

HIST353: Race, Gender, and Politics in American Sports

Spring 2021

Professor R.W. Roberts

University Hall 223

rroberts@purdue.edu

Discussion/Student Hours Thursday 4:30-5:30 pm (EST) and by appointment

Zoom Link on Brightspace

Course Delivery:

This is an online course delivered on Brightspace. With the exception of the book *The Heritage: Black Athletes, A Divided America, and the Politics of Patriotism* most of content and assignments will be available on Brightspace. Links to many of the videos and other content will be contained in the relevant PowerPoints. We will regularly post critical announcements to Brightspace, and your weekly prompts. It is your responsibility to keep up with these announcements daily.

Overview:

Today American sports stand at the center of a multi-billion dollar industry that is one of the leading employers in the nation. Each week millions of Americans watch hours of sports on television, discuss what they saw with friends, and follow the successes and failures of their favorite teams and athletes. But often they do not consider the larger meaning of the athletes and the “games” they “play.” This course is an in-depth look at the how sports and particular athletes have both reflected and shaped attitudes toward race, gender, and politics in America. It is not a history of such sports as baseball, boxing, basketball, and football per se, but rather an exploration of the intersection of race, gender, and politics and the world of sports. Because those intersections are most prominent in boxing and baseball, the lectures and readings will emphasize them. It is also about how historians, journalists, novelists, filmmakers, and readers have tried to make sense out of sports and give meaning to them. It is important to recognize that the meaning we attribute to sports has changed over the last two centuries, and that Americans in 1900, 1925, 1940, or today viewed (or view) the meaning of the “games” we play in radically different lights. To understand this is to comprehend why the past is never dead and why history is important.

Teaching Assistants:

Brett Russler brussler@purdue.edu Discussion/Student Hours Thursday 4-6pm and by appointment Zoom Link on Brightspace	Students with last names:
Jonathan Soucek jsoucek@purdue.edu Discussion/Student Hours Thursday 4-6pm and by appointment Zoom Link on Brightspace	Students with last names:

Learning Outcomes:

1. Understand how historians, journalists, novelists, filmmakers, and readers have tried to make sense out of and find the meaning of sports in America.
2. Recognize how sports that were once considered just “games” actually open a window into the study of American social, cultural, and political history.
3. Comprehend the statement by William Faulkner, "The past is never dead. It's not even past."
4. Recognize how sports have reflected and helped change debates over race, gender, class, and politics throughout American history.
5. Identify the characteristics of different sports and the importance of the leading athletes.

Learning Objectives:

- 1.1 Journalists documented sports. Students will read and analyze and the documents that journalists produced.
- 1.2 Historians study the documents that journalists, government officials, and wide variety of other sources produced American sports. Students will learn and investigate how historians use a wide variety of documents.
- 1.3 Novelists and filmmakers create works of art from the lives of athletes. Students will be introduced to and appraise the idea of how fiction can present a higher truth.
- 2.1 Analyze how current events during the past 75 years have influenced how historians, novelists and film makers have interpreted the meaning and importance of sports in America.
- 3.1 The Faulkner statement suggests that history is a living, contested thing. Students will explore and differentiate how and why our interpretation of the past is constantly changing
- 4.1 Students will locate and identify the major trends and figures in American sports history by listening to pod casts lectures and reading historical works.
- 5.1 Drawing on lectures and readings, students will increase their knowledge of sports by identifying characteristics and accomplishments of the leading athletes, promoters, and journalist in American sports.

Exams and Grading:

Your grade in this class is based on:

1. A Midterm and a Final. Each exam is worth 100 points. The exams will focus on lectures, readings, and representations of sports in documentaries and films.
2. A 1,000-1,250 research paper on the Court Martial of Jackie Robinson. All research materials will be provided for you. Your paper is worth 100 points.
3. Brief (250-300 word) answers to 12 prompts. Each will be worth 10 points and I will drop your lowest 2. All together the 10 prompt is papers are worth 100 points. For the weeks that you have a prompt, it will be released in an announcement on Monday and due by Thursday at 11:59pm EST.

Total points in the class:400

Required Readings:

- Bryant, *The Heritage: Black Athletes, A Divided America, and the Politics of Patriotism*
- Articles listed in syllabus available on Brightspace.

