

HISTORY OF SPORTS IN THE UNITED STATES

HIST 341-001

Spring 2024

3 credit hours

Instructor: Professor Chris Elzey

Location: Enterprise Hall 276

Day: M/W

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

Office: Horizon Hall 3208

Email: celzey@gmu.edu

Office Hours: M/W, 12:00-1:00 pm

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 sport in the United States from colonial times to the turn of the twenty-first century. Students will consider the ways in which sports reflected—and oftentimes shaped—attitudes toward race, ethnicity, gender, class, amateurism, professionalization, international politics, and governmental policies, among other things. In addition, the course traces the development of sports. Specifically, it explores how and why spontaneous games played by Americans in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries evolved into highly formalized, organized, and popular activities—activities that are an integral part of the social and cultural landscape today and comprise an industry that is worth tens of billions of dollars.

Learning 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 sport in American history
- How and why sports evolved from impromptu events with few rules and customs into major social and cultural activities
- The professionalization of American sports
- The history of intercollegiate sports
- The ways in which race, gender, class, ethnicity, the media, and international politics both reinforced and revealed attitudes about sport
- How and why American sport segregated, and then desegregated
- The history of American athletic clubs

- How sport was used as a tool of political protest
- The international role of sport
- The ways in which sports helped shaped and reflected broader themes and trends in American history

Demonstrating effective and clear expression in both writing and verbal communication are two other important goals of the course.

Required Books:

Readings are to be completed for the day 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.

Longman, Jere. *The Girls of Summer: The U.S. Women's Soccer Team and How It Changed the World*. New York: itbooks, HarperCollins, 2000, 2001.

Remnick, David. *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero*. New York: Vintage, 1998.

You are also responsible for reading several articles. All of these are available on Blackboard under the "Course e-Reserves" tab. As with the assignments for books, the readings are to be completed by the time you come to class.

Breen, Timothy H. "Horses and Gentlemen: The Cultural Significance of Gambling among the Gentry of Virginia." *William and Mary Quarterly* (April 1977): 237-259.

Dooley, Patricia L. "Jim Crow Strikes Again: The African American Press Campaign Against Segregation in Bowling During World War II." *Journal of African American History* (Summer 2012), Vol. 97, Issue 3: 270-290.

Morais, Dominic G. "Eugen Sandow's 'Modern' Marketing Strategies, 1887-1925." *Journal of Sport History* (Summer 2013): 193-214.

Rider, Toby C. "Projecting America: Sport and Early US Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960." In *Defending the American Way of Life: Sport, Culture, and the Cold War*, eds. Toby C. Rider and Kevin B. Witherspoon, 13-28. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press. 2018.

White, Derrick E. "We Won't Shut Up and Dribble: A Short History of Black Athletic Protests." *Origins: Current Events in Historical Perspective* (August 2021), Vol. 14, Issue 11: 1-19.

Wiggins, David K. "'Black Athletes in White Men's Games': Race, Sport, and American National Pastimes." *International Journal of the History of Sport* (January 2014), Vol. 31, Issue 1/2: 181-202.

Wiggins, David K., and Elzey, Chris, "Creating Order in Black College Sport: The Lasting Legacy of the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association." In *Separate Games: African American Sport Behind the Walls of Segregation*, eds. Ryan Swanson and David K. Wiggins, 145-164. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press. 2016.

Course Structure:

The content of the course includes a variety of material, including lectures, readings, and films. You are responsible for all course content (in other words, everything posted in the weekly modules for the class, as well as the in-class lectures and readings you will do apart from the material posted on Blackboard).

Exams, Quizzes and Assignments:

There are two exams. Each covers material from the class and assigned readings. The exams will consist of identifications, and short answer and essay questions. About two weeks before each exam, I will post a list of identifications (IDs) and several essay questions on Blackboard. From that list, I will select four ID terms and an essay question. You will answer three IDs, the essay question, and two short-answer questions (the short-answer questions will not appear on the study guide). Each exam will count for 25 percent of your grade.

There are also three short papers (approximately 350 words for each). The papers are part opinion pieces, part analysis of the books we will read in class. **Do not summarize the books.**

Please note: You are responsible for writing three short papers. I would like you to think about the book and articles and write about how they relate to American history and culture. You will be graded on content, persuasiveness, grammar, and overall organization. **No papers will be accepted by email.** The scores of the papers will be averaged and count for 20 percent of your grade.

Quizzes are also part of the course, and they may be announced, unannounced, or consist of an assignment. IMPORTANT: In-class quizzes will be given on the day of discussion over the books we will read in course. In addition, there are a handful of quizzes over articles or class material. Bring a pen or pencil, and writing paper, to class that day. The dates of the in-class quizzes are listed in the course schedule (see below).

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 presentation. I will divide the class into five groups. Each group will be responsible for one of the four books or collection of select articles (in other words, the five articles after exam #1). You are to

develop a short presentation (no more than 25 minutes) on the book or articles. I would like you to include background information of the material discussed in the book or articles (you may present the material using PowerPoint slides or some other platform) and prepare three or four discussion questions, which are to be submitted to me via email **NO LATER THAN A DAY** 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; be prepared to answer them (some might even be included on the quiz). **YOU MUST WRITE ONE OF YOUR THREE PAPERS ON THE BOOK OR ARTICLES YOUR GROUP IS PRESENTING.**

The group presentation requires you to work with each other outside of class (electronically and/or in person). It is a collaborative project. That means everyone in the group must contribute equally. And each group member is to speak. The project is worth the final 10 percent of your grade.

