



**HTS 4001A:  
SPORTS AND MODERN AMERICA  
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
WEDNESDAY 9:00 – 12:00 (OLD C.E. 104)**

**Contact Information**

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Office Hours: Wednesday 1:00 – 3:00 or by appointment

**Course Overview**

In this course, we will use sports as a “magnifying glass” to study modern American history. The purpose of this seminar is to examine how sports have shaped modern American society and culture. We will also explore how historians have interpreted American sports in order to better understand the importance of race, gender, class, social conflict, and globalization.

**Course Format**

This course will be a discussion-based seminar where students study the relationship between sports and American culture. By the end of the semester, students will produce a substantial research paper (20-25 pages) that is based on primary sources and engages relevant historiography. Throughout this seminar we will discuss what it means to be a historian, the research process, and the craft of writing.

## **Learning Objectives**

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

- Explain how sports have shaped modern American society and culture
- Discuss how race, ethnicity, class, gender, nationalism, and globalization have influenced the meaning of American sports
- Critically examine primary and secondary historical sources
- Formulate their own arguments with evidence from a variety of sources and defend their views orally and in writing

## **Required Readings**

Martin Polley, *Sports History: A Practical Guide*

Jules Tygiel, *Pastime: Baseball As History*

H.G. Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights*

Walter LaFaber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism*

**\*Additional course readings will be posted on T-Square**

## **Suggested Readings**

Before beginning their research projects, students should consider consulting general histories of American sports. The following texts will help introduce students to the history of sports in America. These books will be available on reserve at the library.

Richard Davies, *Sports in American Life: A History*

Gerald Gems, Linda Borish, and Gertrud Pfister, *Sports in American History: From Colonization to Globalization*

Elliott J. Gorn, and Warren Goldstein, *A Brief History of American Sports*

Benjamin Rader, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Televised Sports*, 6<sup>th</sup> ed.

## **Attendance and Class Participation**

Attendance for this seminar is mandatory. Students are expected to attend all class meetings, but may miss one meeting without penalty. For every absence thereafter, students will be penalized one full letter grade.

## **Office Hours and Meetings with the Instructor**

I am here to help you succeed. I am incredibly excited about teaching this seminar and I am eager to help you with your research project. In addition to my regularly scheduled office hours, I am free to schedule one-on-one meetings with you. Please email me in advance of all meetings so I can ensure that I have the necessary time to assist you.

## **Seminar Etiquette**

Class begins on time and 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. I also expect that you will respect your classmates and the instructor at all times. I will not tolerate sleeping in class, text messaging, or using your computer for any purposes other than taking notes. Students should also check their Georgia Tech email on a regular basis, especially the day before class to ensure that they receive all announcements from the instructor.

### **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>

### **Grading and Assignments:**

Participation in Seminar Discussions (75 points)  
Preliminary Bibliography and Proposal (25 points)  
Preliminary Presentation (25 points)  
Annotated Bibliography (25 points)  
Revised Proposal (25 points)  
Outline (25 points)  
Draft (50 points)  
Final Presentation (50 points)  
Final Paper (150 points)

**400 Total Points**

### **Overview of Assignments**

**Participation in Seminar Discussions (75 points):** Students must consistently participate in class discussions. You are expected to offer thoughtful comments and ask relevant questions. Students should come to class prepared to ask questions about the reading and offer insight about the subject. If you attend class, but fail to show that you completed the readings, I reserve the right to mark you absent for that day.

**Preliminary Bibliography and Proposal (25 points):** Your preliminary bibliography will consist of sources that you intend to consult. You must include at least three scholarly sources (books/journal articles) and three primary sources. Your bibliography should follow the format in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. In the same document, you will write a proposal about two pages long. A good research proposal clearly outlines the nature of your topic and the key questions that will be addressed. Your proposal must describe your research methods, sources, and the historical significance of the selected topic. You should also address any concerns you have about pursuing the topic or problems you have faced in your preliminary research. I do not expect students to provide a thesis in their initial proposal. **Your preliminary bibliography and proposal are due on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at midnight. All bibliographies and proposals must be emailed to the instructor.**

**Preliminary Presentation (25 points):** Students will give a preliminary presentation that offers a clear discussion of their research topic and justifies why they have chosen their topic. Your preliminary presentation should also include: (1) A brief historiographical overview of your topic; (2) a discussion about the primary sources you intend to use and how you acquired them; (3) any concerns you have about moving forward with your research and writing. The goal of these presentations is for each student to receive feedback from the instructor and other students in the class. **All preliminary presentations will take place in class on October 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Annotated Bibliography (25 points):** The annotated bibliography will consist of an extensive list of secondary and primary sources. For each source listed, students should write about a paragraph explaining the relevance of the source to their topic and how you plan to use it. All entries should follow the format described in the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The annotated bibliography should serve two purposes: (1) it should help students think about how they are going to use their sources; (2) and for students to demonstrate that they have located quality sources that will allow them to execute their project. **The annotated bibliographies are due in class on October 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Revised Proposal (25 points):** After receiving feedback from the instructor, students should refine their proposal and explain how they have revised the focus of their project. **Revised proposals are due in class on October 15<sup>th</sup>.**

**Outline (25 points):** Outlining a paper helps writers organize their ideas. It should also challenge you to consider how you will use your sources, develop an argument, and defend your thesis with evidence. Each outline must include an introduction, thesis statement, and an ordered overview of your paper. The outline does not need to follow a specific format, but it should have a clear structure that you can follow. **Outlines are due in class on October 29<sup>th</sup>.**

