

Sports in U.S. History

HIS276/W

MW 2:00-3:15pm

Location 270 B&L

Instructor: Brianna Theobald

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454 Rush Rhees Library

Office Hours: MW 11am-12pm and by appointment [in person or via Zoom]

Course Description: Recent acts of protest by high school, collegiate, and professional athletes--including, at times, a refusal to play--remind us that sports are not and have never been separate from the world of politics, nor are they isolated from social, cultural, and economic contexts. Rather, sports reflect the society in which they are embedded and at times have spurred change in these realms. This course will explore U.S. history in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries through the lens of sports. Among the many questions we will consider are: How might one define a sport, and how have popular understandings of sport changed over time? What functions have sports served in American life? How have sports reinforced inequities in American society, such as those along racial, socioeconomic, and/or gendered lines? To what degree have sports defied these boundaries, acting as agents of democratization? Above all, we will ask: What does it mean to study sports historically?

The College's credit hour policy on undergraduate courses is to award 4 credit hours for courses that meet for the equivalent of 3 periods of 50 minutes each week. Students enrolled in HIST 276/W are expected to devote at least one hour each week outside of class to analyzing the course readings, working alone or in groups, and to researching in depth their topics for the final paper.

Required Reading:

Wade Davies, *Native Hoops: The Rise of American Indian Basketball, 1895-1970*. University Press of Kansas, 2020.

Frank Guridy, *The Sports Revolution: How Texas Changed the Culture of American Athletics*. University of Texas Press, 2021.

Both books are available online, at the university bookstore, and through Rush Rhees Library. *Native Hoops* is available as an ebook on the library website, and a print copy of *The Sports Revolution* is on reserve for this class. All other required reading and other media will be posted on Blackboard.

Grade Breakdown:

94-100% = A	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+	67-69% = D+
90-93% = A-	83-86% = B	73-76% = C	63-66% = D
	80-82% = B-	70-72% = C-	60-62% = D-

Assessment:

Much of your grade will be derived from *writing*. We will talk more in class about what constitutes a good paper, but at this point it suffices to note that I expect students to submit polished, well-organized work. I encourage students to visit me during office hours to brainstorm essays, work through problems, and, if necessary, discuss strategies for improvement. Additional writing assistance is available through the U of R Writing and Speaking Center. Learn more about this resource here: <http://writing.rochester.edu/tutoring/index.html>.

Students will write at least two short papers in this course. For Paper 1, each student will read Henry Beach Needham's 1905 essay "The College Athlete" as well as one or more articles that they locate independently on controversies surrounding amateurism and college sports in the twenty-first century. Students will then write a short paper (2-3 pages) that compares the articles' themes and arguments. Paper 1 is due via Blackboard at the start of class on Monday, Sept. 13. Paper 2 requires students to attend a sporting event of their choice, watch one on television, or stream one online. Each student will then write an ethnographic paper (2-3 pages) analyzing the rituals and practices they observed and considering what conclusions can be drawn about sports and society in this historical moment. Paper 2 is due via Blackboard at the start of class on Wednesday, Oct. 13.

To encourage everyone to be following sports in the news and thinking about sports-related developments historically, each student will submit three short analyses of contemporary news articles; these analyses should briefly summarize the article's contents and, more importantly, consider how the event, issues, or themes in question relate to (or diverge from) the historical material we are exploring in class. These Sports in the News write-ups should be submitted via email to me anytime between Sept. 15 and Nov. 22, although I ask that you not submit more than one analysis per week. Analyses should be 2-3 paragraphs in length, and they must include the link to the article that prompted your analysis.

While most of our course materials focus on baseball, basketball, and football, I encourage students to use the final project as an opportunity to follow their particular interests. Each student will complete a capstone project for the course that they will select in consultation with me by early October. Students should send a one-page project proposal to me via email by the start of class on Monday, Oct. 4. Examples of possible capstone projects include a video, a website, a podcast, or a research paper, among many other options. **Note that students taking the "W" version of the course must write a 12- to 15-page research paper as their final project, a rough draft of which is due on Monday, Nov. 22.**

The remainder of a student's grade will be based on participation. To be adequately prepared for class, students need to have completed the assigned reading listed on the schedule below. Class

sessions will be a mix of lecture and discussion, and students are expected to participate regularly in these discussions. If you are concerned that you will not be able to make your engagement with course material visible to me during our regular class sessions, please let me know so that we can figure out workable alternatives. Attendance is typically required for HIST 276/W, but I've revised this policy in light of the ongoing pandemic and the need to make sure we're all doing our part to keep the UR community healthy. I will keep a record of attendance, but it will not directly affect your grade. If for any reason you need to miss more than one consecutive class session, please let me know, so that we can work together to make sure you stay on track. Note that in previous semesters, students have reported that regular attendance improved both their performance in and experience of this course.

