**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 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 groups and social movements have made use of amateur and professional sports to shape particular visions of rights, freedom, and democracy. The course engages frameworks from across the humanities and social sciences, including Black Studies, critical race theory, cultural studies, women of color feminism, and critical sports studies.

No background in sports or scholarship on sports is assumed or required.

Pending the resumption of amateur and professional sporting leagues in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, the course will also take a field trip to a women’s professional basketball (WNBA) game and students will attend at least one other amateur sporting event to produce a short ethnographic paper.

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 concepts 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 TEXT**
The following text is required and can be purchased through an online retailer or at the Yale Bookstore. In addition, there will be required readings posted on Canvas.


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**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 and discussions. 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).

2. **AMATEUR/RECREATIONAL SPORTS OBSERVATION ESSAY.** You will write a 750-1000 word essay (about 3-4 double spaced pages) 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. (15% of final grade).

4. **FINAL EXAM.** All students will take a final oral exam during a scheduled time during the final week of the course. The exam will be approximately 25 minutes long. Students will be provided with a pool questions in advance. (25% 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. (20% of final grade).

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**D. 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.

**Monday, May 25**


*Film--*Not Just a Game: Power, Politics & American Sports

**Wednesday, May 27**

* Jackson, *The Game is Not a Game*, 1-55
WEEK TWO: Sports, Indigeneity, Patriotism, and National Identity

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

Monday, June 1

* Jackson, The Game is Not a Game, 55-100
* Zareena Grewal, “Taking a Stand by Sitting Down.” The Undefeated

*Film--By the Dawn's Early Light: Chris Jackson’s Journey to Islam (2004)

Wednesday, June 3

*Jackson, The Game is Not a Game, 100-150
*E. Staurowsky. “‘You Know, We Are All Indian.’ Exploring White Power and Privilege in Reactions to the NCAA Native American Mascot Policy.” J. of Sport and Social Issues Feb 2007 vol. 31 no. 1 61-76.

WEEK THREE: Everyday experiences of sport and political rebellion.

This week we will consider the regulation of gender and sexuality in women’s college and professional basketball. At the end of the week we will take a class trip to watch the WNBA’s Connecticut Sun and will read scholarship on race, sexuality, and the women’s basketball.

Monday, June 8

*Film: Training Rules: No Drinking, No Drugs, No Lesbians www.trainingrules.com

Choose one additional article:
Wednesday, June 10

* Jackson, The Game is Not a Game, 150-177

WEEK FOUR: Race and Gender in Amateur Athletics. During the first class meeting we will welcome former MLB player, Yale lecturer, and journalist Doug Glanville to talk about journalism and sports advocacy. In the same meeting, we will discuss amateur athletics and the everyday ways people use sports to express their values, identities and aspirations.

Monday, June 15


Choose two articles to read:

Wednesday, June 17

* Jackson, The Game is Not a Game, 175-207
* In class film—Stadiums of Hate (2012 BBC)

WEEK FIVE: Racial apartheid and its legacies

To conclude the course, we will consider a range of contemporary issues at the intersection of race, sports and social change, including a day of student-led discussions.

Monday, June 22


Wednesday, June 24

For the last class, each student will select a reading to discuss in class that relates to course themes. We will afford approximately 20 minutes to discuss each article and its relation to the course. Articles should be emailed to Professor HoSang one week in advance. Articles should be between roughly 800 and 2000 words.