

History 136: Sport, Recreation, and Society in the U.S.

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Instructor: Isaac Lee
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Prerequisites: None

Format: Online/Asynchronous
Semester: Summer 2023
Credits: 3
Breadth: Humanities/Social Science

Course Canvas Link: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/356484>



The women's freshman basketball team in Ladies Hall at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. 1903

As much as we may try to convince ourselves that sport offers an escape from the “real world,” constant news of players’ strikes, stadium financing controversies, and the lack of diversity in league management remind us that we cannot separate the games we play and watch from the social contexts in which they are embedded. With this in mind, this course explores how sport has shaped and been shaped by major trends in American cultural, political, and economic history. Students will engage with serious historical debates about sport’s relationship to American capitalism, social movements, and urban development. Readings also provide exposure to often-overlooked perspectives on the politics of race, gender, and class in American sport. Non- sports fans are welcome!

History at the College Level

History at the college-level is about finding meaning in the past and learning to make thoughtful and sophisticated arguments about their significance. Learning about the past and learning to think historically necessarily requires confronting topics that are provocative and upsetting. Our task is not to rationalize these histories but to understand their context and interpret their meanings. While much of

the material we examine in class will call into question basic assumptions about the relationship between sport and society, the goal is not to dampen your enthusiasm for playing and watching the games you love. Instead, my hope is that the course fosters a critical sensibility that helps you view these games in their historical and sociological context.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will:

- Recall the key contexts, events, actors, and ideologies that have shaped the history of American sport since the colonial era.
- Connect the history of American sport to the larger social, political, and cultural issues. These include the struggle between capital and labor, movements for inclusion and equity, the transformation of the built environment, and the role of the United States abroad.
- Make coherent arguments about what happened in the past and why, supported by appropriate and relevant evidence.
- Evaluate how sports media and other popular sources represent sports within American society and use history to recognize and critique overgeneralizations and unfounded assumptions.
- Improve upon critical reading skills by learning to summarize and evaluate the content and form of scholarly literature.
- Have fun engaging with the past. While it sounds cliché, this is my hope, at least – that you will discover an appreciation for the history of sports and a sense of curiosity about people and places in the past.

Important Dates

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| ● June 19 th : 8-week Session Begins | ● July 21 st : Drop Deadline #2 (Last chance to drop the class. Afterwards you will need approval from an academic dean) |
| ● June 23 rd : Drop Deadline #1 (Last chance to drop this course and receive a full tuition refund) | ● July 31 st : Essay #2 Due |
| ● July 7 th : Essay #1 Due | ● August 10 th : Final Exam Due |

All Dates and Deadlines are in Central Standard Time Zone (CST)

Course Reading

Your reading assignments each week will consist almost entirely of secondary sources (documents written by scholars analyzing primary source evidence). Because of the shortened summer schedule, readings average approximately 60-65 pages per week. **All readings are available online through the course Canvas page.**

I have assigned a carefully curated combination of scholarly articles and academic book chapters as secondary source reading. Think of academic scholarship like an ESPN+ subscription – the content you will read is designed for a niche audience of highly engaged readers. Articles and book chapters advance




nuanced arguments that go beyond the clickbait “hot takes” and soundbites of most sports media. When necessary, I will provide you with additional context on these readings, particularly when you read sections of longer books.

Credit Hours: The credit standard for this course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include: assigned readings, watching assigned course content, writing weekly posts, weekly writing assignments, and exams. In condensing a 3-credit course to 8 weeks, students should expect to spend around 15-18 hours per week on History 136.

Email and Office Hours: I will be sending out regular announcements and reminders over email. Your success in this course will depend on keeping up with communications from me and regularly checking your messages. If you need to reach me with questions or concerns, I prefer you send an email to ijlee@wisc.edu. Please include History 136 somewhere in the subject line. You can expect a response within 24 hours. If you do not receive a response in under 24 hours, it is likely because you can find the answer to your question on Canvas or the course syllabus.

As this is an online asynchronous class, I will not be holding regularly scheduled office hours, however, I am always happy to schedule appointments and meet over Zoom.

Grades: Below are the requirements for this course and the weight of each towards a final grade

-  Course Surveys: 5%
-  Canvas Posts: 30%
-  1-2 page Paper: 10%
-  Lecture Quizzes 15%
-  4-5 page Paper: 20%
-  Final Exam: 20%

Grading Scale: A (92.50+); AB (87.50-92.49); B (82.50-87.49); BC (77.50-82.49); C (69.50-77.49); D (60-69.49); F (Below 60)

Discussion Post Rubric: Each discussion post will be graded using the below rubric on a scale of 0-5 points.

