

BASKETBALL AND THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

HIST 340

Spring 2017

3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Professor Chris Elzey

Location: Krug Hall 242

Day: T/TH

Time: 9:00-10:15 a.m.

Office: Robinson B 369B

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

Office Hours: T/TH 10:30-11:30 a.m. (also by appointment)

Prerequisites for the course

None

Class Contacts

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

The Course

Basketball and the American Experience explores the evolution of basketball, from its invention in the 1890s to the first decades of the twenty-first century. We will use the game as a lens, examining such important themes in American history as the acculturation and assimilation of immigrants; racial, ethnic and gender discrimination; the rise of big-time college athletics and professional sports; post-WWII affluence and its impact on American youth culture; the fight for civil rights; the role of media in American society; the women's liberation movement; international politics; and the decline of the American Dream in a post-industrial world. We will not spend much time discussing team histories, statistics, or coaching and training techniques. Instead, we will investigate how basketball informed the course of American sport history, and how historical forces shaped the game.

Objectives

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to explain:

1. The history of basketball in the United States
2. Why basketball was invented and the role it played in acculturating immigrants during the turn of the twentieth century
3. How the game reflected and reinforced issues of race, class, gender, ethnicity and international politics

4. The evolution of a black aesthetic in the game, and its embrace by players, fans and the media
5. How basketball mirrored and shaped attitudes of American disillusionment and protest during the 1960s and 1970s
6. The meaning of the game to both rural and urban America
7. The economic aspects of college and professional basketball
8. How basketball reinforced notions of masculinity
9. The ways in which important players, coaches, games, and historical events shaped the course of basketball history
10. The commercialization, professionalization, and globalization of basketball
11. The role of sports in a post-industrial America
12. Effective and clear expression in writing and speaking

Required Texts

Please complete the readings for the day that they are assigned in the course schedule (see below). The required books are:

Graham, Tom and Rachel Graham Cody. *Getting Open: The Unknown Story of Bill Garrett and the Integration of College Basketball*. New York: Atria, 2011.

Grundy, Pamela and Susan Shackelford. *Shattering the Glass: The Remarkable History of Women's Basketball*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

LaFeber, Walter. *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1999.

Davis, Seth. *When March Went Mad: The Game That Transformed Basketball*. New York: Times Books, 2009.

Lane, Jeffrey. *Under the Boards: The Cultural Revolution in Basketball*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007.

You will also be responsible for reading several articles. All can be found on Blackboard under e-reserve.

Carlson, Chad. "The Motherhood, the Godfather, and the Birth of a Basketball Dynasty: American Efforts to Promote Basketball in Lithuania." *International Journal of the History of Sport* 28 (August 2011): 1479-1495.

Criblez, Adam. "White Men Playing a Black Man's Game: Basketball's 'Great White Hope' of the 1970s." *Journal of Sport History* 42 (Fall 2015): 371-381.

Goudsouzian, Aram. "Bill Russell and the Basketball Revolution." *American Studies* 47 (Fall/Winter 2006): 61-85.

Henderson, Russell J. "The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law: 'Something more than the game will be lost.'" *Journal of Southern History* 63 (November 1997): 827-854.

- Huang, Fuhua. "Glocalisation of Sport: The NBA's Diffusion in China." *International Journal of the History of Sport* 30 (March 2013): 267-284.
- Miller, John E. "Lawrence Welk and John Wooden: Midwestern Small-Town Boys Who Never Left Home." *Journal of American Studies* 38 (April 2004): 109-125.
- Myerscough, Keith. "The Game with No Name: The Invention of Basketball." *International Journal of the History of Sport* 12 (January 1995): 137-152.
- Paino, Troy D. "Hoosiers in a Different Light: Forces of Change v. the Power of Nostalgia." *Journal of Sport History* 28, no. 1 (2001): 63-80.
- Wiggins, David K. "Edwin Bancroft Henderson: Physical Educator, Civil Rights Activist, and Chronicler of African American Athletes." *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 70 (June 1999): 91-112.

