

# HISTORY OF SPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES

HIST 341-001

fall 2016

3 credit hours

Instructor: Professor Chris Elzey

Location: Robinson B 203

Day: MW

Time: 1:30-2:45 p.m.

Office: Robinson B 226A

Email: celzey@gmu.edu (please use your MasonLive account when emailing)

Office Hours: MW 10:30 a.m.-12:10 p.m.

## Prerequisites for the course

None

## Class Contacts

1. Name and phone number/email:
2. Name and phone number/email:

## The Course

History 341 explores the history of sports in the United States from the colonial period to the present. Students will consider how sports reflected—and sometimes shaped—ideas about race, ethnicity, gender, class, amateurism, professionalization, international politics, and governmental policies. The course also traces the development of sports, exploring the ways in which spontaneous games played by Americans in the eighteenth and nineteenth century evolved into highly formalized and popular activities—activities that now comprise a multi-billion dollar industry.

## Objectives

Understanding the history of sports in America is one of the most important goals of History 341. After completing the course, students will be able to explain:

- The role of sports in early American history
- How and why sports evolved from impromptu events with few rules and customs into major cultural activities
- The professionalization of American sports
- The general history of intercollegiate sports
- The ways in which race, gender, class, ethnicity, the media and international politics both reinforced and revealed attitudes about sports
- The segregation and desegregation of American sports
- The history of American athletic clubs

- How sports was used as a tool of political protest
- The ways in which sports reflected broad themes in American history
- Demonstrating effective and clear expression in both writing and speech is another important objective of the course

### **Required Books**

Readings are to be completed for the day that they are assigned in the course schedule (see below). The books are:

- Brown, Daniel James. *The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics*. New York: Viking, 2013.
- Jenkins, Sally. *The Real All Americans: The Team That Changed a Game, a People, a Nation*. New York: Broadway, 2007.
- Remnick, David. *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero*. New York: Vintage, 1998.
- Ware, Susan. *Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2011.

You are also responsible for reading several articles or book chapters. All of these will be made available on Blackboard (so be sure you have access to it). As with the assignments for books, the readings are to be completed by the time you come to class. You may or may not be quizzed on the articles. The article/chapters are:

- Berg, Adam. "‘To Conquer Myself’: The New Strenuousness and the Emergence of ‘Thru-Hiking’ on the Appalachian Trail." *Journal of Sport History* (Spring 2015): 1-19.
- Breen, Timothy H. "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia." *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 1977): 237-259.
- Eikleberry, Sarah Jane. "More than Milk and Cookies: Reconsidering the College Play Day." *Journal of Sport History* (Fall 2014): 467-486.
- Kirsch, George B. "Baseball Spectators, 1855-1870." *Baseball History* (Fall 1987): 4-18. (The abridged version we will read is in Reiss, Steven A. *Major Problems in American Sport History*, ed. Steven A. Reiss, 103-111. Boston: Wadsworth, Cengage, 1997.
- Reiss, Steven A. "Sport and the Redefinition of American Middle-Class Masculinity," *International Journal of Sport History* (May 1991): 5-22.
- Soares, John. "Cold War, Hot Ice: International Ice Hockey, 1947-1980." *Journal of Sports History* (Summer 2007): 207-230.

### **Exams, Quizzes and Assignments**

There are two exams. Each covers material from both the class and assigned readings. The exams will consist of identifications, and short answer and essay questions. About a week before the exam, I will post on Blackboard a list of

identifications (IDs) and several essay questions. From that list, I will select several ID terms, and two essay questions, of which you will answer only one. Each exam will count for 25 percent of your grade.

There are also three short papers (each approximately 3-4 pages in length). The papers are part opinion pieces, part analysis of the books and articles we will read in class. **DO NOT MERELY SUMMARIZE THE BOOK AND ARTICLES.** I would like you to think about the book and articles and how they relate to American history. You will be graded on content, persuasiveness, grammar and overall organization. Papers must be submitted in hard copy. **NO PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED BY EMAIL.** The scores of the papers will be averaged and count for 20 percent of your grade. Papers are due the day of discussion.

Quizzes are another part of the course, and they may be announced, unannounced, or a small assignment. There will be a quiz given on the day of discussion (over that particular book). Please bring a pen or pencil, as well as writing paper, to class. Also, I will count attendance as a quiz. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz score and calculate the average, which is worth 20 percent of your grade.

The last requirement is a group project. I will divide the class into eight groups. Two groups each will be responsible for one of the four books. One of the two groups will develop a short presentation (no more than 20 minutes) on the first half of the selected book, while the other group will do the same for the second half of the book. I would like you to include background information of the material discussed in the book (you may present the material using PowerPoint slides or Prezi) and prepare discussion questions, which are to be submitted to me via email **NO LATER THAN TWO DAYS** before the presentation. I will subtract five points from your overall presentation grade for each day the questions are late. **YOU WILL BE GRADED ON THE PRESENTATION OF BACKGROUND MATERIAL, THE DISCUSSION THAT YOU GENERATE, AND THE QUALITY OF THE QUESTIONS.** I will post the questions that you submit on Blackboard. If you are not presenting that day, you are expected to review the questions on Blackboard and be prepared to answer them (some might even be included on the quiz).

