

AMH 4612-0660
Sport and American Culture/ Spring 2015
M, W, F: 4 (10:40-11:30) Flint 119

Professor Jack E. Davis Ofc. Keene-Flint 235

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Course web-site information: <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/davisjac/>

Ofc. Hrs.: 11:30-12:30 M, W, F

This course explores the place of sport in American society and culture from the time of European settlement to the present. It uses sport, in its institutional and recreational forms, to illuminate broader historical themes: urban and community life, economic development, social relationships, social mobility, and popular and cultural processes.

Course Objectives:

- Expanding one's knowledge of the history of sport and its place in the larger American experience.
- Introducing the student to scholarship in sport history.
- Promoting critical thinking about the dynamics of race, gender, and class in American society.
- Advancing the student's experience in the reading, researching, and writing tasks of the historian.
- Improving the student's cognitive and communication skills.

Course Requirements:

Class participation	10%
Oral history/autobiography review	15%
Research paper (including Writing-Mechanics exercise)	25%
Mid-term paper	25%
Final paper	25%

Course Grading Scale (see UF grading scale at end of syllabus):

A+ =100

A =95

A- =90

B+ =88

B =85

B- =80

C+ =77

C =75

C- =70

D =65

Assignments not completed earn a 0

Plagiarized assignment (see plagiarism section below) earn a 0

Assignments not turned in before or by stated due date will not be accepted. All assignments must be made available in hard copy. Emailed assignments cannot be accepted.

Class participation is based on attendance and discussion participation. You are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. Each additional absence will result in .5% deduction from the 10% class-participation requirement. Religious holidays, UF athletic travel conflicts, and written explanations from a certified health professional are eligible for an excused absence when cleared with the professor. See UF attendance policy at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Course Texts (required):

H. G. Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights: A Town, A Team, and a Dream* (Da Capo Press, 2000)

Darcy Frey, *The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Games* (Mariner Books, 2004)

Elliot J. Gorn and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports* (University of Illinois Press, 2004)

Mary Lou LeCompte, *Cowgirls of the Rodeo: Pioneer Professional Athletes* (University of Illinois Press, 1999)

Steven A. Reiss, *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (University of Illinois Press, 1991)

Murray Sperber, *Beer and Circus: How Bog-Time College Sports is Crippling Undergraduate Education* (Owl Books, 2001)

Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (OUP, 1997)

Week I (Jan 7, 9): Course introduction

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, chapter 1

Week II (Jan 12, 14, 16): Early American Sports

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, chapter 1, cont. (begin reading Reiss)

Week III (Jan 19 (MLK Day), 21, 23): City Sports and the Rise of Urban Society

Reading: Reiss, 1-168

WRITING-MECHANICS EXERCISE DUE (download from my web site)

Week IV (Jan 26, 28, 30): Religion and Physical Culture in Victorian Society

Film: *Chariots of Fire*

Reading: Reiss, 171-228; Gorn and Goldstein, chapter 2

Week V (Feb 2, 4, 6): The American Way: The Development of Youth Sports, Intercollegiate Sports, and Organized Sports

Reading: continued from last week

Week VI (Feb 9, 11, 13): The American Tough

Film: *On the Water Front*

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, 98-113, 138-49.

Week VII (Feb 16, 18, 20): The Last Blood Sport

Film: *Raging Bull*

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, 114-28.

Week VIII (Feb 23, 25, 27): The Idea of the American Sports Hero and Heroine

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, 183-96

Week IX: (March 2, 4, 6 (Spring Break))

Week X (March 9, 11, 13): America's Game: The Early Years of Baseball

Film: *Baseball* (excerpts)

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, 209-220; begin reading Tygiel

Week XI (March 16, 18, 20): America's Game and the American Dilemma

Reading: Tygiel, all; Jack E. Davis, "Baseball's Reluctant Challenge: Desegregating Major League Spring Training Sites, 1961-1964," *Journal of Sport History* 19 (Summer 1992): 144-162 (access at <http://library.la84.org/SportsLibrary/JSH/JSH1992/JSH1902/jsh1902e.pdf>).

Mid-Term Paper Due

Week XII (March 23, 25, 27): Women and American Sports

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, 197-208; LeCompte, all; Dave Zirin, "Danica's Overexposure," *The Progressive* (July 2008): 20 (access at Dave Zirin's blog <<http://www.smirkingchimp.com/thread/15367>>).