Participation:	20%
Paper 1:	15%
Paper 2:	15%
Sports in the News:	15% (3 @ 5% each)
Final Project:	35%

Course Policies and Expectations:

Late Assignments: Assignments incur a 10-point penalty for every 24-hour period or portion thereof that passes from the deadline until the assignment is submitted. If an assignment is due at the start of class on September 13 and it is not turned in until the evening of September 13, ten points will be automatically deducted. If it is not turned in until the afternoon of September 14, twenty points will be deducted.

Accommodation Policies: I'm happy to make accommodations as recommended by UR Disability Services. Should you need accommodations, I encourage you to make these arrangements sooner rather than later.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is at the core of the historical discipline, and you'll find that it is something I care deeply about. All work submitted must be your own, prepared especially for this course. Unacceptable breaches of your obligation as a student include: submission of the same work or portions of the same work to more than one class, turning in work prepared by another person as if it were your own; and the unattributed use of text of any length from any source, including websites. I will report all suspected cases of academic dishonesty to the University's Board on Academic Honesty. That said, I am happy to discuss any and all questions you may have about what does and does not constitute plagiarism, provided this conversation occurs *before* you submit the assignment. For helpful discussions of plagiarism (including subtle instances), see the American Historical Association's "Defining Plagiarism," <https://www.historians.org/teaching-and-learning/teaching-resources-for-historians/plagiarism-curricular-materials-for-history-instructors/defining-plagiarism>.

Schedule:

Part I: Setting the Stage

Week 1:

W Aug 25: Introductions and Looking Ahead

Week 2:

M Aug 30: Why Sports History?
Reading: Davis, "New Directions"

Part II: Amateurism and Professionalism

W Sept 1: Nineteenth-Century Amateurism
Reading: Pope, *Patriotic Games*, ch. 2

Week 3:

M Sept 6: Labor Day: NO CLASS.

W Sept 8: Sports in Higher Education
Reading: Ingrassia, *The Rise of Gridiron University*, ch. 2

Week 4:

M Sept 13: Crises in Amateurism
Reading: Needham, "The College Athlete"
Paper 1 due via Blackboard at the start of class.

Part III: The Color Line in Sports

W Sept 15: Jim Crow Sports
Reading: Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment*, ch. 2

Week 5:

M Sept 20: Boxing across the Color Line
Film: Watch *Unforgivable Blackness, Part I* (about 2 hours)

W Sept 22: Immigrant Sporting Cultures
Reading: Alamillo, *Deportes*, ch. 1

Week 6:

M Sept 27: Jackie Robinson and Beyond
Reading: Tannenbaum, "The Desegregation of Sportsman's Park"

W Sept 29: Basketball and Boarding Schools
Reading: Davies, *Native Hoops*, intro-ch. 2

Part IV: Modern Indigenous Athletics

Week 7:

M Oct 4: A Sport for All: Female Student Athletes
Reading: Davies, *Native Hoops*, chpts. 3-4
1-page proposal for Final Project due via email at the start of class.

W Oct 6: Interracial Competition
Reading: Davies, *Native Hoops*, chpts. 5-6

Week 8:

M Oct 11: Fall Break—NO CLASS

W Oct 13: The Spectator Experience
Reading: Davies, *Native Hoops*, ch. 7
Paper 2 due via Blackboard at the start of class.

Week 9:

M Oct 18: Beyond Boarding Schools
Reading: Davies, *Native Hoops*, chpts. 8-9

W Oct 20: Indigenous Athletics in the 1960s, '70s, and Beyond
Reading: finish Davies, *Native Hoops*

Week 10:

M Oct 25: NO CLASS: Research Day.

W Oct 27: NO CLASS: In lieu of class:
Listen: Billy Mays interview + discussion board

Part V: Sports and Social Movements

Week 11:

M Nov 1: Before Friday Night Lights
Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, intro & ch. 1

W Nov 3: Sports Entrepreneurialism
Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, ch. 2

Week 12:

M Nov 8: Beyond Integration
Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, ch. 3

W Nov 10: The Battle of the Sexes
Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, ch. 4

Week 13:

M Nov 15: Sports as Big Business

Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, ch. 5

W Nov 17: Title IX

Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, ch. 6

Week 14:

M Nov 22: Basketball at the Turn of the Century

Reading: Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*, chpts. 7-8

HIST 276/W rough drafts due via email at the start of class.

W Nov 24: NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break

Looking for a sports history documentary to watch over break?

Suggestions: ESPN's 30 for 30: *What Carter Lost* and/or ESPN's 30 for 30: *Pony Excess*

Part VI: Wrapping Up

Week 15:

M Nov. 29: Ongoing Histories

Reading: finish Guridy, *The Sports Revolution*

W Dec 1: Ongoing Histories

Reading: TBA

Week 16:

M Dec 6: Presentations

No Reading.

W Dec 8: 2021 in Historical Perspective

Reading: TBA

Final project deadline TBA.