The group project requires you to work with each other outside of class (electronically and/or in person). Each group member must speak. The project is worth the final 10 percent of your grade.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Exams (2)	50%
Papers	20%
Quizzes and assignments	20%
Group project/presentation	10%

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	B+	88-89.9	C+	78-79.9	D	60-69.9
A-	90-92.9	B	83-87.9	C	73-77.9	F	0-59.9
		B-	80-82.9	C-	70-72.9		

### **Missed Exams, Quizzes and Assignments**

Make-up exams will only be given if you have some kind of official documentation (a doctor's note, for instance) excusing you from class. There will be no make-up quizzes. I repeat: **THERE WILL BE NO MAKEUP QUIZZES, BUT I WILL DROP YOUR LOWEST QUIZ SCORE.** Late papers and assignments will be docked 5 points for each day they are not turned in (that includes Saturdays and Sundays). So, please do your work; budget your time; and plan accordingly.

### **Electronic Devices**

Cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that make any kind of noise are not permitted. PCs and tablets are allowed, but only for note taking. If you are seen using your PC or tablet for something other than note taking, you will forfeit your right to use that device in class.

### **Academic Integrity**

You are to do your own work. Students who violate the Honor Code will be dealt with severely. Information on the Honor Code and what constitutes a violation can be found at the website for the Office of Academic Integrity (<http://oai.gmu.edu>).

### **Students with Disabilities**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are available. See the webpage of the Office of Disability Services (ODS) (<http://ods.gmu.edu>), or call 993-2474 for more information.

### **Diversity**

The course complies with George Mason's Diversity Statement, which begins: "George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth." For the full statement, see <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement>.

## Important Drop/Add Dates

- September 6 is the final day to add or drop the course with no financial penalty.
- September 30 is the last day you can drop the course, but you will incur a financial penalty.
- October 28 is last day for selective withdrawal.

## Schedule

### Week 1

August 29: Introduction: Let's Get Serious: "Taking Sport Seriously"; Sports in Colonial America

Read: Start Jenkins

August 31: Games into Sports: Society and Culture, 1800-1860

Read: Breen, "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia"; continue Jenkins

### Week 2

September 5: No Class

September 7: Athletic Clubs and Amateurism

Read: Reiss, "Sport and the Redefinition of American Middle-Class Masculinity"; continue Jenkins

### Week 3

September 12: Baseball's Early Years

Read: Kirsch, "Baseball Spectators, 1855-1870"; continue Jenkins

September 14: Baseball at the Turn of the Century

Read: Continue Jenkins

### Week 4

September 19: **Finish Jenkins, discussion and presentation; paper due**

Read: Start Brown

September 21: Sports on College Campuses, 1880-1920

Read: Continue Brown

### Week 5

September 26: Women and Sports, 1880-1920

Read: Eikleberry, "More than Milk and Cookies: Reconsidering the College Play Day"; continue Brown

September 28: Sports Heroes (and Anti-Heroes) of the 1920s

Read: Continue Brown

### Week 6

- October 3: Sport Heroes in the 1930s  
Read: Continue Brown
- October 5: Sport Heroes in the 1930s (cont.)  
Read: Continue Brown

### Week 7

- October 11 (Tuesday): **Finish Brown, discussion and presentation; paper due**
- October 12: **Exam #1**  
Read: Start Remnick

### Week 8

- October 17: A Separate National Pastime: the Negro Leagues  
Read: Continue Remnick
- October 19: Racial Segregation in Sports  
Read: Continue Remnick

### Week 9

- October 24: Racial Segregation in Sports (cont.)  
Read: Continue Remnick
- October 26: Sports during WWII  
Read: Continue Remnick

### Week 10

- October 31: A Women's Place?: Sports and Post-WWII America  
Read: Continue Remnick
- November 2: **Finish Remnick, discussion and presentation; paper due**  
Read: Start Ware

### Week 11

- November 7: "The Greatest": Muhammad Ali  
Read: Continue Ware
- November 9: Ali (cont.)  
Read: Continue Ware

### Week 12

- November 14: "The Greatest" (cont.)  
Read: Continue Ware
- November 16: The Bitterest of Foes: the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cold War Rivalry in Sports  
Read: Continue Ware

Week 13

November 21: Bitterest of Foes (cont.)

Read: Continue Ware

November 23: Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Read: Continue Ware

Week 14

November 28: Sports in the Era of America Limitations: the 1970s

Read: Berg, "To Conquer Myself: The New Strenuousness and the Emergence of 'Thru-Hiking' on the Appalachian Trail in the 1970s"

November 30: **Finish Ware, discussion and presentation; paper due**

Week 15

December 5: Ice Wars: US and USSR Hockey

Read: Soares, "Cold War, Hot Ice" International Ice Hockey, 1947-1980"

December 7: Commercialization, Globalization, and Infatuation: Sports in the New Millennium

December 14: **Exam #2** (starts at 1:30 p.m.)