Required Films

You are also required to watch several films. All are on reserve in the Johnson Center. Some are available via the Internet or Netflix. The films are:

Black Magic
Hoosiers
Hoop Dreams
Medora
Once Brothers
Sole Man
When the Garden Was Eden

Assignments and Grading

There are two exams. Each will cover material from class, as well as from the assigned readings and films. The exams will consist of identifications, and short answer and essay questions. Each exam will count for 20 percent of your grade.

You will also be responsible for writing five short papers. Each should consist of approximately 750 words. THREE papers are to be written on books, and the remaining TWO on films. The papers are part opinion piece, part historical analysis. In each, I would like you to focus on a major theme presented in the book or film and then connect it more broadly to history. You will be graded on content, persuasiveness, grammar and overall organization. Papers must be submitted in hard copy. NO ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. I will average the scores of the five papers. The average will count for 20 percent of your grade.

Quizzes and minor writing assignments will count for another 20 percent of your grade. Quizzes may be announced or unannounced. The assignments may or may not be announced in class, but will always be posted on Blackboard. So be sure to check your email and Blackboard every day. The assignments are to be turned in when you come to class. Please bring a pen or pencil, as well as writing paper, to

each class. At the end of the term, I will drop your two lowest quiz/assignment scores and calculate the average.

The final assignment requires you and a handful of your classmates to lead a discussion on either a book or film. I will assign you to a group. It is your decision on how you would like to begin the discussion – perhaps a short presentation giving a brief overview of the book or film, or maybe a short introduction and then pose questions. IF YOU ARE ASSIGNED TO DISCUSS A BOOK, DO NOT SUMMARIZE EACH CHAPTER. Generally, the student-led discussion should last up to 25 minutes if you are presenting the same day as another group. If your group is the only one that day, you may take up to 35 minutes. IF YOU GO OVER THE ALLOTTED AMOUNT OF TIME, I WILL CUT YOU OFF. SORRY. A project like this requires you to work with each other outside of class (electronically and/or in person). Each person is required to have a speaking role. I would encourage you to use audio-visuals and incorporate material from outside the class. The presentation/discussion is worth the final 20 percent of your grade.

Grade Breakdown

Exams (2)	40%
Papers	20%
Quizzes and assignments	20%
Discussion	20%

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B+	88-89	C+	78-79	D	60-69
A-	90-92	B	83-87	C	73-77	F	0-59
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

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 MAKE-UP QUIZZES. Late papers and assignments will be docked 5 points for each day they are not turned in (and that includes Saturdays and Sundays). So, budget your time, and plan accordingly.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that ring, beep or make any kind of noise are not permitted. PCs and tablets are allowed, but only for note taking. Do not abuse this privilege. 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 expected to do your own work. Period. Students who violate the Honor Code will be dealt with accordingly. 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 Office of Disability Services' webpage (<http://ods.gmu.edu>) or call 993-2474 for more information.

Enrollment Information

Students are responsible for being enrolled in the course. Important dates to remember:

- Last day to add or drop the course without incurring a penalty is January 30
- Final day to drop the class is February 24
- Last day for selective withdrawal is March 31

Schedule

Week 1: Basketball at the Turn of the Twentieth Century

January 24:

Introduction

Lecture: Who Was Dr. James Naismith?

January 26:

Lecture: Amateurism and the Late Nineteenth Century: Basketball Takes Root

Read: Myerscough, "The Game with No Name: The Invention of Basketball," 137-152.

Week 2: Basketball, the YMCA Movement and Muscular Christianity

January 31:

Lecture: Why the Y?

Read: Carlson, "The Motherhood, the Godfather, and the Birth of a Basketball Dynasty: American Efforts to Promote Basketball in Lithuania," 1479-1495.

February 2:

Lecture: Senda Berenson and Turn-of-the-Century Women's Basketball

Read: Grundy and Shackelford, *Shattering the Glass*, 1-32.

Week 3: America's Urban Game

February 7:

Lecture: The Original Celtics and Early Professional Basketball

February 9:

Lecture: Teaching the Teeming Masses: Basketball as an Agent of Assimilation

Read: Miller, "Lawrence Welk and John Wooden," 109-125.

