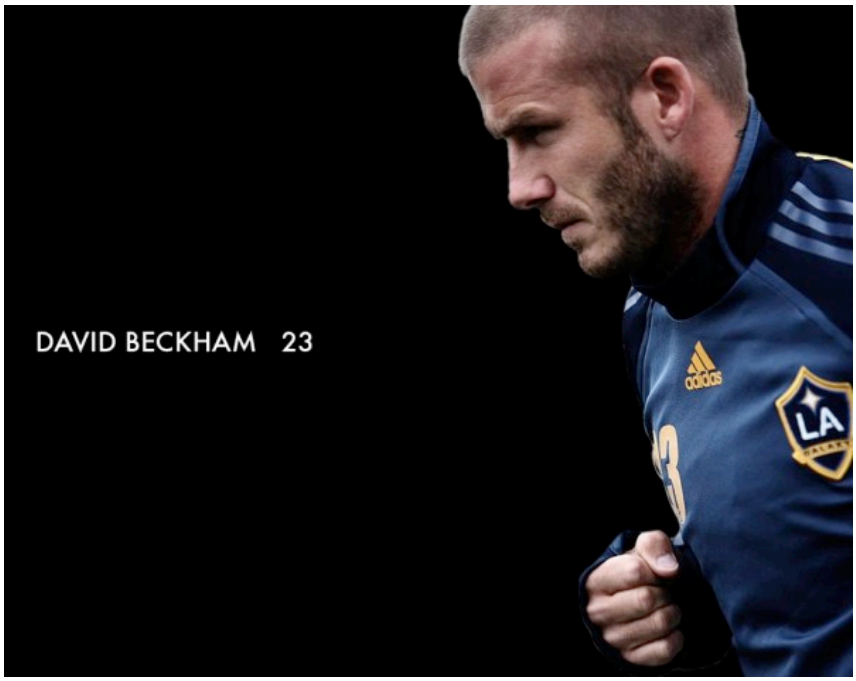

HTS 3823

Foundations of Sports Studies

Tuesday/Thursday – 9:35 to 10:55 - D.M. Smith 207

Dr. Johnny Smith

Email: john.smith@hts.gatech.edu
Office: 137 Old Civil Engineering Building
Office Hours: T/R 2:00 – 3:30

Course Description

This course is designed to teach students about the social, cultural, and economic importance of sports in a global context. Students will learn about sport as a mass cultural phenomenon and its relationship with education, the economy, technology, families, communities, politics, and the media. We will also consider how race, gender, class, and ethnicity have shaped contemporary and historical sporting experiences.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- Demonstrate how sport developed as a mass-cultural phenomenon within the broader historical contexts of American and global societies
- Demonstrate how science and technology became pervasive components of modern sport
- Discuss the relationship between sport and society as it relates to education, politics, economics, the media, technology, and globalization
- Discuss how sports and sport participation inform the way people think about their bodies and about gender, race, social class, and local communities

Required Readings

Andrei Markovits and Lars Rensmann, *Gaming the World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture* (2010)
H.G. Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights* (1990; reprint 2000)
Charles T. Clotfelter, *Big-Time Sports In American Universities* (2011)

*Short reading assignments will also be posted on **T-Square**. I will notify students of additional readings at least one week prior to the discussion date.

Course Format

Since this is a small class, we will emphasize close student-instructor interaction, discussion, and class debates. Students will engage secondary readings, write short essays, and give oral presentations in class. Students will also learn from guest lecturers and discussions led by Georgia Tech faculty in different disciplines.

Grading and Requirements:

Participation

I do not give points for attendance. However, your success in this course is dependent upon your participation in class discussions. Students are expected to arrive on time, prepared to discuss assigned readings. Tardiness will not be tolerated. If you know in advance that you are going to be late or have to leave early, please notify me. Students should also prepare a summary of the day's assigned readings. Occasionally, I will collect these summaries in class and count them toward your participation grade.

Sports Biography & Community Essay and Oral Presentation

Students will write a formal three-to-four-page essay on a significant historical or contemporary sporting figure. Students will demonstrate how the individual helped shape important changes between the sports world and a specific community. You will be required to use at least three scholarly sources approved by the instructor. On **March 14th**, students will submit their paper in class and give a five-minute oral presentation. You will receive a detailed handout with specific instructions for the paper and oral presentation.

Response Papers

Students will write two (2) four-to-five-page response papers; one essay for *Friday Night Lights* and another essay for *Big-Time Sports In American Universities*. We will discuss these books in class before you submit your response papers. I will also provide a handout with specific questions that you will need to address in your essays. The *Friday Night Lights* essay is due on **February 21st** and the *Big-Time Sports* essay is due **April 11th**.

Class Debates

The class will be divided into four teams for two debates. On **April 16th**, two teams will debate the following question: Has Title IX Been Successful? On **April 18th**, two teams will debate the following question: Are "Big-Time" College Sports Good for Society? Individual students will be responsible for arguing on behalf of their team in class and

writing a two-to-three-page paper on their team's position and a description of their role on the team. Students will be required to cite sources in their papers and in the debates. You will receive a handout with further instructions.

Final Exam: The final exam will include a short answer section and an essay section. The cumulative exam will cover material from lecture, readings, and discussions. You are required to write your essay answers in a **blue book**. Blue books can be purchased at the bookstore. On the day of the exam students must bring a blue book, two pens, and their student identification card.

