

SPORTS AND MEDIA

Film S188 Summer Session B (July 1 - August 2)

Monday/Wednesday: 6:00 - 10:30 pm.

Class meetings are online 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 in practice you will be screening on your own time).

Professor. Charles Musser Office Hours: by appointment

email: charles.musser@yale.edu

Teaching Assistant. Threeserana Serana Office Hours: by appointment

Email: threeserana@yale.edu

This course develops critical thinking about sports 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 and sports have shaped identity: gender, race, class, age, geography, and ideology. The background for considering these social phenomena is a general understanding of the commercial and civic nature of major sports, although some attention will also be paid to amateur media and alternative 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 6:00-8:20 pm, Film screenings are on your own time. Principal readings are articles drawn from recent scholarship on Sports 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 sports in media culture, from the *Croft-Courtney Fight* (1894) to *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)—not the first class, however.
- 2) Each student will give a brief presentation (5-7 mins) about a non-mainstream sport (one not otherwise covered in the course).
- 3) Write a 4-to-6-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 form on Canvas or there is a link to the appropriate webpage.

As many films will be available through Course Reserves, through the Yale Library or online. In some 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

July 1. Sports & Nostalgia

Screen in advance: *Eight Men Out* (John Sayles, 1988) before class.

Readings:

-Joan Chandler, "Baseball," in *Television and National Sport* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), pp 24-46 (esp 34-46).

-Diana Goetsch, "Baseball's Loss of Innocence" *The American Scholar* (Spring 2011) <https://theamericanscholar.org/baseballs-loss-of-innocence/>

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)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFFQkQ6Va3A&t=11s>

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 discuss the role of sports in society and what sports tell us about society—about the ways in which race, class and gender and national identity are constructed through sports. We will also consider notions of 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. With Sayles's *Eight Men Out*, we explore the relationship between "our national pastime" and the media, particularly the daily newspapers, in the first decades of the 20th century. Of course, this films and other films about sports are themselves important media manifestations.

July 3: [SEP] The Early History of Sports and Media: Boxing

Screen in advance: *Rocky* (John G. Avildsen, 1976) with Sylvester Stallone.

Musser: short presentation on a marginal sport (Curling)

Readings:

- David Rowe, *Sport, Culture and the Media* 2nd edition (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2004), 1-36.
- 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 what it has to say about *Rocky* in class as if you were the author—four groups, each with a team leader:

- Matt Jacobson, *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post-Civil Rights America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 97-108.
- Leger Grindon, *Knockout: The Boxer and Boxing in American Cinema* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2011), pp 215-225.
- Victoria A. Elmood, "Just Some Bum from the Neighborhood," in Ron Briley et al., *All Stars & Movie Stars* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2008), pp. 172-198.
- Clay Motley, "Fighting for Manhood: Rocky and Turn of the Century Antimodernism," in Briley et al., *All Stars & Movie Stars*, pp. 199-214.

Clips: *Corbett-Courtney Fight* (1894)

Boxing Cats (1894)

Bob Fitzsimmons vs James J. Corbett –excerpt (1897)

Jack Johnson vs Tommy Burns (December 26, 1908)

Jack Johnson Vs. James J Jeffries (July 4th, 1910)

Muhammad Ali vs Chuck Wepner Round 15 (final round) 1975

The Killers (1946)

Rocky II (1979)

The relationship between sports and the media was always fundamental. In the 19th century 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. *Rocky* won an Academy Award and was a box office hit. It has been a controversial film in terms of its art and its politics from the beginning. How are media used and presented in this film?

Week 2. Race, Sport & Documentary

July 8: Muhammad Ali**Screen in advance:** *When We Were Kings* (Leon Gast, 1996)**Readings:**

- Joshua Malitsky, "Knowing Sports: The Logic of Contemporary Sports Documentaries," *Journal of Sport History*, 41:2 (Summer 2014), 205-214.
- Amir Saeed, "What's in a Name? Muhammad Ali and the Politics of Cultural Identity." *Sport, Media, Culture: Global and Local Dimensions*. Eds. A. Bernstein and N. Blain. UK: Frank Cass 2003: 51-72.
- David Remnick, *King of the World: Muhammad Ali and the Rise of an American Hero* (New York: Random House, 1998), 126-159, 173-204.

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:
- George Foreman vs Muhammad Ali* (Oct. 30, 1974)
- Laila Ali vs Jacqui Frazier* (June 8, 2001)

As a witty, dynamic and immensely talented Black Muslim heavyweight boxer in the Vietnam War Era, Muhammad Ali became a focal point for racial, social and political controversy. From Civil Rights to Black Power and Black cultural nationalism, boxing became much more than a blood sport. What does *When We Were Kings* and our readings tell us about this era? And about the media?

We are thinking a lot about race and masculinity but what about 21st century efforts to bring women into the sport?