GRADING STANDARD:

97-100%--A+	83-86%--B	70-72%--C-	00-59%--F
93-96%--A	80-82%--B-	67-69%--D+	
90-92%--A-	77-79%--C+	63-66%--D	
87-89%--B+	73-76%--C	60-62%--D-	

Schedule of Lectures and Topics:

Week 1:

Tuesday, January 19:

Listen: Introduction to Course

Thursday, January 21:

Listen: The Revival of Prize Fighting in England

Read: Roberts, "Eighteenth Century Boxing"; Egan, "Tom Molineaux," Boxiana

Week 2:

Tuesday, January 26:

Listen: Prize Fighting Arrives in America: The Meaning of the Ring

Read: Gorn, "'Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch': The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry"

Thursday, January 28:

Listen and Participate: Discussion of both of the Gorn readings

Read: Gorn, “The Meaning of Prize Fighting”

Week 3:

Tuesday, February 2:

Listen: John L. Sullivan, Part I

Read: Lindsay, “John L. Sullivan, The Strong Boy of Boston”

Watch: Scene from “Gentleman Jim”

Thursday, February 4:

Listen: John L. Sullivan, Part II

Listen: Book Podcast: Kline Interview

Read: Roberts, “Emperors of Masculinity,”

Week 4:

Tuesday, February 9:

Listen: Why is Baseball America’s Game

Watch: Burns, “Baseball”

Thursday, February 11:

Listen: Baseball, Race, and Ty Cobb

Read: Rader, “‘Matters Involving Honor:’ Religion, Race, and Rank in the Violent Life of Tyrus Raymond Cobb”

Watch: Burns, “Baseball”

Week 5:

Tuesday, February 16:

Listen: Jack Johnson’s in the House

Read: Roberts, “The Days of Tamerlane,” and Lardner on London

Read: London on Johnson-Burns Fight or Lardner on the Johnson-Jeffries Fight

Read: Du Bois, “The Scholar’s Pugilist and the Heavyweight Champ as Folk Lore”

Watch: Burns, “Unforgivable Blackness

Thursday, February 18:

Listen and Participate: The Meaning of Ty Cobb and Jack Johnson for America

Watch: “Cobb,” the 1994 film (The entire film if you can; scenes if you can’t.)

Week 6:

Tuesday, February 23

Listen: The Golden Age of Sports?: Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, and All the Rest, Part I

Read: Roberts, and Smith, “When Babe Ruth and the Great Influenza Grippped Boston”

Read: Menand, “How Baseball Players Became Celebrities”

Watch: Burns, “Baseball”

Thursday, February 25:

Listen: The Golden Age of Sports?: Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, and All the Rest, Part II

Watch: Roberts, "Jack Dempsey: An American Hero in the 1920's"

Read:

Week 7:

Tuesday, March 2:

Listen: De Coubertin, the Olympic Games, and Jesse Owens

Listen: Schaap on Book *Triumph*

Watch: U-Tube clip on Owens

Thursday, March 4:

Exam 1: Released at 9:00am EST due Wednesday, March , by 9:00am EDT

Week 8:

Tuesday, March 9:

Listen: The Rise of Joe Louis

Read: Roberts, "Richard Wright Discovers Joe Louis Dynamite"

Thursday, March 11:

Listen: The Triumph of Joe Louis

Read: Roberts, "Red, White, Blue, and Black"

Listen: Selection of Louis Songs

Week 9:

Tuesday, March 16:

Listen: The One: The Life of Jackie Robinson

Read: Robinson Court Martial Papers

Thursday, March 18:

Read: Robinson Court Martial Papers

Week 10:

Tuesday, March 23:

Robinson Court Martial Paper Due (1,000-1,250 words)

Thursday, March 25:

Listen: Army, Purdue, and Football During World War II

Read: Roberts, "The Army-Navy Game Nobody Missed," WSJ

Read: Roberts, "How Army Once Found the Will to Win," WSJ

Week 11:

Tuesday, March 30:

Listen: Baseball and Patriotism During World War II and After
Read: Roberts, "The World Hiroshima Created"

Thursday, April 1:

Listen: What's the Matter With Kid's Today
Watch: Code Breakers (ESPN film, 2005)

Week 12:

Tuesday, April 6:

Watch: Mickey's the One: Modern Sports Marketing
Read: Smith and Roberts, "Why Are Sportswriters Whitewashing Baseball's Dark Secrets" <https://www.thedailybeast.com/why-are-sportswriters-whitewashing-baseballs-dark-secrets>

Thursday, April 8:

Listen: Race and the Politics of Sports in the 1960's: Muhammad Ali
Read: Something from Blood Brothers

Week 13:

Tuesday, April 13:

