Course Overview

This course begins with the assumption that sports are more than a playful diversion. Indeed, sports not only afford a unique and important space in which to think critically about human beliefs and behaviors, but they also direct attention to the centrality of race to American identities and experiences. Consequently, in this class, we direct attention to the interplay of difference and power within sports as manifested in social structures and institutions, symbols and rituals, language and discourse, as well as media coverage and mundane practices. We will attend to the complex relationships between race and sport (as well as gender, class, nation, and sexuality) through an examination of the social significance of figures like Michael Jordan, LeBron James, Kobe Bryant, Yao Ming, Jeremy Linn, Jack Johnson, Mike Tyson, Curt Flood, and countless other athletes. We will also look at various sports and numerous issues, such as globalization in sports, athletics and immigration, integration, sports as slavery, the notion of sports as a space of colorblindness, social mobility and the American dream, Native American mascots, criminalization, and resistance. At its core, our course seeks to underscore the importance of sports as a tool and space of politics, ideologies, discursive articulations, control and resistance. It reflects on the cultural debates and relevance of sports, illustrating the ways in which meanings are articulated and challenged in and around the court, field, pitch, rink, course, and sporting plantations seen throughout the world.

Objectives

This course has five objectives.

- First, stressing meaning, power, and culture, it seeks to reframe sport, enhancing students’ understandings of its social significance.
- Second, it endeavors to clarify and problematize the meanings, histories, and practice of race and gender, particularly as associated with American public culture in the 20th century.
- Third, it strives to enable student to locate themselves as participants and spectators, encouraging students to think about what it means to play and watch sports.
- Fourth, fostering self-reflection and critical social perspectives, it also aims to create a learning environment in which students seriously and sensitively engage the social significance of sports.
- Fifth, this course seeks to improve their critical thinking and communicative skills.
Required Readings

- **One Man Out: Curt Flood versus Baseball** by Robert M. Goldman (2008)


- **My Life and Battles by Jack Johnson** – Potomac Books Inc. (June 30, 2009); ISBN-10: 1597972673

- **Counting Coup: A True Story of Basketball and Honor on the Little Big Horn** by Larry Colton (October 1, 2001) ISBN-10: 0446677558


Course Requirements

**Attendance**
You are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time, and participate in an informed and consistent manner. PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU ARRIVE LATE OR LEAVE CLASS EARLY, OR SIMPLY DECIDE TO TAKE A BREAK DURING CLASS, YOU MAY BE GIVEN A PARTIAL ABSENCE. Anything less will not be tolerated and will result in problems in this class. After two absences, WHETHER excused and unexcused (in terms of absences resulting from university-sanctioned activities, please see me), each missed class will lead to a 5% deduction (per day) from your overall grade, up to 15%. IN TOTAL, YOU WILL BE ALLOWED TO ACCUMULATE 5 ABSENCES (FIRST 2 ARE “FREE,” – WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE; HOWEVER, EACH ADDITIONAL ABSENCE AFTER THAT, UP TO 3 -WILL RESULT IN A 5% DEDUCTION PER ABSENCE). YOUR 6TH ABSENCE WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC “F” FOR THE COURSE. This may seem punitive but being present, being engaged, and otherwise contributing to the success of the class is in my mind the most important element of this class. Attendance usually will be taken at the beginning of class, so lateness will potentially lead to an absence for that day. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away.

**Participation (20%)**
In order for this class to be productive you will need to come to class each and every day prepared to discuss the material. This requires more than simply doing the reading (WHICH IS ESSENTIAL), but arriving at class with a readiness to discuss the issues for that day. Recognizing that silence is not always a result of a lack of interest or preparation, I envision participation along many lines. Participating in class not only consists of talking, but also includes listening (please do...
not talk while others are speaking), interacting with your peers, and contributing to our classroom energy (body language, being engaged – no newspapers, no playing “rock, paper scissors,” or cell phones).

There are three additional ways to enhance your participation grade and contribution to class:

- You can e-mail me comments or questions prior to class
- You can hand me a note at the beginning of class that asks specific questions (or relays comments) about readings, a previous lecture or film – I will do my best to incorporate into that day’s class
- You can also enhance participation grade by reading the daily newspapers in print or online and bringing the class’s attention to relevant articles/developments

**Participation Portion of grades based on following:**

17-20 Points: Active participant in class in all regards; enhances and invigorates the class; contributes in all facets of the class, including small groups

13-16 Points: Participates and contributes regularly; does not push class conversations in new directions but often contributes

10-13 Points: Contributes on occasions but does so at basic level; engaged, but not active

6-9 Points: Rarely contributes, but present; shows limited effort and interest in class

2-5 Points: Does not contribute, but physically present for most part; brings little energy and generally demonstrates little interest or effort within class

0-1 Points: Detracts from overall success of class because of disinterest, use of cell phone in class, sleeping during class, disengagement, negative attitude, rudeness, non or disruptive/destructive participation, etc.