July 10: Ethnography, Post-colonialism and Cricket**Screening in advance:** *Trobriand Cricket: An Ingenious Response to Colonialism* (Leach, 1976)

- Fire in Babylon* (Stephan Riley, 2010)

Readings:

- George Orwell, "The Sporting Spirit," *Tribune* (magazine), 14 December 1945,
- Marjoribanks and Farquharson, "Sport, Race and Racism." *Sport and Society in the Global Age*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan 2012: 43-59.
- Sally Ann Ness, "Understanding Cultural Performance: 'Trobriand Cricket'" *TDR* (1988) Vol. 32, No. 4 (Winter, 1988), pp. 135-147
- Jerry Leach, "Structure and Message in Trobriand Cricket," Jack R. Rollwagen, ed., *Anthropological Filmmaking* (Reading, UK: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1988), 237-251.
- ** -C.L.R. James, "The Light and the Dark," *Beyond a Boundary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 49-65. (optional)

Clips: *various*

Cricket—a sport that Great Britain successfully exported to many of its colonies—is seen as an alternative to American baseball. We explore the ways colonialism, race and culture shaped the sport in the Trobriand Islands, New Guinea, and the West Indies—and vice versa. Always useful to compare and contrast the two films and the two different responses to the colonizers' game.

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

July 15: Cycling and the Myth of the Pure American

Screening in advance: *Breaking Away* (Peter Yates, 1979)

-*The Armstrong Lie* (Glbney, 2013)

Readings:

-Christopher Thompson, *The Tour de France: A Cultural History* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2008), selections

-Bryan Denham and Andrea Duke, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the Rogue Warrior: Lance Armstrong as (Symbolic) American," in Andrew C. Billings and Heather L. Hundley, *Examining Identity in Sports Media* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2010),

Clips --Nike commercials with Lance Armstrong (YouTube)

Road to Paris (2001) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRYEz8KqYZE&t=903s>

Lance Armstrong was eight when *Breaking Away* went into theater.

July 17: Olympics and Nationalism

Screening in advance: *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981)

Readings: Joseph Maguire, "Global Sport, Identity Politics and Patriot Games." *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations* (UK: Polity 1999), 176-206.

-Martha Solomon, "Villainless quest: Myth, metaphor, and dream in *Chariots of Fire*." *Communication Quarterly* 31.4 (1983): 274 -281.

-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chariots_of_Fire

Clips: *Olympiad* (Riefenstahl, 1936)

Personal Best (Towne, 1982)

Munich (Spielberg, 2005)

mid-term paper due

Week 4: Football

July 22: Women's Soccer: Gender and Sports

Readings: -: -Michael Messner "Center of Attention: The Gender of Sports Media." *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports* (Minnesota UP 2002), 91-134.

-Jeff Bradley, "Shot of Redemption," *The 10 Most Significant Goals In U.S. Soccer History: Brandi Chastain*, <https://www.si.com/longform/soccer-goals/goal6.html> (Links to an external site.)

Barry, Glendenning, Women's World Cup game-changing moments No 4: Brandi Chastain in 1999," *The Guardian*, 20 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2019/jun/20/womens-world-cup-game-changing-moments-no4-brandi-chastain-1999> (Links to an external site.)

Cecilia Caruso, "The Nike sports bra that has changed the history of football and fashion: The one worn by Brandi Chastain during an iconic goal celebration," 5

July 2019, <https://www.nssgclub.com/en/fashion/19068/brandi-chastain-nike-top-womens-football>

Screenings: *Dare to Dream: The Story of the U.S. Women's Soccer Team (2005)* – on YouTube and Media Library

Bend It Like Beckham (Gurinder Chadha, 2002)-on HBO Max (you all get it as Yale students)

July 24: Rugby: Myth and Allegory

Screening in advance: *Invictus* (Clint Eastwood, 2009)

Readings:

Chandler 1988 "Televised Sport in Context." *Television and National Sport: The United States and Britain* (Illinois UP 1988), 175-187.

-Rowe, "Screening the action: the moving sports image." *Sport, Culture, and The Media*. 171-202. <http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/8020626>

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

Week 5: Race and Gender

July 29: Race, Aspiration and Basketball

Screening in advance: *Hoosiers* (David Anspaugh, 1986)

Hoop Dreams (Steven James, 1994)

Readings: Timothy Marjoribanks and Farquharson, "Sport, Race and Racism," in *Sport and Society in the Global Age* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan 2012), 43-59.

-Ron Briley, "Basketball's Great White Hope and Ronald Reagan's America: *Hoosiers* (1986)" *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 35.1 (2005): 12-19.

-Brant Short and Dayle Hardy Short, "Redemption by Grace: A Rhetorical Analysis of *Hoosiers*." *Journal of Religion and Popular Culture* 14 (2006): 99-118.

Clips

July 31: Women and Sports

Screening: *Legacy* (Kristi Wagner, 2015)

Venus and Serena (Maiken Baird and Michelle Major, 2013)

Readings: Timothy Marjoribanks and Karen Farquharson, "Sport, Gender and Sexuality" in *Sport and Society in the Global Age* (UK: Palgrave Macmillan 2012: 60-75).

-Michael Messner "Center of Attention: The Gender of Sports Media." *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports* (Minnesota UP 2002), 91-134.

"Directors Maiken Baird, Michelle Major talk Venus and Serena doc,"

Blackfilm.com (<http://www.blackfilm.com/read/2013/05/directors-maiken-baird-michelle-major-talk-venus-and-serena-doc/>)

<http://hdl.handle.net/10079/bibid/11649427>

clips:

final paper

askpoorvucenter@yale.edu