Week 4: The Jewish Influence on Basketball

February 14:

Lecture: A Jewish Game

February 16:

Lecture: Abe Saperstein: The Most Powerful Man in Basketball

Read: Wiggins, "Edwin Bancroft Henderson," 91-112.

Week 5: New York, Madison Square Garden and the Evolution of College Basketball

February 21:

Lecture: The Long Island University Blackbirds of 1935-36

Read: Begin Graham and Cody, *Getting Open*.

February 23:

Lecture: Snakes in the Garden: Gambling and College Basketball, 1950-51

Read: Continue Graham and Cody, *Getting Open*.

Week 6: The Color Line in the College and Pro Game, 1900-1970

February 28:

Discussion: First half of *Black Magic* (papers due)

Read: Continue Graham and Cody, *Getting Open*.

Read: Goudsouzian, "Bill Russell and the Basketball Revolution," 61-85.

March 2:

Lecture: The Big O and the Mighty Tigers of Crispus Attucks High

Read: Continue Graham and Cody, *Getting Open*.

Read: Henderson, "The 1963 Mississippi State University Basketball Controversy and the Repeal of the Unwritten Law," 827-854.

Week 7: Hoosier Hoops: Basketball in Indiana

March 7:

Discussion (2X): *Hoosiers* and *Getting Open: The Unknown Story of Bill Garrett and the Integration of College Basketball* (papers due)

Read: Paino, "Hoosiers in a Different Light," 63-80.

March 9:

Exam

Week 8 (SPRING BREAK)

March 14: (NO CLASS)

March 16: (NO CLASS)

Week 9: Racial Integration of the Game and the Evolution of a Black Aesthetic

March 21:

Lecture: The White-Black Aesthetic: Pistol Pete

Read: Grundy, *Shattering the Glass*, 37-123.

March 23:

Discussion: Second half of *Black Magic* (papers due)

Read: Criblez, "White Men Playing a Black Man's Game: Basketball's 'Great White Hope' of the 1970s," 371-381.

Week 10: Women's Basketball

March 28:

Lecture: Women's Basketball Before Title IX

Read: Grundy, *Shattering the Glass*, 127-212.

March 30:

Discussion: *Shattering the Glass* (papers due)

Read: Grundy, *Shattering the Glass*, 215-257.

Week 11: International Politics

April 4:

Lecture: FIBA and American International Basketball Dominance, 1932-1972

Read: Davis, *When March Went Mad*, 1-64.

April 6:

Lecture: The American-Soviet Olympic Rivalry

Read: Davis, *When March Went Mad*, 65-136.

Week 12: Magic vs. Larry: The Rivalry That Made March Mad and Saved the NBA

April 11:

Discussion: *When March Went Mad* (papers due)

Read: *When March Went Mad*, 137-275.

April 13:

Lecture: Nielsen Ratings Nightmare: The NBA and the late 1970s

Read: Lane, *Under the Boards*, xi-66.

Week 13: Basketball and Hip-Hop America

April 18:

Discussion (2X): *Hoop Dreams* and *Medora* (papers due)

Read, Lane, *Under the Boards*, 69-145.

April 20:

Discussion (2X): *Under the Boards* and *When the Garden Was Eden* (papers due)

Read: Lane, *Under the Boards*, 147-241.

Week 14: The Phenomenon of Michael Jordan

April 25:

Lecture: MJ, the Dream Team, and “the Other Dream Team”

Read: LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 13-89.

April 27:

Discussion (2X): *Sole Man* and *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* (papers due)

Read: LaFeber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*, 90-164.

Week 15: The Globalization of the Game

May 2:

Discussion: *Once Brothers* (papers due)

Read: Huang, “Glocalisation of Sport: The NBA’s Diffusion in China,” 267-284.

May 4:

Lecture: Personal Reflections on Basketball Globetrotting

May 11: **Final Exam** (starts at 7:30 a.m.)