History of Sports in America
Sample Syllabus

HIST: Upper Level
Andrew McGregor
Fall 2010

Course Description:
This course will examine and interpret American sports from the colonial era to the present placing attention on the role of sports in American life and how changes in American life have affected sports. This is a course in America social and cultural history exploring issues such as race, class, gender, foreign policy, nationalism, religion, economics, industrialization, and urbanization as they relate to sports. Class time will be devoted to lectures and discussions so come prepared. Not all of the content for exams and other class assignments will be discussed in class; reading the required texts is imperative for success.

Texts:
All students are required to read:

Each student will be assigned to read one of the following books:
Normal Mailer, The Fight – Ali v. Foreman
Barbara Smit, Sneaker Wars – Adidas and Puma
Sally Jenkins, The Real All Americans – Carlisle / Jim Thorpe
Kenny Moore, Bowerman and the Men of Oregon – Nike / Oregon Track
Patti Dickinson, Coach Tommy Thompson and the Boys of Sequoyah – Native America Sports
Paul Kiell, American Miler – Glenn Cunningham / Kansas Track
Dean Smith, A Coach's Life – Dean Smith / North Carolina Basketball

Films:
Each Student will be assigned to watch one of the following films:
Glory Road (2006) – basketball / integration
A League of Their Own (1992) – Women’s baseball
Chariots of Fire (1981) – running / muscular Christianity / Olympics
Running Brave (1983) – running / Native Americans / Olympics
Knute Rockne All American (1940) – football
Miracle (2004) – Olympics / hockey
Lords of Dogtown (2005) – skateboarding
Seabiscuit (2003) – horse-racing

Grading:
The final grade will be based upon a matrix of 500 points.
Examinations 100 points (x3) = 60%
Book Review 50 points = 10%
Movie Review 50 points = 10%
Research Paper 75 points = 15%
Participation 25 points = 5%

Course Objectives:
1. To understand the role of culture (more specifically sport) as a lens to study and evaluate American History
2. To analyze how categories of race, class gender, sexuality, and other factors have been ideologically constructed through sport
3. To understand the significant events, ideas, and figures of American Sports History
4. To employ critical thinking by applying content knowledge to the evaluation of popular presentations of history
5. To develop effective communication through research, writing, and presentation

Assignment Overview:
Examinations: There will be three examinations worth 100 points each. Each exam will consist of true/false,
multiple choice, and short-answer questions. Content from each reading assignment, class discussion, and lecture will appear on the exams. Former Ohio State football coach Woody Hayes liked to say, “luck is the residue of adequate preparation.” It is essential that you stay up-to-date on the reading and coming to class.

Book Reviews: Each student will read and complete a book review on a text assigned to them (from the list above). The book review is worth 50 points and must adhere to the specific format found at back of the syllabus. In addition to reviewing the book, each student must be prepared to discuss the book in class on the assigned due date. Failure to discuss the book will result in a 5% loss of points on the assignment.

Movie Reviews: Each student will be assigned to view and critique a film (from the list above). It is the student's responsibility to acquire the film and watch it on their own time (services like Netflix, Redbox, etc. should have most, if not all of them, if you have difficulty finding a film contact your instructor). The film must be reviewed according to the format found at the back of the syllabus. Be prepared to discuss the film in class on the day the review is due. Failure to discuss the film will result in a 5% loss of points on the assignment.

Research Papers: Each student is required to complete a research paper worth 75 points over a topic selected and approved in consultation with the instructor. As an upper level course students are required to utilize both primary and secondary source material. The papers must be between 10-15 pages, double spaced, standard font, size 11, and adhere to Chicago Manual of Style formatting. To prevent procrastination and ensure fluent, well-thought-out-writing, built in check points will require students turn in bibliographies, thesis statements, outlines, and drafts prior to the final due date – these will factor into the overall grade of the paper.

Participation: “The Past Is But Prologue” is the inscription cut into marble above the entrance to the National Archives. Current events often have roots in the past. Part of class will be devoted to discussing these current events and linking them to course content. With this in mind, students should take note of the prominent stories and headlines in media outlets such as ESPN and Sports Illustrated over the course of the semester. Additionally, students are expected to contribute to class discussions, movie and book review presentations, as well as answer and ask questions. If something does not make sense or you want to know more ASK!

Extra Credit: A limited number of extra credit opportunities are available, but only to students who complete all assignments with an honest effort. See the instructor for further details.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism and cheating are a serious issue and will not be tolerated. All papers submitted must be the student's own, original work. The course assignments are designed to develop academic skills in critical thinking and writing. Students may not recycle papers, reviews, etc. from previous classes. There are multiple forms of plagiarism – the most common is quoting or paraphrasing someone else work as your own without properly citing the source. Another common type is copy/paste layering of different sources with citations but no original thought or authorial insight. If you have questions about these policies or your own work, contact the instructor prior to the assignment due date. Violation of these policies will be dealt with under university policy.