**Draft (50 points):** The culminating assignment in this course is an extensive research paper based on primary and secondary sources. Students will receive a detailed handout that outlines the guidelines and standards for the draft and final paper. **Students are expected to submit a polished draft in class on November 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**Final Presentation (50 points):** Students will make a formal presentation discussing all aspects of their project. All students are expected to attend class and participate in their fellow classmates' presentations. The instructor will provide a detailed handout that outlines the guidelines and standards for the final presentations. **Student presentations will take place in class on November 12<sup>th</sup> and November 19<sup>th</sup>.**

**Final Paper (150 points):** Research papers will be graded using a clear criterion based on the following: (1) following instructions; (2) quality of research; (3) citations; (4) quality of writing; (5) organization; (6) use of evidence; (7) and analysis of the material. Students will receive a detailed handout that outlines the guidelines and standards for the final paper. **All papers must be submitted to the instructor in his office on December 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. No late papers will be accepted!**

### Course Schedule:

**Aug. 20: Introduction: What is sports history? Why should we study the history of sports?**

**Reading:** Polley, Introduction, Warm-Up Exercises, Chapters 1-2; Mark Naison, "Why Sports History Is American History" (Available on T-Square)

**Aug. 27: Reading Sports History: Historiography and Primary Sources**

**Reading:** Polley, Chapters 3-8, Conclusion

Guest Instructor: Bruce Henson, Associate Dean of Libraries

**\*\*We will meet in the Library's Homer Rice Classroom for the first hour of class on August 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**Sept. 3: Boxing As History**

**Reading:** Elliott J. Gorn, "The Meanings of Prizefighting," excerpt from *The Manly Art: Bare-Knuckle Prize Fighting in America* (1986); Randy Roberts, "Emperors of Masculinity: John L. Sullivan, Jack Johnson, and Changing Ideas of Manhood and Race in America" in *Sport, Race, and Ethnicity: Narratives of Difference and Diversity* (2011)

**Primary Sources:** "The Bigger Brute Won," *NYT*, July 9, 1889; Jack London, "Johnson vs. Jeffries" (1910)

**Assignment: Preliminary bibliography and proposals due on Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup> at midnight. All bibliographies and proposals must be emailed to the instructor.**

**Sept. 10: Individual Meetings with Instructor: Group A**

- Please bring a copy of your preliminary bibliography and proposal

**Sept. 17: Individual Meetings with Instructor: Group B**

- Please bring a copy of your preliminary bibliography and proposal

**Sept. 24: Baseball As History**

**Reading:** Jules Tygiel, *Pastime: Baseball As History* (All)

**Primary Sources:** Gay Talese, "The Silent Season of a Hero," *Esquire*, July 1966

**Oct. 1: Sports as Public History: Class Field Trip**

College Football Hall of Fame (10:00-12:00)

250 Marietta St NW

**Oct. 8: Football As History**

**Reading:** H.G. Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights* (All)

**Oct. 15: Preliminary Presentations**

**Assignment: Annotated bibliography and revised proposal due at the start of class.**

**Oct. 22: Tennis as History: Race and Gender**

**Reading:** Eric Allen Hall, "'I Guess I'm Becoming More and More Militant': Arthur Ashe and the Black Freedom Movement, 1961-1968" *Journal of African American History* 96 (Fall 2011); Susan Ware, "The Making of a Sports Icon," in *Game, Set Match: Billie Jean King and the Women's Revolution in Sports* (2011)

**Primary Sources:** Arthur Ashe documents; Arthur Ashe, "Send Your Children to Libraries," *NYT*, February 6, 1977; Marvin Dent, "An Open Letter to Arthur Ashe," *NYT*,

February 27, 1977; "Sports Called Opiate for Black Masses," *NYT*, February 27, 1977; Pete Axthelm, "The Battle of the Sexes," *Newsweek*, September 24, 1973, 82-85

**Oct. 29: The Olympics as Cold War History**

**Secondary Reading:** Donald Abelson, "Politics On Ice: The United States, the Soviet Union, and Hockey Game in Lake Placid," *Canadian Review of American Studies* 40:1 (2010)

**Primary Sources:** "Should U.S. Boycott Olympics?" *U.S. News and World Report*, January 21, 1980; "Shaping Up: An Olympics Without U.S.," *U.S. News & World Report*, January 28, 1980; "Inside The Big Red Machine," *Time*, June 23, 1980; "Olympic Boycott: What It Proved, What It Didn't," *U.S. News & World Report*, August 11, 1980; Jimmy Carter, "Why The United States Should Boycott The 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow"

**Assignment: Outlines due at the beginning of class.**

**Nov. 5: Basketball As Global History**

**Reading:** Walter LaFaber, *Michael Jordan and the New Global Capitalism* (All); Carson Cunningham, "Basketball Bedlam in Barcelona: The Dream Team, A Reflection of the Globe's New World Order"

**Primary Sources:** Lang Whitaker, "The Dream Will Never Die: An Oral History of the Dream Team," *GQ*, July 2012; Jack McCallum, "USA, Inc.," *Sports Illustrated*, July 22, 1992, 124-126.

**Nov. 12: Student Presentations**

**Nov. 19: Student Presentations**

**Assignment: Drafts of Final Paper Due In Class**

**Nov. 26: NO CLASS** (Revise Research Papers)

**Dec. 3: NO CLASS** (Revise Research Papers)

**Dec. 10: Research Papers due by 9:00 a.m.**