Men, Women, & Sports: Topics in US Sports History

From eye-gouging to Muhammad Ali and *Girlfight*, Mia Hamm to the Superbowl, the nature of sports in the U.S. has dramatically changed. Using films, scholarly articles, essays, and documents, this course examines the shifting terrain of sports in the U.S. beginning in the 19th century, including the way sports have been tied to and expressed ideals of manhood and womanhood, race, class, and nation, and the development of sports as spectacle and enterprise.

Students will deepen their ability to analyze both sports and history, will hone their historical understanding (involving dynamics of change and stasis, context and contingency, human agency and its limits), and will strengthen their critical thinking and writing skills.

Course Requirements:

Laptops, cellphones, and other hand-held devices are not allowed in class unless the professor indicates otherwise for a particular exercise.

**-Informed Participation (30%)**: includes attendance, contributions to class discussion informed by your own course reading and critical thinking and listening, and posts to the WordPress site as follows: each week each student in the first half of the alphabet will post on Mondays by 5:00 for Tuesday’s discussion and respond to other posts on Wednesdays by 9:00 for Thursday’s discussion; students in the last half of the alphabet will post on Wednesdays by 5:00 for Thursday’s discussion, and respond on Mondays by 9:00 for Wednesday’s discussion. These posts are informal one to two paragraph posts on the class WordPress site tagged with the appropriate date for each class session for which there are readings or a film giving your reactions to the reading and/or film for that session (engaging with the arguments, making connections among the readings/films and between the readings/films and other aspects of the class and events outside the class, asking questions, letting us know if the piece didn’t make sense to you, etc.). (No late posts will be accepted.)

**-Two short (5 page) essays (15% each)**: the first short essay will try to make sense of (develop an analysis of) the range of depiction and coverage of the Johnson-Jeffries fight revealed by the material from newspapers of the time posted by your fellow students (see below); the second will try to make sense of the way that other scholars have approached your research topic.

**-One 15-20 page research essay (40%)**: the essay is on an approved topic of your choice; you must meet with me within the first four weeks of the class to discuss possible research topics. I strongly encourage you to consult the posted rubric for this assignment. Also see below—you must find one article or document (or part of a film) to assign to your fellow students for the last four weeks of class. Finally, each Tuesday in November you must hand in four brief
paragraphs, consisting of one paragraph on each of four additional sources on your topic. There is an option to create a web page instead of a traditional research essay—the page must make evident that an equivalent level of research has been done and convey an equivalent level of analysis. DUE IN CLASS ON 9. NOVEMBER 2021

**Required readings** are listed below the week they are due; they are from:

The rest of the readings are available through on-line databases accessed through the Duke University Library catalogue or on the course Sakai website.

**Tues. Aug. 24 & Thurs. Aug. 26:** Introduction—themes, questions, issues and discussion of Zirin’s *A People’s History of Sports in the U.S.*

*Bring a paragraph on Friday 1/10 making a case for a turning point in the first half of the book—a moment or event after which the trajectory of sports history changed—and on Wednesday 1/16 a turning point in the second half.*

**Topic 1: Boxing**

“Organized”? Sport: Making Rules, Civilizing Combat, Redefining Masculinity—Boxing in the mid-19th Century

**Tues. 8/31:** Reading: *(both these articles are available on databases (JSTOR or America History and Life) through the Duke Library system)*: Elliott J. Gorn, “‘Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch’: The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry,” *American Historical Review* 90 (Feb. 1985): 18-43 **AND** Elliott J. Gorn, “‘Good-Bye Boys, I Die a True American’: Homicide, Nativism, and Working-Class Culture in Antebellum New York City,” *The Journal of American History* 74:2 (Sept. 1987): 388-410 please print them and bring them to class

AND document: “Horace Greeley Decries the Slaughter of Boxer Thomas McCoy, 1842” on Sakai

**Arena of Empire: Boxing and Race (Jack Johnson)**

**Thurs. 9/2:** Reading: Randy Roberts, “The 1910 Jeffries-Johnson Fight and Its Impact,” in *Major Problems in American Sports History*, pp. 290-299 on Sakai;

**AND** watch the film of the fight on youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzAS-wihuVI or you can search Jack Johnson v Jim Jeffries on youtube—it’s the one by DavidBumerBoxHilite (it’s 11 minutes)

**AND post** the press (one pre-fight article and one post-fight article) from your assigned newspaper found in America’s Historical Newspapers database or ProQuest Historical Newspapers


NB: Your first paper is due in class on Thursday 9/9.