Week XIII (March 30, April 1, 3): Gridiron Culture and Local Values

Reading: Mealer, all

Week XIV (April 6, 8, 10): Sports Dreams and College Business

Reading: Sperber, part I, and chapters 16-21

Week XV (April 13, 15, 17): Round Ball, Magic Ball

Film: *Hoop Dreams* (1st half)

Reading: Gorn and Goldstein, 222-249; Frey, all.

Week XVI (April 20, 22): The Last Hurrah

Film: *Hoop Dreams* (second half)

(Final Essay Due.)

Course Requirements Descriptions:

All written work for the course must be typed or computer generated and in 12-point double-spaced print. Your work must also be presented in third-person language. All assignments must be turned in on the due date to receive full-credit consideration.

Course Attendance is required. A missed class will result in a deduction from your class participation grade. An absence is considered *excused* if there is an *acceptable reason* according to UF policy (<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationattendance.html>). Examples of acceptable reasons are medical illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor of an excused absence and to provide documentation of an acceptable reason. Otherwise, the absence will be considered *unexcused* and will result in a quiz grade of zero if a quiz is administered when the student is absent. Whenever possible, the instructor should be notified prior to the absence. When this is not possible (e.g., due to unexpected emergency or illness), the instructor should be notified as soon as possible.

Writing-Mechanics Exercise should be downloaded from my web. Circle the correct answer and bring to class on due date.

Mid-term and Final Papers will represent responses to a list of essay questions provided on my web site at least one week prior to the due date of the assignment. The questions will be drawn from the assigned readings and the course lectures, and you will be expected to use the course readings and your class notes as sources to answer the questions. Each answer must be presented in essay format, using formal, academic language and style (i.e., complete sentences, tightly constructed paragraphs, no colloquialisms). Do not, in other words, provide answers in lists or bullets. Those exams that address each question in a rigorous and organized manner are more

likely to earn a decent grade. These grades will be dependent in part on your compliance with the rules in the "Writing Mechanics" exercise.

Autobiography/Oral History Paper assignment asks you to choose an autobiography of any athlete who had an impact on American sports and society, or whose life with sports was shaped by larger society. Pay particular attention to the latter two. We're not interested in personal athletic achievements, except as backdrop, as we are the big picture. Examples would include sexual discrimination shaping Billie Jean King's tennis career, or an immigrant or first-generation American drawn to a sport by the forces of Americanization.

The book must be an autobiography as opposed to a biography. You can alternatively use an oral history of the person.

Write a three-page, double-spaced paper, following the writing-mechanics rules, summarizing that person's life and highlighting the points above: how that person had an impact on his or her sport and larger American society, or how American society or social changes in American life shaped that person's experiences in American sports.

Research Paper represents a work of original work that draws on both secondary- and primary-source materials and deals with a subject in American sport history. The work should include end notes or foot notes and a bibliography and should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style* required for the history discipline. The paper should be no less than and not many more than 10 pages in length. Those papers that deal with broader issues of the American experience beyond just sport will be graded more favorably. In other words, a paper that concentrates solely on sports trivia or a great player or team without addressing the larger historical context will be regarded as less suitable.

Other Business:

Plagiarism/Honesty:

Keep in mind that your written assignments must represent original work. You cannot copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, and conclusions of someone else or of another source (including Internet sources) without giving proper credit to the person or source by using quotation marks and a foot note. Do not cobble together paragraphs or passages of separate texts and then try to claim that you have done original and legitimate work. You must write with your own ideas and in your own words. If you copy the words of someone else without putting those words in quotation marks, REGARDLESS OF CITING THE SOURCE, you are plagiarizing. Plagiarism is theft, and it is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is grounds for an automatic failing grade in the course, a grade that is final and that cannot be made up. If you have any questions about how you are citing or using sources, come to me for the answers. Please also review the university's honesty policy at: {<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.htm>}. {<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/dr/p/>}

Classroom Assistance:

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office {<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/dr/p/>}. The Dean of

Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide that documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

For general counseling and mental health services provided by the university: 392-1575, <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

UF Grading Scale

Please note UF's new grading scale with the addition of minuses.
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

A = 4.0

A- = 3.67

B+ = 3.33

B = 3.0

B- = 2.67

C+ = 2.33

C = 2.0

C- = 1.67

D+ = 1.33

D = 1.0

D- = 0.67

E = 0.0

E1 = 0.0 Stopped attending or participating prior to end of class

I (incomplete) = 0.0

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

Alpata: A Journal of History

Keep in mind that the undergraduate- and graduate-student members of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society at the University of Florida publish an academic journal each spring. In the fall, the journal editors will be sending out a call for submissions (articles and book reviews) to the journal.