Grading Scale

Participation	20%
Sports Biography Essay	10%
Sports Biography Presentation	10%
Response Paper One	10%
Response Paper Two	10%
Debate Presentation	15%
Debate Position Paper	10%
Final Exam	15%
Total	100%

A: 90-100%
B: 80 - 89%
C: 70 - 79%
D: 60 - 69%
F: 59% and below

Academic Honesty

Students in this class will be expected to abide by the Georgia Tech honor code. Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated. All students are responsible for understanding and complying with Georgia Tech rules. For information see **http://www.honor.gatech.edu**

General Courtesy Guidelines

I expect you to respect your classmates and me at all times. You are expected to be on time for class, refrain from speaking out of turn, and **turn off all electronic devices before class begins**. I will not tolerate sleeping in class, text messaging, or using your computer for any purposes other than taking notes. If you choose to use a laptop for notes, you are required to sit near the back of the room. If you engage in any kind of distracting or inappropriate behavior I reserve the right to ask you to leave the class.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodation, or you have questions related to any accommodations for testing, note takers, readers, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. Students may also contact the Office of Disability Services, located in the Office of the Dean of Students (ODOS). The ODS phone number is 404-894-2563.

Weekly Class Schedule

Week 1:

January 8 – Course Introduction – Foundations of Sports Studies

January 10 –The Meaning of Modern Sport: Why It Matters to Americans and People Around the World

Week 2:

January 15 – Foundations in Sociology of Sport/Defining Sport

January 17 – The Origins of Modern Sport: Industrialization, Technology, and Globalization in the 19th Century

Week 3:

January 22 – The "Second Globalization" of Modern Sports: Post-industrialization and Technology, 1970-Present
Reading: Markovits and Rensmann, *Gaming the World*, 1-106

January 24 – Sociology of Sport: Guest Lecture, Dr. Jay Coakley, Professor Emeritus, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs

Week 4:

January 29 – Economics of Sports: Part I: Guest Lecture, Dr. David Laband & Dr. Juan Moreno-Cruz, Georgia Tech

January 31 – Economics of Sports Part II: Guest Lecture, Dr. David Laband & Dr. Juan Moreno-Cruz, Georgia Tech

Week 5:

February 5 – Gender and Sports: A History of Title IX
Reading: Ellen J. Staurowsky, "Title IX Literacy: What Every Citizen Should Know About Title IX, Gender Equity, and College Sport" (available on T-Square)

February 7 – Guest Speaker: Ken Chin, Vice President of Business Development & Events for the Atlanta Sports Council

Week 6:

February 12 – Race in American Sports
Reading: Mary G. McDonald and Cheria Thomas, "The Rutgers Women's Basketball Team Talks Back: Instersectionality, Resistance, and Media Power" (available on T-Square)

February 14 – Race and American Football: ***Friday Night Lights*** **discussion**

Week 7:

February 19 – Deviance and Sports: Performance-Enhancing Drugs

February 21 – Documentary: *Bigger, Faster, Stronger: The Side Effects of Being an American;* ***Friday Night Lights*** **essay due in class**

Week 8:
February 26 – Applied Physiology: Guest Lecture, Dr. Mindy Millard-Stafford, Georgia Tech

February 28 – Sports Psychology: Guest Lecture, Dr. Dana Wyner, Emory University

Week 9:
March 5 – Football and Concussions: Causes and Consequences
Reading: Sean Gregory, "The Problem With Football," *Time*, February 8, 2010; Alan Schwartz, "NFL's Dementia Study Has Flaws, Experts Say, *New York Times*, October 27, 2009 (Both articles available on T-Square)

March 7 – Sports Analytics and Computer Technology: Guest Lecture, Dr. John Stasko, Georgia Tech

Week 10:
March 12 – Sports Analytics and Predictive Modeling: Guest Lecture, Dr. Joel Sokol, Georgia Tech

March 14 – Sports Biography Presentations
Sports Biography essay due in class

Week 11:
March 19 – **No Class – Spring Break**

March 21 – **No Class – Spring Break**

Week 12:
March 26 – The Politics of Sports Stadia: Guest Lecture, Dr. Benjy Flowers, Georgia Tech

March 28 – Sports and the Media

Week 13:
April 2 – Sports and Digital Media: Guest Lecture, Dr. Ian Bogost, Georgia Tech

April 4 – The Political Economy of Soccer: Guest Lecture, Dr. Kirk Bowman, Georgia Tech

Week 14:
April 9 – College Athletics and Higher Education: Corruption and Commercialism
Discuss Clotfelter, *Big-Time Sports in American Universities*

April 11 – Sports Law: Guest Lecture, Natasha Brison, J.D., Georgia State University
***Big-Time Sports in American Universities* essay due in class**

Week 15:
April 16 – Class Debate Group I: Title IX

April 18 – Class Debate Group II: Big-Time College Athletics

Week 16:
April 23 – Politics and Sports
Reading: Gary Smith, "Why Don't More Athletes Take a Stand?" *Sports Illustrated*, July 9, 2012; Robert Lipsyte, "Jocks vs. Pukes," *The Nation*, July 27, 2011 (both articles available on T-Square)

April 25 – Fantasy Sports and American Culture

April 30 – **Final Exam** (8:00 to 10:50 a.m.)