Thursday 9/9: ARCHIVES DAY

Tues. 9/14: The Black Hope?


Jeffrey T. Sammons, Beyond the Ring: the Role of Boxing in American Society (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 113 on Durham’s response to the Louis fight on Sakai

Sports as Business and Racket I--1950s heyday of business unionism and suspicions of it—and the role of TV


And document: “Ike Williams Testifies on the Corruption of Boxing in the Late 1940s,” pp. 401-408 in Steven A. Reiss, ed., Major Problems in American Sports History on Sakai

Tues. 9/21: Viewing On the Waterfront (1954)—I Could’ve Been a Contender (stream via Sakai site)

Fighting Back—Ali (vs. Joe Louis)

Thurs. 9/23: Viewing: American Experience 1964 (view online via library catalog)

Reading: Kasia Boddy, Boxing a Cultural History (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), pp. 326-338 (338-348 optional) on Sakai


Sports and Class—I Can Be a Contender (the decline of the working class)

**Tues. 9/28:** Viewing: *Rocky* (1976) (view online via library catalog)

Men, Women, Boxing, Race, & Class

**Thurs 9/30:** Viewing *Girlfight* (2000) (view online via library catalog)
We will divide the following two pieces so you will read either but not both:

**FALL BREAK!!**

**Thurs. 10/7:** Viewing: *Million Dollar Baby* (2004) (view online via library catalog)

**Topic 2: Title IX**

Pre-Title IX: Women, Sports and Health

**Tues. 10/12:** Reading: Ellen L. McDonagh and Laura Pappano, *Playing with the Boys: Why Separate is not Equal in Sports* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 7-17, 164-189 on Sakai

**Thurs. 10/14:** Viewing: *Pat & Mike* (1952) stream via Sakai site

**NB: 10/14 Bring laptops to do searches for secondary and primary sources.**

Title IX and its Immediate Impact
**Tues. 10/19**: Reading: Susan Ware, *Title IX: A Brief History with Documents* (Longrove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2007), pp. 1-12, 35-76.  
Susan Cahn, *Coming on Strong*, pp. 251-254 on Sakai  
Come prepared to contribute questions for the interviews with relatives or others your mother’s age and your grandmother’s about their school sports experiences.

**Thurs. 10/21**: Reading: Ware, *Title IX*, pp. 12-27, 77-85  
*Equal Play*, 140-143 on Brown U. v. Cohen on Sakai  
p. 268 on Sakai  
I will distribute the interview questionnaire for your use.

Title IX Under Fire

**Tues. 10/26**: Reading: Ware, *Title IX*, pp. 86-123, 129-131, 147-152  
*Equal Play*, pp. 169-170 (chart), 171-177, 388 (chart), 197-217 (Tilting the Playing Field), 218-238 (critique of Tilting the Playing Field) on Sakai  
Post your interviews on the Wordpress site—be prepared to discuss!

**Thurs. 10/28**: Reading: Ware, *Title IX*, pp. 124-129, 131-147, 153-168  
*Coming on Strong*, pp. 269-272 (FloJo, etc.), and epilogue, 281-314  
*Unlevel Playing Field*, pp. 383-386, 398-400, 421-423  

**Tues./Thurs. 11/2 & 11/4**: individual meetings with Prof. Deutsch in her office (326 Classroom)  
Students use the week to locate readings related to their research from which to choose a document to assign for the last four weeks of class, and two articles for their second paper.

Second Paper due November 9

**Tues./Thurs.:** 11/9, 11/11: readings chosen by students; discussion led by students  
**Tues./Thurs.:** 11/16, 11/18: ditto  
**Tues. 11/22:** ditto  
**THANKSGIVING BREAK**  
**Tues./Thurs.:** 11/30, 12/2: ditto