Needs Improvement (0-1)	Competent (2-3)	Good (4-5)
The post does not adequately answer the prompt. The post does not use assigned readings or course materials.	The post responds to the prompt but does not provide complete answers. The post uses evidence from assigned readings, but the importance/relevance of some evidence may not be clear	The post responds to the prompt with clarity and creativity. The post uses readings and lecture materials effectively and accurately.

(Note: I do not accept re-writes or edits on discussion posts.)

Course Components and Requirements

● **Course Content:**

- Assigned Readings: These will include a mixture of primary source materials and scholarly writings. On average students should expect around 100 pages of reading per week.
- Media: Each week I will post in Canvas, 2-3 short lessons organized around specific topics. Each lesson will include an introductory video that previews key themes for the lesson followed by several short (5-10 min) audio clips. Students will be responsible for mastering this content in its entirety by the end of the week.

● **Assignments:**

- Canvas Posts: Students in History 136 will write two posts every week, each between 150-200 words, that are posted to the course's Canvas discussion board. The prompts for these posts will be tailored to encourage synthesis and analysis students of weekly readings and videos.
 - Post #1, Due Wednesdays @ Midnight: This first post will ask students to pick one of the questions that initiate each of the week's recorded lectures and respond to that question using content from the lesson.
 - Post #2, Due Fridays @ Midnight: This second post is designed to be more open-ended. Students will have 3 options for this second post:
 1. Write a paragraph explaining a connection you observed between an assigned reading and the weekly media content.
 2. Copy and paste a Wednesday post written by one of your classmates. Then write a paragraph that explains why you agree or disagree with your classmate's answer.
 3. Choose a direct quote from one of the week's assigned readings (and cite, including author and page number). Then write a paragraph explaining how the quote relates to the larger theme of the reading.
- Lecture and Reading Quizzes: There will be weekly multiple-choice quizzes that students must take by Friday at 11:59pm each week, online via Canvas. Each quiz will contain 5 questions and students will be allowed to take each quiz as many times as they want to until they get a score they are satisfied with. There is no quiz during Week 8.
- 1-2 page essay: At the end of Week 3, students will write a very short 1-2 page essay that considers the relationship between sport and broader social changes in the United States.
- 4-5 Page Paper- As we near the end of Week 6, students will write a longer 4-5 page paper. The prompt will require students to draw on material from Weeks 3-6. Students may also choose to incorporate material from earlier in the class as well.
- Final Exam- The final exam will consist of a short answer and essay component. The essay component will be cumulative.

● **Course Evaluations:**

- Bi-weekly Check-ins: At the end of every two-week unit, I will circulate a short anonymous survey for you to provide me with feedback on the course. Completion of all 4 surveys constitutes 5% of your final grade. NOTE: These are not official course

evaluations. I will be grading completion on an honor system to retain anonymity and use your feedback to improve course organization and clarity.

- **Course Evaluation:** At the end of the semester, you will receive an anonymous online survey via AEFIS. I will not see your feedback until after grades have been submitted so please take the time to share your thoughts on the structure and content of the course.

Course Breakdown and Late Policy:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat.-Sun.
Multimedia (~3 hours weekly)	New lecture videos and podcasts released	Watch the assigned lecture videos and other assigned media			Complete Weekly Quiz by Midnight	
Readings (~4 hours weekly)	Complete the assigned readings					
Assignments (~3 hours weekly)	Prompts for weekly discussion posts released		Submit Canvas Post #1		Submit Canvas Post #2	Bi-Weekly Course Feedback

The above schedule reflects the weekly pacing of History 136. Weekly readings and media content are organized by week and designed to be engaged with on week-by-week basis. As this course is asynchronous, with no scheduled meeting times, students are free to organize their time as they see fit. *Students are permitted to work ahead* by reading and listening to content from upcoming weeks as well as posting on the discussion board and taking reading quizzes. Late work, however, will be penalized.

Late Policy: All late work will be penalized based on the assignment. Given the accelerated pace of this summer course, it will be important to not fall behind. Due dates are designed with this in mind. If you anticipate needing more time for an assignment, please contact me **before** the due date.

- Discussion Posts: Each day a post is late will subtract 1 point from the total.
- Quizzes: Quizzes close at Midnight on Fridays. Students can complete the quiz over weekend for half credit.
- Essays: Each day an essay is late, the assignment will lose 10% (or 1 letter grade).

