

SPORT HISTORY AND FILM
HIST 387-003/HIST 389-001
Spring 2022
3 Credit Hours

Instructor: Professor Chris Elzey

Location: Enterprise Hall 276

Day: W

Time: 4:30-7:10 p.m.

Office: Horizon Hall 3208

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

Office Hours: W 1:00-3:00 p.m. (also by appointment)

Prerequisites for the course

None

Class Contacts

1. Name and contact information:

2. Name and contact information:

The Course

HIST 387-003/HIST 389-001 explores the intersection of film and sports and how the connection can inform our understanding of sport history from both an American and international perspective. Using documentaries, shorts, newsreels, and feature films, the course examines such topics as the early development of sports films; the history of the Olympic Games and film; the history of college athletics and film in the United States; the sordid role of organized crime in sport, and its portrayal in film; the French obsession with cycling; race and cricket; rugby and social change in South Africa; women's sport history in America; the historical convergence of surfing and politics; hockey in the former Soviet Union; and doping and international sport. Attention is also devoted to the historical background, as well as the social and cultural context, of sports films.

Objectives

After completing the course, students will be able to explain:

1. The evolution of sports films
2. The difference between sports "actualities" and narrative sport films
3. The role sports films play in shaping attitudes toward race, gender, class, gambling, doping, national identity, and global politics
4. The use of film in the Olympic Games
5. The popularity of certain sports in different countries
6. The history of professionalism in college sports

7. The intersection of race and sport in film
8. How sports reflect social and cultural history in the US and other countries
9. The role of women in baseball during the 1940s
10. The Soviet view of the 1980 Olympic hockey final
11. The histories of several sports films

In addition, effective, concise, and clear expression in writing and public speaking is one of the chief aims of the course.

Required Readings

You are to complete all readings by the day they are listed in the course schedule (see below). The required book is:

Laderman, Scott. *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2014.

You are also required to read the following articles and book chapters. All can be found on Blackboard under the “Access to Films and Readings” header.

Abelson, Donald E. “Politics on Ice: The United States, the Soviet Union, and a Hockey Game in Lake Placid.” *Canadian Review of American Studies*, 40 (2010): 63–94.

Abrams, Douglas E. “The Little League Champions Benched by Jim Crow in 1955: Resistance and Reform after *Brown v. Board of Education*.” *Journal of Supreme Court History* (2013): 51-62.

Abrams, Douglas E. “The twelve-year-old girl's lawsuit that changed America: the continuing impact of *NOW v. Little League Baseball, Inc.* at 40.” *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and Law* Vol. 20, Issue 2 (2012): 241-269.

Bachrach, Susan. “Part 4: The Nazi Olympics.” Chap. in *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 2000): 74-110.

Brichford, Maynard. “Munich 1972.” Chap. in *Encyclopedia of Modern Olympic Movement*, eds. John E. Findling and Kimberly E. Pelle (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004): 185-190.

Early, Gerald. “The Mortality of Kings: Ali vs. Frazier.” Chap. in *Rivals: Legendary Matchups* eds., David K. Wiggins and Pierre R. Rodgers (Fayetteville, AR, 2010): 49-67.

Friedman, Lester D. “Introduction.” Chap. in *Sports Movies: Quick Takes: Movies and Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020): 1-39.

Grundlingh, Marizanne, and Grundlingh, Albert. “Fractured Fandom and Paradoxical Passions: Explaining Support for New Zealand All Black Rugby Teams in South Africa, 1960-2018.” *International Journal of the History of Sport* Vol. 36, Issue 1 (2019): 67-82.

