“Race, Sports and Social Change”
AMST 252/ER&M 302
Yale Summer Session II, 2018
M/W, 1-4:15 PM
Draft Course Syllabus

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A. Course Description

Recent protests by athletes during professional and amateur sporting events are the latest chapters in a long history of political activism emanating from sports.

This course examines a broad range of sporting sites—from public protests by professional athletes to debates about sports mascots to recreational and amateur sports leagues—to explore themes of political formation, domination, and resistance in the United States. It considers the ways that athletes, political actors and social movements have made use of amateur and professional sports to shape particular visions of rights, freedom, and democracy. The course engages theoretical and methodological frameworks from across the humanities and social sciences, including Black Studies, critical race theory, discourse analysis, cultural studies, women of color feminism, and critical sports studies.

The objectives of this course are:

- To familiarize students with some of the important themes, debates and arguments central to the study of race, gender and sports in the United States during the last 100 years.
- To think engage with a series of important keywords related to the critical study of race and gender, especially freedom, populism, indigeneity, nationalism, colorblindness, and power.
- To improve critical writing and analytic skills through regular practice and feedback.
- To provide extensive opportunities for students to reflect upon their own experiences and perspectives in light of the course themes.

B. Required Texts

The following required texts are required and can be purchased through an online retailer; in addition, there will be required readings posted on Canvas.


C. Assignments
1. **RESPONSE & REFLECTION JOURNAL.** You will spend 10-15 minutes during most class meetings writing responses to questions based on the assigned readings, films and discussion. YOU MUST PURCHASE A COMPOSITION BOOK (black and white hard cover notebook) and bring the book to each class meeting to record your responses, as well as to take notes about course readings. The journal will be submitted weekly for comments and grading. The questions will require you to demonstrate your engagement with this material. A grading rubric can be found on Canvas. (25% of final grade).

**JOURNAL WRITING INSTRUCTIONS**

a. For each day the class meets, you will write an entry in your journal. The entry should include:
   i. A list of 2-3 questions that you have based on the assigned reading for the day.
   ii. Your response to the 1-2 questions posted in class.

b. Your response should demonstrate your engagement with the readings, films and in-class discussion. That is, it should not simply summarize the reading, nor should it just be an expression of your opinions. It should draw on both the readings and your own engagement.

c. You will submit your journals to be graded once per week, on a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)

2. **AMATEUR/RECREATIONAL SPORTS OBSERVATION ESSAY.** You will write a 750-1000 word essay based on your observations of a local amateur sports practice, game or event that connects to the course themes. (15% of final grade)

3. **OPINION-EDITORIAL ESSAY.** You will write a 500-750 word Op-Ed essay on a current topic related to sports and race and/or gender, posting it to the course Canvas site by the end of the third week of class. You must also leave comments on at least 4 other columns posted by classmates. Instructions are posted on Canvas. (15% of final grade).

4. **FINAL EXAM.** A take home final exam, consisting of short answer questions and an essay, will be distributed on the last day of class. (20% of final grade).

5. **READING, PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE.** Participation and attendance are important to the success of the class, and will be considered in calculating your final grade. Attendance will be taken in every class; missing two or more classes or frequent tardiness will result in a full letter grade deduction. Any unexcused absences or excused absences without completing a make-up assignment can also lower your final grade. You are expected to come to class having finished all of the assigned reading. A grading rubric can be found on Canvas. (20% of final grade).

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**D. OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

1. **CLASSROOM CONDUCT & CLIMATE.** We are all accountable to create a climate of mutual respect and engagement in the classroom. While differences of opinion, perspective and analysis are important and will be encouraged, common courtesy as well as University policy prohibit personal attacks and discriminatory conduct.

2. **ATTENDANCE.** You are expected to arrive on time and stay for the entire class and participate fully in class discussions. Please contact the instructor to request an accommodation for any anticipated absences

3. **ELECTRONIC DEVICES.** Wireless devices and cell phones must be turned off prior to class. Please see the instructor if you need to use your laptop in class.
4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Penalties for plagiarism can include a failing grade for the course. Guidelines on proper citation practices and avoiding plagiarism can be found here: http://writing.yalecollege.yale.edu/advice-students/usingsources/ and here: http://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism/what-plagiarism.

5. ACCOMMODATIONS. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation, please notify the instructor as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact the Yale Resource Office on Disability http://rod.yale.edu/course-accommodation.

E. READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE: Sports and social change

We begin the course by considering the historical relationship between sports and social change. Professional athletes, on the one hand, have often been admonished to “shut up and play,” and some critics contend sports are mere cultural spectacle, serving to distract the public from more trenchant social issues. On the other hand, many of the most dominant issues of the day—police violence, militarism, racial segregation, gender equality-- have been contested through sports and by athletes.

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*Zirin. A People’s History of Sports  
*Film--Not Just a Game: Power, Politics & American Sports (Pt 1) |
| 2   | * Zirin. A People’s History of Sports  
* Film--Not Just a Game: Power, Politics & American Sports (Pt 1) |

WEEK TWO: Sports, Indigeneity, Militarism and National Identity

Sports have been a continual site to perform, express, debate, and contest group-based identities, especially around racial and national identities. This week, we’ll examine these of the most prominent examples of such debates: (1) The use of Native American mascots in amateur and professional sporting events, and policies regulating their use and (2) The role of the military and performances of militarism and patriotism within sports.

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WEEK THREE: Globalization, Soccer, the World Cup

Can soccer—the world’s most popular sport—help us to understand the complexities of our contemporary world, and the twin forces of globalization and nationalism that regulate social and political life in so many places? This week, we take up this argument through Franklin Foer’s How Soccer Explains the World, which argues that local and national soccer cultures reveal an enormous amount about the ways people inhabit and contest social identities in the face of such conditions. We’ll consider Foer’s arguments through the 2018 World Cup and the revival of ethno-nationalism and antisemitism in Europe.

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| 1   | Franklin Foer, How Soccer Explains the World  
     *Film—Stadiums of Hate |
| 2   | Franklin Foer, How Soccer Explains the World  
     "’It’s Only Working for the White Kids: American Soccer’s Diversity Problem"  
     "’I’ll be Muslim Too’: Fans Embrace Liverpool’s Mo Salah"  

WEEK FOUR: Race and Gender in Amateur Athletics

This week we turn our attention from the realm of high revenue professional sports toward amateur athletics and the everyday ways people use sports to express their values, identities and aspirations. During the second class meeting, we’ll consider the regulation of gender and sexuality in women’s collegiate sports including rowing and basketball.
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*Film: Training Rules: No Drinking, No Drugs, No Lesbians www.trainingrules.com* |

**WEEK FIVE: Contemporary Issues**

To conclude the course, we will consider a range of contemporary issues at the intersection of race, sports and social change, including the recent protests inaugurated by Colin Kaepernick in the National football League, the prevalence of sexual violence in amateur athletics, and the role of professional sports stadiums in the unequal development of urban areas.

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*"Why We Victim Blame---And Why Larry Nassar Shows We Shouldn’t"* (ESPN.com)  
Jennifer E. Bruening. “Gender and Racial Analysis in Sport: Are All the Women White and All the Blacks Men?” *Quest* Vol. 57 , Iss. 3, 2005 |
| 2   | "A Long-Lost Tax Plan Scares Sports Teams and Could Save America Billions"  
"The Gentrification of Oracle Arena"  
"The Raiders Robbed Las Vegas in America’s Worst Stadium Deal"  
Field of Schemes  
http://www.fieldofschemes.com  
"'The American Dilemma': Why Do We Still Watch Football?" |