Listen: Race and the Politics of Sports in the 1960's: Bear Bryant and Alabama
Read: Something from Rising Tide

Thursday, April 15:

Listen: Roone Arledge and Televised Sports
Read: "The Roone Revolution"
Read: Playboy Interview

Week 14:

Tuesday, April 20:

Listen: The Curt Flood Case
Read: *The Heritage*
Watch:

Thursday, April 22:

Listen: Billie Jean King and Title 9
Read: *The Heritage*
Watch:

Week 15:

Tuesday, April 27:

Listen: Rocky and the 1970s
Read: *The Heritage*

Thursday, April 29:

Listen: Zoom Discussion on *The Heritage*
Read: *The Heritage*

Week 16: Exam 2 (Final) Released at 9:00am EST TBA and due the next day by 9:00am EST

Class Attendance and Behavior:

I encourage everyone to get the most out of their tuition dollars by following along with the course's content in a timely manner. Obviously, this course is being offered during troubling times. I encourage everyone to make use of my Zoom office hours, so I can get to know you as I would during a face-to-face class. If you encounter any medical problem, please keep me informed.

Special provisions related to Protect Purdue Policy implementation

Students should stay home and contact the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if they feel ill, have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, or suspect they have been exposed to the virus. In an online class and the current context of COVID-19, in-person attendance will not be a factor in the final grades, but the student still needs to inform the instructor of any conflict that can be anticipated and will affect the submission of an assignment or the ability to take an exam. Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility. When conflicts can be anticipated, such as for many University-sponsored activities and religious observations, the student should inform the instructor of the situation as far in advance as possible. For unanticipated or emergency conflict, when advance notification to an instructor is not possible, the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible by email, through Brightspace, or by phone. When the student is unable to make direct contact with the instructor and is unable to leave word with the instructor's department because of circumstances beyond the student's control, and in cases of bereavement, quarantine, or isolation, the student or the student's representative should contact the Office of the Dean of Students via [email](#) or phone at 765-494-1747. Our course Brightspace includes a link on Attendance and Grief Absence policies under the University Policies menu.

If you become quarantined or isolated at any point in time during the semester, in addition to support from the Protect Purdue Health Center, you will also have access to an Academic Case Manager who can provide you academic support during this time. Your Academic Case Manager can be reached at acmq@purdue.edu and will provide you with general guidelines/resources around communicating with your instructors, be available for academic support, and offer suggestions for how to be successful when learning remotely. Importantly, if you find yourself too sick to progress in the course, notify your academic case manager and notify me via email or Brightspace. We will make arrangements based on your particular situation. The Office of the Dean of Students (odos@purdue.edu) is also available to support you should this situation occur.

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 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.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity:

Academic integrity is one of the highest values that Purdue University holds. Individuals are encouraged to alert university officials to potential breaches of this value by either emailing integrity@purdue.edu or by calling 765-494-8778. While information may be submitted anonymously, the more information that is submitted provides the greatest opportunity for the university to investigate the concern.

Accessibility and Accommodations:

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: drc@purdue.edu or by phone: 765-494-1247. More details are available on our course Brightspace under Accessibility Information.

Nondiscrimination Policy, Diversity and Inclusion:

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

Purdue University prohibits discrimination against any member of the University community on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, age, national origin or ancestry, marital status, parental status, sexual orientation, disability, or status as a veteran. The University will conduct its programs, services and activities consistent with applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations and orders and in conformance with the procedures and limitations as set forth in Executive Memorandum No. D-1, which provides specific contractual rights and remedies.

Mental Health Statement:

If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try WellTrack, <https://purdue.welltrack.com/>. Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.

If you need support and information about options and resources, please see the Office of the Dean of Students, <http://www.purdue.edu/odos>, for drop-in hours (M-F, 8 am- 5 pm). If you're struggling and need mental health services: Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765)494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

Grief Absence Policy

Purdue University recognizes that a time of bereavement is very difficult for a student. The University therefore provides the following rights to students facing the loss of a family member through the Grief Absence Policy for Students (GAPS). Students will be excused from classes for funeral leave and given the opportunity to complete missed assignments or assessments in the event of the death of a member of the student's family.

Violent Behavior Policy

Purdue University is committed to providing a safe and secure campus environment. Purdue strives to create an educational environment for students and work environment for employees that promote educational and career goals. Violent behavior impedes such goals. Therefore, violent behavior is prohibited in or on any university facility or while participating in any university activity.

Right of Revision

Final decisions regarding course structure, requirements, and grading rest with the professor, and are subject to change.

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.