Hunt, Thomas M, and Paul Dimeo, Florian Hemme, and Ann Mueller. “The Health Risks of Doping during the Cold War: A Comparative Analysis

- of the Two Sides of the Iron Curtain.” *International Journal of the History of Sport* Vol. 31, Issue 17 (2014): 2230-2244.
- James, CLR. *Beyond a Boundary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1963, 2013): ix-xxvi, xxxi, 1-7, 225-252, 257-261.
- Leab, Daniel J. “Reaffirming Traditional Values: The Blue Collar Ethic in Bicentennial America: Rocky.” Chapt in *Hollywood’s America: Understanding History Through Film*, eds. Steven Mintz, Randy Roberts, and David Welky (Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: Wiley and Sons, 2016): 288-296.
- Lemann, Nicholas. “How the Seventies Changed America,” *American Heritage*, Vol 42, Issue 4 (1991): 39+.
- Llewellyn, Matthew P., Toby C. Rider, and John Gleaves, “The Golden Games: The 1984 Olympics.” Chap. in *LA Games: Play, Games, and Community in the City of Angels*, eds. Wayne Wilson and David K. Wiggins, (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 2018): 201-219.
- Lopez, Bernat. “Propaganda on Two Wheels: The Spanish Republican Team in the 1937 Tour de France” *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 36, Issue 2-3 (2019): 267-293.
- McLemore, Henry. “Propaganda? Not in This Film!” *Hollywood News-Citizen*, (December 16, 1938).
- Meiklejohn, Alexander. “The Evils of College Athletics.” *Harper’s Weekly* (December 2, 1905): 1751-1752.
- Ritchie, Andrew. “Marshall ‘Major’ Taylor: The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World.” Chap. in *Out of the Shadow: A Biographical History of African American Athletes*, ed. David K. Wiggins (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2006): 21-37.
- Slater, John, “Tokyo 1964,” Chap. in *Encyclopedia of Modern Olympic Movement*, eds. John E. Findling and Kimberly E. Pelle (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004): 165-174.
- Smith, Ronald A. “The 1929 Carnegie Report: Condemnation of Professionalism.” Chap. in *The Myth of the Amateur: A History of College Athletic Scholarships* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2021): 73-87.
- Smith, Thomas G. “Outside the Pale: The Exclusion of Blacks from Organized Professional Football, 1934-1946.” *Journal of Sport History* 15 (1988): 255-281.
- Streible, Dan. “A History of the Boxing Film, 1894-1915.” *Film History* 3 (1989): 235-257.
- Wagg, Stephen. “Father, King, Statesman, General, Prince.” Chap. in *Cricket: A Political History of the Global Game, 1945-2017* (New York: Routledge, 2018) 73-89.
- Wagg, Stephen. “The Soul of a Nation, Long Suppressed.” Chap. in *Cricket: A Political History of the Global Game, 1945-2017* (New York: Routledge, 2018) 90-107.

Ware, Susan. "Introduction: Title IX—Thirty-seven Words That Changed American Sports." Chap. in *Title IX: A Brief History with Documents* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2014; 2007): 1-31.

Yoseloff, Anthony A. "From Ethnic Hero to National Icon: The Americanization of Joe Dimaggio." *International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 16 Issue 3 (1999): 1-20.

Required Films

Below is the list of films you'll watch in class and outside of class. Most are available through different streaming services to which GMU subscribes (Swank, Kanopy, and so forth). Some films below can be accessed by going to the "Access to Films and Readings" header on the left-hand menu in Blackboard.

In addition, I've placed DVDs of a handful of in-class films on reserve at the reserve desk of Fenwick Library. Streaming services such as Netflix, YouTube TV, ESPN+, and Apple TV also have most of the films. The only film that cannot be watched as a DVD at the GMU Library reserve desk or through GMU streaming services is *Icarus* (2018).

IMPORTANT: You are to have watched the outside-of-class film assigned for its date in the course schedule before coming to class.

- *The Freshman* (1925)—in class
- *Schooled: The Price of College Sports* (2013)—in class
- *Horse Feathers* (1932)—in class
- *Kid Galahad* (1937)—in class
- *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942)—outside of class
- *42: the Jackie Robinson Story* (2013)—in class
- Ken Burns, *Baseball* ("Part 6: The National Pastime"); start at 59:54 and watch to 2:09:15—outside of class
- *Olympia* (1938)—excerpt; in class
- *Tokyo Olympiad* (1965)—excerpt; in class
- *Visions of Eight* (1973)—excerpt; in class
- *Sixteen Days of Glory* (1985)—excerpt; in class
- *A League of Their Own* (1992)—in class
- *The Endless Summer* (1964)—in class
- *A Sunday in Hell: Paris-Roubaix* (1976)—in class
- *Thrilla in Manila* (2008)—in class
- *What's My Name* (first part) (2018)—outside of class
- *Rocky* (1976)—in class
- *Bad News Bears* (1976)—outside of class
- *Fire in Babylon* (2010)—in class
- *Of Miracles and Men* (2016)—in class