Students With Disabilities: The Department of History is committed to equal opportunities in education for all students, including those with documented physical disabilities or learning disabilities. If you have a disability and will require special accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center for the proper documentation and then visit with me to arrange for the appropriate accommodations.

Technology: Please turn off your cell phones before entering the classroom and do not turn it on until after class is concluded. You may use a computer to take notes only. If it is discovered that students are surfing the web, email, etc. during class your instructor reserves the right to revoke computer note taking privileges for the entire class. Please ask permission before using of tape or digital voice recorders in lectures and discussions, however generally it will be permitted.

Your Instructor: I am Andrew McGregor instructor in the Department of History. You can contact me by email at admcgregor3@gmail.com or phone at (913) 220-6431. I check and respond to email and voice-mail daily. However, to ensure I recognize your email be certain to write “RE: Sports History” in the subject line.
Class Schedule:

Aug 23: Course introduction/overview. Sporting in Early America
Davies Ch 1 – Sign up for book and movie reviews

Davies Ch 2

Aug 30: Baseball the Development of “Our Game,” 1845 - 1875
Davies Ch 2

Sept 1: The Origins of College Sports, 1860 – 1917
Davies, Ch 4, – select a research paper topic by today

Sept 6: Labor Day

Sept 8: Harvard v. Yale
Rivals! Ch 1 – The Real All Americans Due

Sept 13: America Embraces the “Strenuous Life,” 1850 - 1920
Davies Ch 5 – Chariots of Fire Due

Sept 15: Baseball Becomes the National Pastime, 1875 – 1921
Davies Ch 6

Sept 20: On the Margins: Boxing in America, 1840 – 1950
The Fight Due

Sept 22: Ballyhoo: The 1920s
Davies Ch 8
First Bibliography Due

Sept 27: The Spirit of Notre Dame: The Construction of Big Time College Football
Davies Ch 7, – Knute Rockne All America Due

Sept 29 First Examination

Oct 4: Sport During the Great Depression and the Second World War
Seabiscuit Due; America Mile Due

Oct 6: Racism and American Sports, 1870 – 1940
Davies Ch 9,

Rivals Ch 2,

Davies Ch 7, 11, – Bowerman and the Men of Oregon Due
Thesis Statements Due

Coach Tommy Thompson Due

Davies Ch 12, Rivals! Ch 4,

Oct 25: Race and Racism, 1940 – present
Glory Road Due,
    Davies, pp 151-55, 263-70 – *A League of Their Own Due*
    *Outlines Due*

Nov 1: Women cont.
    Rivals! Ch 8 – *Million Dollar Baby Due*

Nov 3: *Second Examination*

Nov 8: Television Transforms American Sports, 1940 – 2006
    Davies Ch 10, Rivals! Ch 5 – *Running Brave Due*

Nov 10: Sports and the Cold War, 1945 – 1992
    Davies Ch 13, Rivals! Ch 7 – *Miracle Due*

Nov 15: College Sports Inc.
    Davies Ch 11, Rivals! Ch 3 – *A Coach's Life Due*
    *First Draft Due*

Nov 17: Wilt, Bob, and Bill, Michael, Larry, and Magic: The NBA
    Rivals! Ch 6

Nov 22: The Age of Jimmy the Greek: Sports Gambling in America

Nov 24: America's Game: Modern Professional Football

Nov 29: Baseball in the Age of Free Agency and Expansion
    Rivals! Ch 10

Dec 1: The Business of Sports
    *Sneaker Wars Due*

Dec 6: Sports and Society
    Davies Ch 15-16 – *Lords of Dogtown Due*
    *Research Papers Due*

TBA: *Third Examination* (during final examination period)
The book review format for this class is most likely unlike any that you have done before. Therefore, **read the following directions carefully.** The review will consist of two pages, and only two pages, typed single-spaced. The first page will list by number and answer the six points described below. The second page will consist of a concise (but thorough) summary of the book's quality. A good review must be written in a clear, concise narrative that is free of typographical errors, misspellings, and grammatical difficulties as befitting your status as a successful upper division student at a major university. If possible submit your review as one sheet front and back. Place your name at the top of page one along the right hand margin and give the current date.

The standard bibliographical reference should appear at the top of the page, and follow this format:


Your review should identify and discuss the following six factors, with emphasis given to those matters that are most important to your particular book.

1. **The Author:** Who is the author and what are his/her qualifications for writing this book? (e.g., other major publications, academic history, other relevant experiences?).

2. **Topics and Scope:** Often the title does not convey the chronological or topical range of the book. Are there important aspects of the subject that have been overlooked?

3. **Sources:** What are the major sources used by the author? Is the bibliography adequate? Are there major omissions?