**Essays (80% -- Each will be worth 20%)**

There are four essays for this class (Although the final essay be due during finals week). Each will be a take-home and for each you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit after receiving your initial grade. These essay questions will ask you to reflect on and analyze readings, and class materials. An essay question might ask you to analyze the ways in which the U.S. has utilized sport within its imperialistic projects or how globalization has impacted sport and how each has affected race on a global scale. FOR EACH ESSAY YOU WILL NEED TO INTEGRATE SPECIFICS FROM COURSE READINGS, FILMS, AND DISCUSSIONS. To give you a general sense of each paper, the following themes will form the basis of each question:

- Paper #1: Sports as more than a game (focus on race, politics, and the interrelationships between sports and broader social issues)
- Paper #2: Blackness and Sports Commodities
- Paper #3: Globalization and Baseball
- Paper #4: Native American Female Basketball
Assignment Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Date**</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Essay #1</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>Essay #2</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Essay #3</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/17</td>
<td>Essay #4</td>
<td>20 Points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyday</td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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**We hold right to make adjustments to class and assignment schedule as needed by class needs

Grading Scale
100-93: A
92-90: A-
89-87: B+
86-83: B
82-80: B-
79-77: C+
76-73: C
72-70: C-
69-67: D+
60-67: D
59 and Below: F
## Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages/Reading</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/24</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Cultural Politics of Sport</td>
<td>Reading: TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>8/31</td>
<td>Johnson, #1-7</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/2</td>
<td>Johnson, #8-15</td>
<td>Film: <em>Unforgivable Blackness</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/7</td>
<td>Johnson, #16-21</td>
<td>Film: <em>Unforgivable Blackness</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/9</td>
<td>Johnson, #21-25</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/14</td>
<td>Oriard, #1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/16</td>
<td>Oriard, #2</td>
<td>Film: <em>Breaking the Huddle</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/21</td>
<td>Oriard, #3</td>
<td>Film: Clips from <em>Revolt of the Black Athlete</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/28</td>
<td>Oriard, #4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9/30</td>
<td>Oriard, #5</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/5</td>
<td>James &amp; Bissinger, #1-3</td>
<td>FILM: <em>More than a Game</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>James &amp; Bissinger, #4-6</td>
<td>FILM: <em>More than a Game</em></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/12</td>
<td>James &amp; Bissinger, #7-10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/14</td>
<td>James &amp; Bissinger, #11-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/19</td>
<td>James &amp; Bissinger, #13-16</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/21</td>
<td>Goldman, #1 &amp; 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/26</td>
<td>Goldman, #3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>FILM: YouTube Clips</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/28</td>
<td>Goldman, #5 -6</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/2</td>
<td>Goldman, #7- epilogue</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/4</td>
<td>Kirsch, pp. 1-36</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/9</td>
<td>Kirsch, pp. 39-74</td>
<td>Film: <em>Road to the Big Leagues</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>NO CLASS</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/16</td>
<td>Kirsch, pp. 101-126 &amp; 154-174</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/18</td>
<td>Kirsch, pp. 175-205</td>
<td>Films: <em>Million Dollar Arm and Children of Industry</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>11/30</td>
<td>Kirsch, pp. 175-205</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2</td>
<td>Colton, 126-202</td>
<td>Film: <em>Edge of America</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/7</td>
<td>Colton, 205-271</td>
<td>Film: <em>Edge of America</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12/9</td>
<td>Colton, 272-315 (we won’t be able to finish discussing the book in class but I encourage to finish)</td>
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This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances and shifts in class needs. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made in your absence.

### Course Policies

Although I hope to redefine the classroom as a space of discussion, debate and intellectual transformation, thereby unsettling your ideas of a student-teacher relationship, there are specific key guidelines that should guide your experience within the classroom. We can certainly expand
on these, but the following represents rules/guidelines for our class, ones that are in part based on experiences in previous classes:

1. **READ, READ, READ . . . .**
2. **Turn cell phones off upon arrival to class** – Please note that if I see your cell phone/other handheld device (not if it rings) whether because you’ve decided to text message, check scores, show friend a picture or listen to messages, you will be asked to put it away.
3. **YOU ARE ASKED NOT TO GET UP DURING CLASS BECAUSE YOU FEEL THIRTY OR HUNGRY**
4. **Arrive to class on time** (and that doesn’t mean put down your stuff before class begins and then leave for 25 minutes) – THAT MEANS YOU NEED TO ARRIVE IN CLASS AND BE READY TO ENGAGE AT 9:00 AM
5. **Sleeping or otherwise “tuning out”** is not acceptable; class requires engagement from all members of the community. You should not come to class with the sole intent of sucking up the classroom oxygen while you sleep.
   **If you fall asleep in class, you will be woken up**
6. **If you use class time to read the newspaper or do work for other classes, you will be called out in front of the class**
7. **Be respectful of others, in terms of engaging and listening to lectures, peer comments, and other course materials**
8. **Reflect on social location and work to understand alternative arguments, analysis, and narratives, as well as anger**
9. **Respect and understand rage**
10. **Don’t be rude** (egs – Offer a comment and then while someone is responding walk out of the room to get something to eat; walking out of the room to get something to eat CONSTANTLY; doing other work or engaging in rock-paper-scissors while in class;)

**Cheating**

DON'T DO IT! What constitutes cheating: Turning in any work that is not yours and yours completely, which includes using a “cheat sheet,” copying the answers from a peer, copying and pasting from a website, copying a friend's work, etc. If someone else said it, wrote it, thought it, etc. give them credit – DON’T STEAL THE INTELLECTUAL WORK OF OTHERS. Your failure to follow these basic instructions, to respect the classroom, to take the easy route, to be in the business of pretending to learn, think, analyze, and otherwise be a student, is not acceptable in any regard. If I determine that you have violated the academic policy, you will face a range of potential classroom sanctions: redoing the initial assignment for half-credit, completing extra assignment(s) and/or receiving a zero (0) for the assignment. Irrespective of the classroom sanctions, all violations of the university’s academic integrity policy will be reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. Any decision to violate the sanctity and purpose of the classroom leaves me with little choice in this regard. If you are unfamiliar with WSU policy regarding cheating and confused as to what constitutes cheating (plagiarism), please consult the Standards for Student Conduct found here: [http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=109](http://conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=109)
Students with Disabilities
I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodation to fully participate in this class, please visit the Disability Resource Center (DRC). All accommodations MUST be approved through the DRC, located Washington Building, Room 217. To make an appointment with a disability specialist, please call 335-3417.

Emergency Notification System:\footnote{From T \& L 589 syllabus of Dr. Paula Groves Price}
WSU has made an emergency notification system available for faculty, students and staff. Please register at myWSU with emergency contact information (cell, email, text, etc). You may have been prompted to complete emergency contact information when registering for classes on RONet. Please refer to the University emergency management website http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies as well WSU ALERT http://alert.wsu.edu for information on WSU’s communication resources WSU will use to provide warning and notification for emergencies. The entire WSU safety plan can be found at http://safetyplan.wsu.edu.

Primary Learning Outcomes

- Understanding the dialectical relationship between race/gender-based ideologies, sports, capitalism and other forms of popular culture
- Ability to think through continuities of systems of oppression; understand systems of power and domination within and beyond sporting contexts (sports as slavery and plantation metaphor)
- Recognize and understand the ways in which race, masculinity, femininity, “the other,” America, white supremacy, resistance, cultural products and capitalism affect one another
- Understand sports as a global political and economic processes
- Recognize the ways in which sports teaches about race, gender, nationality, and sexuality; recognize the ways in which sport and sporting discourses discipline and punish bodies perceived to be as dangerous, transgressive and oppositional
- Ability to analyze and deconstruct rhetorical strategies present within sports discourses
- Ability and willingness to deconstruct our own views/enjoyment of sports, evident through our television watching, magazine reading and overall investment in sports culture
- Articulate a clear working definition of sports sociology, American Dream, race, patriarchy, racism and white supremacy
- Analyze the relationship between sports as a cultural processes and social structures – what can we learn about “society” from sports; what can learn about sports from society?
- Articulate the ways in which athletes, fans and other participants in athletics resist hegemonic ideas, discourses, and inequalities
- Recognize the connections between sports, Social Darwinism, concepts of criminality, black male sexuality and media coverage
- Reflect on the experiences of Latino, Native American, and Asian athletes, transcending the black/white paradigm

1 From T \& L 589 syllabus of Dr. Paula Groves Price
• Recognize the ways in which ideas of race, gender, sexuality, nationality and class are conceived, employed, deployed and resisted within the world of sports
• Relate notion of personal being political to concepts discussed in class – how are we complicit with the reactionary and oppressive realities of American sports
• Understand the history and power of sport as a site of resistance, whether individual or collective challenges to sporting hegemonies and those outside the arena, off the field, etc.