- *Invictus* (2010)—in class
- *Fair Play (Have You Heard from Johannesburg)* (2010)—outside of class
- *Icarus* (2018)—in class

You are also responsible for watching one of the following films as part of a group presentation (more on that below). All the films below can be accessed through one of the streaming services at GMU. The films are:

- *Seabiscuit* (2003)
- *Hoosiers* (1986)
- *Cinderella Man* (2005)
- *Million Dollar Baby* (2004)
- *Glory Road* (2006)
- *Body and Soul* (1947)
- *Swift Feet* (2016)
- *Diego Maradona* (2019)
- *Offside* (2007)

In addition, each group member is expected to write a research paper on the group's film (for more, see below).

A list of the location of all films can be found on Blackboard under the header "List of Where to Locate Films."

Assignments and Grading

There are no exams in the class. Your knowledge of the course material will be assessed by how well you complete the following:

- Five short papers, which are to be 300-400 words in length
- Your group's final presentation
- Participation in the course (attendance will be kept)
- The research paper on your group's film

The short papers will consist of opinion pieces, historical reflections, comparisons of one film to another, film critiques, and response essays to reviews or articles. The short papers should be between 300 and 400 words. The prompt for each film will be made available a week before it's due in the weekly module on Blackboard. Except for weeks #1 and #16, there is a prompt available each week.

IMPORTANT: There are thirteen prompts, but you are responsible for completing only five shorter papers. I'll repeat that: There are thirteen prompts, but you are responsible for completing only five shorter papers.

All shorter papers are to be submitted via the link provided on Blackboard. The scores you receive for the five papers will be averaged at the end of the term. That score will count for 20 percent of your grade.

The group presentation will count for another 20 percent of your grade. During the first of the semester, I'd like you select your top three films (please email me with your picks by 11:59 pm on February 2). Once you've been assigned a group, it is important that you communicate with your fellow group members. The presentation will discuss the film, it's historical and cultural context, and the meaning of it as it relates to the goals of the course. The presentation is to be a collaborative effort, and the best presentations are the ones in which all group members actively participate. Each member is required to take part in the presentation. The use of audio-visuals is a good idea, though not required. Each group will have roughly twenty minutes to make its presentation. The presentations will take place on May 11.

Participation in class is another requirement of the course. I expect you to come to class having completed all readings and other assignments (films included) for the date they're listed in the course schedule. One of the goals of the class is to have a robust and well-informed discussion on sport history and film. The only way that can be done is if you come to class prepared to discuss the material and fully participate. Also, I will take attendance each class. Participation will count for 20 percent of your grade. (If you find yourself unable to attend several classes because of illness or other reasons, I may assign an alternative assignment, such as an essay.)

The research paper on your group's film is the final requirement of the course, and it will count for 40 percent of your final grade. Each group member is to write a research paper of 10-15 pages in length. You are expected to do research (primary source as well as secondary source) on the film and its historical and/or cultural context and background, and then write an essay explaining the film's meaning to our understanding of sport history. You will submit the paper through a link under "Week #16" in the "Weekly Modules" header on the Blackboard page for the course. The paper is due by 11:59 pm ET on May 11.

Grade Breakdown

Research paper	40%
Shorter papers	20%
Group presentation	20%
Participation	20%

Grading Scale

A	93-100	B+	88-89.99	C+	78-79.99	D	60-69.99
A-	90-92.99	B	83-87.99	C	73-77.99	F	0-59.99
		B-	80-82.99	C-	70-72.99		

Important Statement

A few of the films we'll watch this semester contain language and/or use references that are insensitive or offensive. It's important to remember that some films included such language or references as disapproving commentary, while others reflected a historical moment in which the terms and references were condoned.

