SPORTS AND MEDIA

Film S188 Summer Session B (June 29 through July 31)
Monday/Wednesday: 6:00 - 10:30 pm.
Class meeting are on line using Zoom and other platforms.
Note: the actual seminar will meet from 6 to 8:20. 8:30 to 10:30 is a screening slot but there will be multiple options for screenings.

Professor. Charles Musser Office Hours: by appointment
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This course develops critical thinking about sport in contemporary media culture. The social aspect of playing, watching, and talking about sports has always involved media; media likewise inflect the meaning of athletic events. “Media” here designates cinema, television, radio, print, and social media. We will analyze the ways mass media sport can shape identity: gender, race, class, age, geography, and ideology. Some attention will also be paid to amateur media and alternative sports, especially digital sharing and handheld technology. The background for considering these social phenomena is a general understanding of the commercial and civic nature of major sports. Our scope will extend from the U.S. toward the globe, observing how international networks (Olympics, World Cup) act in specific national cultures. Classroom meetings 6:00 - 8:15pm, screenings 8:30-10:30pm. After the first session students may screen the films on their own time. Principal readings are articles drawn from recent scholarship on Sport and Media, and criticism of films - all available on classes*v2 or as online books. Historically significant and contemporary films will introduce the history of sport in media culture, such as Rocky, Paper Lion, The Armstrong Lie, Invictus, Venus and Serena, and Chariots of Fire. Classroom activities will include mini-lectures, discussion, group analysis of texts, and brief student presentations.

Assessment
1) Written Responses for each class, Participation (talking and listening),
2) Each student will give a brief presentation (7 mins) about a non-mainstream sport (one not otherwise covered in the course).
3) Write a 4-to-5-page analysis, comparing some aspect two films shown in class. That is, write an interpretation of the films that is sensitive to the way style shapes and creates meaning.
4) A final paper of 8 to 12 pages. This can deal with any aspect sports and media but should build on the work done in class. It is assumed that this paper will involve some additional reading, screening and research and you will discuss your proposed paper with the instructor.

Readings and Viewings
All readings are either in pdf for on Canvas or there is a link to the appropriate
webpage. As many films will be available on Kanopy, through the Yale Library or online. In a few cases students may have to rent the film on Amazon or the like.

Policies
http://yalecollege.yale.edu/content/general-conduct-and-discipline
Contact college dean (or equivalent authority) and myself regarding any abnormalities or issues. Academic Honesty: Be honest, especially when in difficulty. Models of essay writing will be presented and followed by class discussion to address issues of academic honesty. It is important to stress individual contribution and acknowledging scholarly credit. Special needs - please contact me (in advance, if applicable)

Syllabus

Week 1. Introduction: Media and Culture

June 29. Sports & Nostalgia
Screen in advance: Eight Men Out (John Sayles, 1988) before class.
Clips screened in class: Team Spirit (Errol Morris, 2012)
   The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings (John Badham, 1976)
   Chris Rock’s Take on Blacks in Baseball Real Sports (HBO)
   A League of Their Own (Penny Marshall, 1992)
   Angels in the Outfield (William Dear, 1994)

This class meeting offers an introduction to the concerns of the course. We will also discuss Eight Men Out as we explore the relationship between “our national pastime” and the media, particularly the daily newspapers, in the first decades of the 20th century. What is the role of sports in society and what do sports—and sports tell us about society—about race, class and gender are constructed—about national identity, fairplay and honesty. In the United States, baseball has long been considered the “national sport”—though plenty of people think it is slowly dying or at least in trouble. Eight Men Out enables us to explore the relationship between

July 1: The Early History of Sport and Media: Boxing
Screen in advance: Rocky (1976) with Sylvester Stallone.
Readings:
-Charles Musser, “Full Length Programs” Fights, Passion Plays,” The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907 (New York: Scribners, 1990),
193-208.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rocky

**Students will read one of the following and present/defend it in class as if you were the author:**

**Clips:**  
Corbett-Courtney Fight (1894)  
Boxing Cats (1894)  
The Killers (1946)  
Rocky II (1979)

The relationship between sports and theatrical entertainment was always fundamental. Top boxers made most of their money sparring on the stage—or appearing in skits or plays. Motion pictures—the production of boxing films—put boxing on a new commercial basis and made it a big business. Of course, television eventually took over. The changing dynamics involving boxing, movies and race are key to understanding American culture and society.

**Week 2. Race, Sport & Documentary**

**July 6: Muhammad Ali**

**Screen in advance:**  *When We Were Kings* (Leon Gast, 2002)

**Readings:**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/When_We_Were_Kings

**Clips:** from *The Trials of Muhammad Ali* (Bill Siegel, 2014)  
and selections from various televised heavyweight championship fights

Muhammad Ali

**July 8: Ethnography, Post-colonialism and Cricket**

**Screening in advance:** *Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism* (Leach, 1976)
- *Fire in Babylon* (Stephan Riley, 2010)

**Readings:**


**Clips:** various

### Week 3: World-wide Sports: The Olympics and Bicycling Racing

**July 13:** Cycling and the Myth of the Pure American  
**Screening in advance:** *Breaking Away* (Peter Yates, 1979)  
*-The Armstrong Lie* (Gibney, 2013)

**Readings:**  
**Clips** --Nike commercials with Lance Armstrong (YouTube) and *Road to Paris* (2001)

**July 15:** Olympics and Nationalism  
**Screening in advance:** *Chariots of Fire* (UK 1981)  

**Clips:** *Olympiad* (Riefenstahl, 1936)  
*Personal Best* (Towne, 1982)  
*Munich* (Spielberg, 2005)

**mid-term paper due**

### Week 4: Football

**July 20:** American Football: We’re No 1  
**Screenings:** *Paper Lion* (1968)

**Readings:**  
-Don Sabo and Sue Curry Jansen, “Prometheus Unbound: Constructions of
**Clips:** Plimpton! Starring George Plimpton as Himself (2012) 
Hearts and Minds (1974)
Everybody’s All American (1988)

**July 22: Rugby: Myth and Allegory**
**Screening in advance:** Invictus (USA/South Africa, 2009)

**Readings:**
**Clips:** Bend It Like Beckham (UK 2002)

**Week 5: Race and Gender**

**July 27: Race, Aspiration and Basketball**
**Screening in advance:** Hoosiers (David Anspaugh, 1986) 
Hoop Dreams (Steven James, 1994)

**Clips**

**July 29: Women and Sport**
**Screening:** Legacy (Kristi Wagner, 2015) 
Venus and Serena (Maiken Baird and Michelle Major, 2013)

clips:

final paper