4. **Thesis:** What is the central concept upon which the author build his narrative? Does the author adequately prove the thesis? Is the thesis ideologically drive or does it grow naturally out of the narrative's documentation? Do you agree or disagree with the thesis? (Note: the thesis should not be confused with the topic and scope of the book).

5. **Style:** How effective does the author's narrative present the information? Does the style make the subject come to life, make the contents of the book meaningful? Is the book well organized? Is it too wordy, too brief, repetitive, concise, clear, or vague? Did the style make this an enjoyable read?

6. **Contribution to Knowledge:** How does the book add to our understanding of the subject? Does it challenge, modify or complement other books on this subject? (Note: Students may want to consult professional reviews in such publications as the *New York Times Book Review Magazine, Journal of Sports History, Journal of American History, H-Net,* or one of a myriad of other possible locations of reviews).
Movie Review Instructions

It is useful to keep in mind that you should “read” the film rather than simply “watch” it. You should plan to be an active participant rather than a passive viewer. This exercise is not for couch potatoes! As with reading a serious novel, you should be prepared to analyze, interpret, and understand the meaning of the film in addition to being entertained.

Plan to watch the film more than once, at least the crucial parts. This is essential if you are to write an effective review. You will need to use evidence from the film – such as quoting a passage or describing a particular scene. You need to have a strong grasp on what scenes are most important in relationship to the major theme of the film. Those scenes will be described accurately and with adequate detail. Like a good novel, a good film will reveal new ideas or themes each time you re-read it. You need to ask questions “why?” as well as “what?” As with a good book review, your film review should seek to analyze and interpret rather than merely describe the plot. The crucial questions is not “What happened in the film?” but rather, “When did the film happen the way it did?” Why did the director, actress, or cinematographer choose to approach their subject in this particular way? Why is their approach particularly effective (or ineffective)?

In your review you should address the following 11 points – similarly to the book review format – as well as offer an analytical overview. Sample academic movie reviews are available in journals such as the Public Historian. The review should be 2-3 pages single-spaced, with one page dedicated entirely to your analytical overview. Place your name at the top of page one along the right hand margin and give the current date. Next, the standard bibliographical reference should appear at the top of the page, and follow this format (if you have questions about format ask your instructor):


1. Context: How are the themes and ideas in the film connected to what you know about the historical period in which the film is set or made? How does the experience of the characters dramatize and express the feelings of the people who lived under these conditions during this period? What can the history of the period teach us about the film? What can the film teach us about the history of this period?

2. Narrative: Concern yourself not only about the what the story is, but also about how it is told using the techniques and stylistic elements described below. How do these conventions, techniques, or stylistic elements set up, shift, or frustrate expectations about where the narrative is headed? How are editing, cinematography, sound, etc., being used to tell the story or to represent the relationship between the film's narrative and the written narrative (novel, screenplay, etc.) upon which it is based?

3. Conventions: How does the film use, distort, stylize, or parody conventions or cliches that you recognize from film, television, or photography?

4. Setting: Is the film (or an individual scene) set indoors or out? What is the natural and architectural space like? Is this a “real” place or does it seem contrived? Are there special objects, props, or landscapes that are particularly important to this film?

5. Lighting: What is the source of light? Is it natural or artificial? Direct or reflected? Bright or dim? High or low contrast? How does is obscure or reveal places or persons? Does the lighting influences the emotional impact of themes, characters, or the film?

6. Acting: How do the character look, sound, and move? How do they use their bodies, faces, and voices to interpret and express emotions? Are their things we can learn from their motions that are not revealed in their words?

7. Color: Is it in color or black and white? How are the shadings used?

8. Cinematography: This word refers to the positioning and motion of the camera. A shot refers to the film created by a continuous running camera (the shot may be as short as one frame or as long as the entire film), which also may move during the shot. How is the framing (what is on or off the screen) used to convey a sense of what is important or unimportant, exposed or hidden? What sense is conveyed by the camera's angle (looking up, down, or straight ahead) and distance (how far from the camera is the subject).

9. Editing: Editing refers to the way in which the shorts are assembled in the finished film. A cut is the joining of one length
of footage with another. How does editing work to reveal or obscure characters within a scene? What places, characters, or objects has the editor chosen to emphasize? How are cuts used to convey changes in time or place or action?

10. **Dialogue:** Dialogue refers to the verbal conversations and exchanges of the characters. What meaning is conveyed by the film's dialogue? How does the dialogue help advance the plot, delineate the characters, or introduce important thematic elements?

11. **Sound:** Sound includes music, speech, and sound effects. Sound may be used to create or reinforce the themes of the film, to anticipate action, to express a character's point of view or emotional state, or to provide other sorts of cues. As you watch the film, be certain to listen to it as well. What sounds are detectable in the foreground or background? Are the sounds natural or artificial? Are they synchronized with movement of the image?