By including the films in the course, I do not accept or condone the use of demeaning language or references toward people of color, different sexual orientations, and women. The objective of the course is to view the films through a critical lens while remaining mindful of their historical, social, and cultural context. Sport History and Film celebrates inclusivity and the diverse student body at GMU.

Missed Deadlines

Late papers will be penalized 5 points each day they are late (weekends included). Make it easy on yourself. Submit your work on time.

Electronic Devices

Cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that disrupt class are not permitted. You are allowed to use PCs and tablets. But be sure the usage of them is only for class-related activities. If you are seen using your device for something other than that, you will be asked to put it away. Repeated violations may result in the forfeiture of the right to use the PC or tablet in class.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to adhere to the GMU Honor Code. A violation may result in a lower overall grade, a reduction of points, a zero for an assignment, or a sanction that could result in failing the course. It is your responsibility to understand fully what is expected of you. If you have questions about the Honor Code, information can be found on the website for the Office of Academic Integrity:

<https://oai.gmu.edu/>.

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations for students with disabilities are available. However, it is necessary that you contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) first. For more information, see the webpage of the Office of Disability Services at:

<https://ds.gmu.edu/>. You can also call 993-2474 or visit the ODS office in SUB I, rm. 4205.

Diversity

The class adheres to GMU's Diversity Statement: "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 more, see <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/purpose-and-mission/mason-diversity-statement/>.

Student Privacy

Maintaining student privacy is a matter taken seriously in the course. It's also the law. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates the safeguarding of educational records, among other things. To learn more about FERPA, see <https://registrar.gmu.edu/ferpa/>.

Enrollment Information

It is the responsibility of each student to ensure that he or she is enrolled in the course. Important dates to remember:

- Final day to drop without having to pay a financial penalty is February 7.
- Last day for selective withdrawal is April 11.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Early Sports Films

January 26

- Introduction
- Films (in class)
 - Sports "actualities" and shorts
 - Bobby Jones instructional movies
 - Newsreels
 - *The Freshman* (1925)
- Reading (complete before week 2 material)
 - Friedman, "Introduction"
 - Streible, "A History of the Boxing Film, 1894-1915"

Week 2: College Sports during the First Part of the Twentieth Century

February 2

- Films (in class)
 - *Schooled: The Price of College Sports* (2013)
 - *Horse Feathers* (1932)
- Readings
 - Meiklejohn, "The Evils of College Athletics"
 - *New York Times* and *Chicago Tribune* articles on the Carnegie Report
 - Smith, "The 1929 Carnegie Report: Condemnation of Professionalism"
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 2)—**deadline is 11:59 pm on February 8**
 - IMPORTANT: as a reminder, students are responsible for submitting only five of the thirteen shorter paper assignments

Week 3: Sports Films of the 1930s and 1940s: Portraying the Dark Underside of American Sports or Celebrating All That Is Good with America?

February 9:

- Film (in class)
 - *Kid Galahad* (1937)
- Film (outside of class)
 - *The Pride of the Yankees* (1942)
- Reading
 - Yoseloff, "From Ethnic Hero to National Icon: The Americanization of Joe Dimaggio"
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 3)—**deadline is 11:59 pm on February 15**

Week 4: Racial Segregation in Sports, Jackie Robinson, and Erasing the Color Line
February 16:

- Film (in class)
 - *42: the Jackie Robinson Story* (2013)
- Film (outside of class)
 - Ken Burns, *Baseball* (Part 6) (start at 59:54 and watch until 2:09:15)
- Reading
 - Ritchie, “Marshall ‘Major’ Taylor: The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World”
 - Smith, “Outside the Pale: The Exclusion of Blacks from Organized Professional Football, 1934-1946”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 4)—**deadline is 11:59 on February 22**

Week 5: The Olympics on Film

February 23

- Film (in class)
 - Excerpts from:
 - *Olympia* (1938)
 - *Tokyo Olympiad* (1965)
 - *Visions of Eight* (1973)
 - *Sixteen Days of Glory* (1985)
- Reading
 - Bachrach, “The Nazi Olympics”
 - McLemore, “Propaganda? Not in This Film!”
 - Slater, “Tokyo 1964”
 - Brichford, “Munich 1972”
 - Llewellyn et al., “The Golden Games: The 1984 Olympics”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 5)—**deadline is 11:59 on March 1**