Grade Breakdown:

Exams (2 exams, each worth 25%)	50%
Quizzes and assignments	20%
Short Papers	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 and Quizzes:

Make-up exams will only be given if you have official documentation (a doctor's note, for instance) excusing you from class. There are no make-up quizzes, but I do drop your lowest quiz score at the end of the semester.

Accessing Articles for the Course on Blackboard:

To view the Blackboard page for the course, go to <https://mymasonportal.gmu.edu> and log-in. The "Courses" tab will then appear. After clicking on the tab, HIST 341-001 will appear in a list with your other courses. Then simply click on the HIST 341-001 tab. The list of articles will appear under a heading in the course menu.

Policies of the University:

Please familiarize yourself with the policies of the university and adhered to them. They can be found at: <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>.

Communicating with Instructor:

Email is the best way to contact me. Please include "HIST 341" in the subject line in all messages—use your GMU account. If you email from a different account, I will ask you to resend the message through your GMU account.

I will do my best to respond to your email as quickly as possible, but I might not be able to do it immediately. In general, you can expect a reply within a day. I'd like you to abide by that expectation too. If I email you, please respond no later than twenty-four hours from receiving the message.

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 and other class-related activities. If you are seen using your PC or tablet for something other than note taking or a class-related activity, you will forfeit your right to use that device in class.

Academic Integrity:

Students who violate the Honor Code might receive a sanction that results in a grade of F (or worse) for a paper, quiz, assignment, or exam. It is imperative that you do your own work. Your adherence to the Honor Code is applicable to all the work you do in 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 course follows 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 through their educational records is a matter taken seriously in the course. And it's 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/>.

The Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) is another important resource for students. You can learn more about SSAC here: <https://ssac.gmu.edu/>.

Important Drop/Withdrawal Dates:

- January 30 is the final day you can withdraw from the course without a financial charge.
- March 25 is the last day for selective withdrawal.

Schedule:

Weeks 1 and 2:

January 17: Introduction; Sports in Colonial America

Read: Start Jenkins

January 22: Sports in Colonial America (cont.) 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

January 24: Athletic Clubs and Amateurism

Read: Morais, "Eugen Sandow's 'Modern' Marketing Strategies, 1887-
1925"; continue Jenkins

Week 3:

January 29: Athletic Clubs and Amateurism (cont.); Baseball's Early
Years; How to Give a Good Presentation

Read: continue Jenkins

Submit: **In-class quiz/assignment** on Breen's and Morais's articles

January 31: Baseball's Early Years (cont.); Baseball at the Turn of the
Century

Read: Continue Jenkins

Week 4:

February 5: **Finish Jenkins, discussion, in-class quiz, and
presentation #1; paper due**

Read: Start Brown

February 7: Sports on College Campuses, 1880-1920

Read: Continue Brown

Week 5:

February 12: Women and Sports, 1880-1920

Read: Continue Brown

February 14: Women and Sports, 1880-1920 (cont.); Sports Heroes (and
Anti-Heroes) of the 1920s

Read: Continue Brown

Week 6:

February 19: Sports Heroes (and Anti-Heroes) of the 1920s (cont.)

Read: Continue Brown

Submit: **In-class quiz/assignment** on sports heroes of the 1920s

February 21: Sport Heroes in the 1930s

Read: Continue Brown

Week 7:

February 26: Sport Heroes in the 1930s (cont.)

**Finish Brown, discussion, in-class quiz, and presentation #2;
paper due**

February 28: **Exam #1**

Week 8:

March 4: No class (Spring Break)

March 6: No class (Spring Break)

Week 9:

March 11: A Separate National Pastime: The Negro Leagues

Read: Start Remnick

March 13: Racial Segregation in Sports

Read: Wiggins, "Black Athletes in White Men's Games"

Read: Continue Remnick

Week 10:

March 18: Racial Segregation in Sports (cont.)

Read: Continue Remnick

March 20: Sports during WWII

Read: Dooley, "Jim Crow Strikes Again"

Read: Continue Remnick

Week 11:

March 25: A Women's Place?: Sports and Post-WWII America

Read: Continue Remnick

March 27: **Finish Remnick, discussion, in-class quiz, and presentation #3; paper due**

Week 12:

April 1: "The Greatest": Muhammad Ali

Read: White, "We Won't Shut Up and Dribble"

April 3: Ali (cont.)

Read: Wiggins, Elzey, "Creating Order in Black College Sport: The Lasting Legacy of the Colored Intercollegiate Athletic Association"

Submit: **In-class quiz** on CIAA

Week 13:

April 8: "The Greatest" (cont.)

April 10: The Bitterest of Foes: the U.S.-U.S.S.R. Cold War Rivalry in Sports

Read: Rider, "Projecting America: Sport and Early US Cold War Propaganda, 1947-1960"

Finish last of five articles, discussion, in-class quiz, and presentation #4; paper due

Read: Start Longman

Week 14:

April 15: Bitterest of Foes (cont.)

Read: Continue Longman

April 17: Sports in the Era of (Perceived) Limitations

Week 15:

April 22: Sports in the Era of (Perceived) Limitations (cont.)

April 24: Ice Wars: US and USSR Hockey

Week 16:

April 29: Ice Wars: US and USSR Hockey (cont.)

**Finish Longman, discussion, in-class quiz, and presentation #5;
paper due**

May 1: **Exam #2** (1:30-4:15 pm)