Disability Statement: UW-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy. (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Developing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. If you need accommodations, please let me know by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Academic Integrity: By virtue of enrolling in this course, you are agreeing to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, use of AI-based writing applications, and helping others commit these acts are examples

of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary sanctions include, but are not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. (See <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/>)

Course Schedule

UNIT 1: CULTURE AND COMPETITION IN AMERICAN SPORT(S) (1801 - 1898)

Week 1: American Sport to the Civil War (June 19th – June 23rd)

Reading:

- ❖ Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball*, Chapters 6-Epilogue (101-155)

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- 🎧 “Sports in Early America”
- 🎧 “The Manly Art: Bareknuckle Boxing”

Listen to the following podcast:

- 🎧 “Ghosts of Football Past”

Week 2: Sports in Industrial America (June 26th – June 30th)

Reading:

- ❖ “Football Fight”, *On Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin-Madison Alumni Magazine*
- ❖ Jesse Gant and Nicholas J. Hoffman, *Wheel Fever: How Wisconsin Became a Great Bicycling State*, Chapters 1 & 5 (pp.32-55 & 108-133)

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- 🎧 “Gender and Sport in the 19th Century”
- 🎧 “Athletic Clubs”
- 🎧 “Walter Camp and the Rise of College Football”

Watch the following film:

- 🎧 “Unforgivable Blackness: The Rise and Fall of Jack Johnson”

UNIT 2: SPORTS AND THE MAKING OF AMERICAN IDENTITY (1898-1933)

Week 3: Sports and the Progressive Era (July 3rd – July 7th)

Readings:

- ❖ Matthew Sakiestea Gilbert, “Hopi Footraces and American Marathons, 1912-1930”

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- 🌀 “Albert Spalding and the Making of a Sporting Goods Empire”
- 🌀 “Sports Celebrities and the American Dream”
- 🌀 “Women & Sport in the Early 20th Century”

Essay #1 Due, Friday July 7th @ MIDNIGHT

Week 4: Play, Business, and Space: Sports in the Public Sphere (July 10th – July 14th)

Readings:

- Gerald R. Gems, *The Athletic Crusade: Sport and American Cultural Imperialism*, Chapter 4 (pp.45-66)
- Rita Liberti, “We Were Ladies, We Just Played Basketball Like Boys”: African American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- 🌀 “Stadiums and Turn of the Century Urbanization”
- 🌀 “The Gentleman’s Agreement”

UNIT 3: RAISING THE STAKES: SPORTS IN THE “AMERICAN CENTURY” (1933-1975)

Week 5: Sports and the Growth of the American State (July 17th – July 21st)

Readings:

- Gerald Early, *A Level Playing Field: African American Athletes and the Republic of Sports*, Chapter 1 (23-69)
- Charles K. Ross, *Outside the Lines*, Chapter 7 (pp. 143-158)

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- 🌀 “A New Deal for Sports”
- 🌀 “Jackie Robinson”

❁ “Danny Gardella and the Reserve Clause”

Week 6: Sports and the Sixties (July 24th – July 28th)

Readings:

❖ Sean Dinces, *Bulls Markets*, Chapter 1-2 (pp. 13-80)

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- ❁ “Gentleman’s Agreement, Episode II”
- ❁ “The Revolt of the Black Athlete”
- ❁ “Softball”

Watch the following Film:

▶ *Muhammad Ali, Round Two: What’s My Name*

Essay #2 Due, Monday July 31st @ MIDNIGHT

UNIT 4: SPORTS IN A POSTMODERN ERA (1975-Present)

Week 7: The Big Business of Modern Sports (July 31st – August 4th)

Readings:

❖ Jaime Schultz, *Qualifying Times: Points of Change in U.S. Women’s Sport*, Chapter 4-6 (pp. 103-166)

Multimedia:

Watch the following mini lectures on Canvas:

- ❁ “Title IX”
- ❁ “MLPA”
- ❁ “Global Baseball Labor”

Week 8: The History of Sports, Now (August 7th – August 11th)

Readings:

❖ Sean Dinces, *Bulls Markets*, Chapter 3 & 6 (pp. 81-117 & 187-220)

Multimedia:

Watch the following videos on Canvas:

- ❁ “Ice Hockey and Team Trans”
- ❁ “Rezball: Basketball in Lakota Nation”

Final Exam Essay Due @ Midnight, 8/10/2023