliver J.C. Rick, University of Massachusetts, Boston

The dynamics of different forms and practices of physical cultures within urban environments have gained increased scholarly attention in recent years, often as part of a focus on the relationship between physical activity, urban public health, and the environmental well-being of the city. However, there remains a need to better interrogate connections between and within bodies and “processes that are not
contained or representable by language or cognition alone” (Pellegrini and Puar, 2009, p. 37). This project therefore asserts that a necessary aspect of any understanding of urban contexts and experiences must be recognized in affective and ‘non-representational’ (Thrift 2007) dimensions, being fundamental to both human and non-human interaction. In this presentation, we provide an overview of several approaches to affect as both a theoretical concept, as well as a mode of inquiry into urban physical cultures. We then examine the possibilities for affect and non-representational theory in regards to examples of particular elements of urban physical activity in Baltimore and Washington DC.

Student Presentation Session 3: Science, ‘Social Responsibility’, and Crisis 2:15 - 3:15 p.m. Moderator: Sam Clevenger

Paper 1: “The Lessons of the BSSRS: Methods, Politics, and Crisis” Sam Clevenger, PCS, UMD, College Park (scleveng@umd.edu)

This presentation briefly outlines the argument that American academic scientists need to begin to reconsider the politics and social responsibility of their research, particularly in the relation of the accumulation of scientific knowledge to contemporary capitalism. I base this argument on three key, interrelated points. One, that scientific inquiry and the accumulation of scientific knowledge can only be fully grasped in its dialectical relation to history, politics, and context. Two, because all scientific research is dialectically and politically contingent, scientists must critically consider the important consequences stemming from the persistent commoditization of their scientific knowledge within market capitalism and neoclassical economic theories. Three, that the coming environmental catastrophe of climate change represents a crisis exposing both the problematic relationship between science and capitalism and the implicit problems from the commoditization of scientific knowledge, requiring scientists and scholars to begin to evaluate how they see the role of their research and work within the global society’s response to the environmental crisis. In arguing these points I briefly utilize and examine historical evidence from the political activism of the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), an 1960s and 70s organization created by prominent and politically conscious scientists and scholars in the UK with the aim of responding to their contemporary crisis of nuclear proliferation and the politics affecting science and technology during their time. It is my hope that, at the very least, this presentation can demonstrate the role and importance of historical
insight in rethinking the politics of scientific discovery, within a context in which the world is witnessed the exposed contradictions and limitations of contemporary capitalism.

Response One: Andrew Venezia, PhD Student in the Neuroscience and Cognitive Sciences Program (NACS) under the supervision of Dr. Steve Roth in the Department of Kinesiology

Response Two: Priti Patel, MPH Student in Maryland’s Applied Institute of Environmental Health (MIAEH) under the supervision of Dr. Paul Turner

FACULTY PANEL:

3:30 - 5:00 p.m.

Panel Theme:
Re-thinking the Body in Scientific and Social Research

Chair: Dr. David L Andrews (Ph.D., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) dla@umd.edu

PANELISTS:

Dr. Ross Miller (Ph.D., University of Massachusetts, Amherst)  
Dr. Miller is an assistant professor in the University of Maryland’s Department of Kinesiology, Cognitive Motor Neuroscience. Dr. Miller's research centers on how the neural, muscular, and skeletal systems interact to produce locomotion in health and pathology.

Dr. Shannon Jette (Ph.D. University of British Columbia)  
Dr. Jette is an assistant professor in the University of Maryland’s Department of Kinesiology, Physical Cultural Studies. Her work focuses on social and cultural aspects of health, physical activity, gender and the body.

Dr. Jennie Phillips (Ph.D. University of Maryland)  
Dr. Phillips is a student advisor and instructor who teaches Physical Activity Epidemiology at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of Maryland.

Jo Zimmerman (M.S., George Mason University)  
Jo is an instructor and Physical Activity Program Coordinator in the University of Maryland’s Department of Kinesiology. Jo has been working in the health and fitness industry for nearly 20 years and teaching for over 14 years.