Week 6: Women, Film, and the National Pastime

March 2

- Film (in class)
 - *A League of Their Own* (1992)
- Reading
 - Ware, “Introduction”
 - Daniels, “You Throw Like a Girl: Sport and Misogyny on the Silver Screen”
- Start reading
 - Laderman, *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing*
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 6) —**deadline is 11:59 on March 8**

Week 7: International Politics and Surfing

March 9

- Film (in class)
 - *The Endless Summer* (1964)
- Reading
 - Laderman, *Empire in Waves: A Political History of Surfing*
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 7) —**deadline is 12:00 pm on March 11**

Week 8: Spring Break—No Class

Week 9: The Importance of Cycling in France

March 23

- Film (in class)
 - *A Sunday in Hell: Paris-Roubaix* (1976)
- Reading
 - Lopez, “Propaganda on Two Wheels: The Spanish Republican Team in the 1937 Tour de France”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 9) —**deadline is 11:59 on March 29**

Week 10: Ali, Smokin’ Joe, Boxing, and Politics

March 30

- Film
 - *Thrilla in Manila* (2008)
- Film (outside of class)
 - *What’s My Name* (first part) (2018)
- Reading
 - Early, “The Mortality of Kings: Ali vs. Frazier”
 - Lemann, “How the Seventies Changed America”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 10) —**deadline is 11:59 on April 5**

Week 11: Sport, Film, and the American Underdog

April 6

- Film (in class)
 - *Rocky* (1976)
- Film (outside of class)
 - *Bad News Bears* (1976)
- Reading
 - Abrams, “The Little League Champions Benched by Jim Crow in 1955: Resistance and Reform after Brown v. Board of Education”

- Abrams, “The twelve-year-old girl's lawsuit that changed America: the continuing impact of NOW v. Little League Baseball, Inc. at 40”
- Leab, “Reaffirming Traditional Values: The Blue Collar Ethic in Bicentennial America: Rocky”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 11) —**deadline is 11:59 on April 12**

Week 12: Race, Cricket, and the West Indies

April 13

- Film (in class)
 - *Fire in Babylon* (2010)
- Reading
 - James, *Beyond a Boundary*, ix-xxvi, xxxi, 1-7, 225-252, 257-261
 - Wagg, “Father, King, Statesman, General, Prince”
 - Wagg, “The Soul of a Nation, Long Suppressed”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 12) —**deadline is 11:59 on April 19**

Week 13: The Disaster on Ice: The Soviet Perspective

April 20

- Film (in class)
 - *Of Miracles and Men* (2016)
- Reading
 - Abelson, “Politics on Ice: The United States, the Soviet Union, and a Hockey Game in Lake Placid”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 13) —**deadline is 11:59 on April 26**

Week 14: Rugby and Apartheid in South Africa

April 27

- Film (in class)
 - *Invictus* (2010)
- Film (outside of class)
 - *Fair Play (Have You Heard from Johannesburg)* (2010)
- Reading
 - Grundlingh and Grundlingh, “Fractured Fandom and Paradoxical Passions: Explaining Support for New Zealand All Black Rugby Teams in South Africa, 1960-2018”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 14) —**deadline is 11:59 on May 3**

Week 15: Russia, Doping, and Politics

May 4

- Film (in class)
 - *Icarus* (2018)
- Reading
 - Hunt et al., “The Health Risks of Doping during the Cold War: A Comparative Analysis of the Two Sides of the Iron Curtain”
- Shorter paper assignment (prompt can be found on Blackboard under week 15) —**deadline is 12:00 pm on May 6**

Week 16: Final Presentations on Group Films

May 11

- Presentations
 - *Seabiscuit* (2003)
 - *Hoosiers* (1986)
 - *Cinderella Man* (2005)
 - *Million Dollar Baby* (2004)
 - *Glory Road* (2006)
 - *Body and Soul* (1947)
 - *Swift Feet* (2016)
 - *Diego Maradona* (2019)
 - *Offside* (2007)