

History 302-1: Boxing in History and Culture
Tuesday: 6-8:50

Prof. Randy Roberts
UNIV 223
Tues. 2:30-3:30; or by appt.

This course will look at American history through a different lens. It will use the history of boxing—and how the sport has been treated by Hollywood—to examine race, nationality, masculinity, and culture in America, as well as to explore the American dream of success and nightmare of failure. To do this we will study the history of boxing in America, and to a lesser extent the world, as well as the role boxing has played in literature and film. We will begin and end with one idea: what happens in the ring and is less important than the meaning of what happens in that sacred site.

Books:

Schulberg, **The Harder They Fall**
Roberts, **Joe Louis: Hard Times Man**
Hauser, **Muhammad Ali: His Life and Times**

Grading and Requirements:

Your grade will be based on the following:

1. A mid-term and final (50 points each).
2. A 1,000 word research paper on an important boxing match (50 points).
3. Class participation and quizzes (50 points).

The following percentage scale will be used to determine your grade:

100-90—A
89-80—B
79-70—C
69-60—D
00-59—F

Attendance

Because class participation is required and expected, a missed class will result in the deduction of five points from your total point count.

Cheating / Plagiarism:

Plagiarism refers to the reproduction of another's words or ideas without proper attribution. University Regulations contains further information on dishonesty. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are serious offenses, and will be treated as such in this class. You are expected to produce your own work and to accurately cite all necessary materials. Cheating, plagiarism, and other dishonest practices will be punished as harshly as Purdue University policies allow. Any instances

of academic dishonesty will likely result in a grade of F for the course and notification of the Dean of Students Office.

Disability Issues

If you need any special accommodations to participate fully in the class, please see me as soon as possible. I will keep all discussions confidential as long as the situation permits. Please note that, in order for Purdue University to accommodate your needs, you will need to provide appropriate written documentation and have it on file with Student Services. Students should be aware that Services for Student Disabilities are available at 494-1247 if you need further assistance.

Disclaimer:

In the event of a major campus emergency, the above requirements, deadlines and grading policies are subject to changes that may be required by a revised semester calendar. Any such changes in this course will be posted once the course resumes on Blackboard or can be obtained by contacting the professor via email or phone.

Tentative Calendar	Lecture Topics	Films and Documentaries and Readings
August 24	“It’s A Man’s World:” Boxing as a Window to America	“Ring of Fire”
August 31	The Manly Art in Britain and America: Masculinity and Nationalism	“Hard Times” 1. Gorn, “Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry? 2. Gorn, “ Good-Bye Boys, I Die a True American’: Homocide, Nativism, and Working-Class Culture”
September 7	Empire of Masculinity: Irish Fighters and American Heroes: The Age of John L. Sullivan	“Gentleman Jim” Gorn, The Manly Art, chapter 3 Hauser, “John L. Sullivan Roberts, Joe Louis, chapter 2
September 14	Race and the Title: Jack Johnson and the fight of the Century	“Unforgivable Blackness” Roberts, Papa Jack, chapters 4 and 6
September 21	Heroes of the 1920s: Jack	ESPN Sports Century:

	Dempsey, Babe Ruth, Bobby Jones, Bill Tilden, and Red Grange	“Jack Dempsey” Roberts, Jack Dempsey, chapter 6
September 28	The Dark Age of Boxing: The Great Depression	“The Harder They Fall” Schulberg, The Harder They Fall, chapters 1-9
October 5	Rising Above the Depression: The Cinderella Man	“Cinderella Man” and “City for Conquest” Schulberg, The Harder They Fall, chapters 10-22
October 12	FALL BREAK	NO CLASS
October 19	MIDTERM EXAM	
October 26	“The Brown Bomber”: Joe Louis	“Joe Louis: America’s Hero... Betrayed” Roberts, Joe Louis, chapters 1, 3-5
November 2	Joe Louis, Boxing, and World War II	“The Fight” Roberts, Joe Louis, chapters 6-9
November 9	James Norris, Frankie Carbo, the International Boxing Club, and the Decline of Boxing	“Raging Bull”
November 16	Boxing Noir	“Body and Soul,” “The Set-Up,” “Champion,” and Fat City”
November 23	“The Louisville Lip”: Civil Rights and the Making of Muhammad Ali	Requiem for a Heavyweight” and “When We Were Kings” Hauser, Muhammad Ali, chapters, chapters 1-5
November 30	“King of the World”: Muhammad Ali, Vietnam, Kinshasa, and Manila	“Thrilla in Manila” and “Rocky” Hauser, Muhammad Ali, chapters 6-12
December 7	Mike Tyson and the Fall of Boxing	“Tyson,” “Fight Club,” and “million Dollar Baby”
December 13-18	FINALS WEEK	EXAM TBA