

Introduction to Sports History *History*

Course Description

This history course will examine the development of sport in America. We will examine, historically, how race, class, gender and ethnicity have affected sport. Using various non-fiction readers, students will learn how history influences the present – specifically how sports history has led the American public into a state of sports obsession.

Required Texts

Elliot Gorn, [A Brief History of American Sports](#)

Max McElwain, [The Only Dance in Iowa: History of Six-Player Girls' Basketball](#)

Earl Smith, [Race, Sport and the American Dream](#)

Laura Hillenbrand, [Seabiscuit](#)

Various additional readings

Course Requirements and Evaluation

Reflection Papers (2): 15% each = 30% total

Major Paper: 40%

Sports Autobiography: 20%

Class Participation: 10% total

Sports Autobiography

One of the purposes of this course is to suggest that the history of sport directly impacts today's sporting landscape. To demonstrate this, reflect upon your own life, and your experience with sports. What sports experiences have proven to be most memorable? Which experiences have made you the individual that you are in the present day? If you have limited experience with sport, that is fine. Simply find an individual, interview them, gather their stories, and write a biography. The goal of this paper is to demonstrate that the past significantly influences the present, using sport as a vehicle to accomplish this.

Response Papers

You will be required to write two (2) response papers. Some leeway, however, will be given in terms of topic. Your options for topics are, broadly, **race**, **class** and **gender** (our three units). Choose two of these (see course schedule for due date). Choose a topic within each of these topics – an issue or event, for instance – that interests you. Limited outside research may be required. However, the goal of these assignments is to draw connections between class readings and discussion and an important, relevant issue to you.

Major Paper

Consider this a research paper. Find a current event, one that is currently strongly influencing the sports landscape. Research this issue, find responses to this issue and put this issue in context for the reader. "In context" means to put into a historical context: What, historically, makes this issue relevant in 21st century society? How has history affected the development of this issue?

Works Cited

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