



**MERCER**  
COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## COURSE OUTLINE

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
HIS 122	American Sports History	3
Hours: Lecture/Lab/Other	Co- or Pre-requisite	Implementation Semester & Year
3	None	Fall 2022

### Catalog description:

Examines the place sports hold in American life since the mid-nineteenth century. Focuses on sports as a reflection of our social, political, and economic make-up and its ability to effect and shape our institutions. Particular attention will be given to social class, race and ethnicity, gender, community, technology, and commercialization and the media.

General Education Category:  
Not GenEd

Course coordinator:  
Dr. Craig R. Coenen, x3533, coenenc@mccc.edu

### Required texts & Other materials:

Rader, Benjamin, *American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to Televised Sports* Fourth Edition (Prentice-Hall, 1999).

Riess, Steven A., ed. *Major Problems in American Sport History* (Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

### **In addition, the instructor will assign at least one of the follow titles:**

Carroll, John M. *Fritz Pollard: Pioneer in Racial Advancement* (University of Illinois Press, 1992).

Cayleff, Susan A., *Babe: The Life and Times of Babe Didrikson Zaharias* (University of Illinois Press, 1995).

Chalberg, John C. *Rickey and Robinson: The Integration of America's Game* (Harlan Davidson, 2000).

Gorn, Elliott, ed. *Muhammad Ali: The People's Champ* (University of Illinois Press, 1995).

Kuklick, Bruce. *To Every Thing a Season: Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1970* (Princeton University Press, 1991).

Levine, Peter. *Ellis Island to Ebbets Field: Sport and the American Jewish Experience* (Oxford University Press, 1992).

Oriard, Michael, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (University of North Carolina Press, 1993).

Prince, Carl E., *Brooklyn's Dodgers: The Bums, the Borough, and the Best of Baseball* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

Riess, Steven A. *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports* (University of Illinois Press, 1989).

Ross, Charles K. *Outside the Lines: African Americans and the Integration of the National Football League* (New York University Press, 1999).

Tygiel, Jules. *Past Time: Baseball as History* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

White, Sol, *History of Colored Base Ball and Documents on the Early Black Game, 1886-1936* (University of Nebraska Press, 1995).

### **Course Student Learning Outcomes (SLO):**

- [
- Upon successful completion of this course the student will be able to:***
1. to read primary and secondary historical sources critically, with an understanding of their validity, perspective bias, audience, and context. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
  2. to use information technologies in acquiring new knowledge and perspective. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
  3. to construct an historical essay that presents a clear thesis, a persuasive argument, and well-researched supporting data. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
  4. to identify major personalities of American Sports History. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
  5. to describe major movements, trends, and developments of American Sports History. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
  6. to discuss with authority, either in writing or verbally, the historical forces (e.g., religion, economics, politics, social stratification, gender, individual actors, technology, nature, intellectual and aesthetic thought, etc.) behind the major movements, trends, and developments of American Sports History. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)
  7. to analyze other time periods and cultures with little or no ethnocentrism, thus displaying a sense of informed perspective and a deeper appreciation of the common threads of human nature. (ILG 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11)

### **Course-specific Institutional Learning Goals (ILG):**

**Institutional Learning Goal 1. Written and Oral Communication in English.** Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Institutional Learning Goal 5. Social Science.** Students will use social science theories and concepts to analyze human behavior and social and political institutions and to act as responsible citizens.

**Institutional Learning Goal 6. Humanities.** Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**Institutional Learning Goal 7. History.** Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**Institutional Learning Goal 8. Diversity and Global Perspective:** Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples

**Institutional Learning Goal 9. Ethical Reasoning and Action.** Students will understand ethical frameworks, issues, and situations.

**Institutional Learning Goal 10. Information Literacy:** Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Institutional Learning Goal 11. Critical Thinking:** Students will use critical thinking skills understand, analyze, or apply information or solve problems.

## **Units of study in detail – Unit Student Learning Outcomes:**

The units of study listed below do not correspond to chapters in a textbook. Rather, the broad units, and the student learning outcomes associated with each unit, are universal for Mercer’s United States history survey courses.

### **Unit I: The Origins of Modern American Sports, 1800-1920 (SLO 1-7)**

#### **1. Pre-Modern and Modern American Sports**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Define pre-modern and modern sport.
- Compare and contrast pre-modern and modern sports in America
- Explain why pre-modern sports were so disorganized and often brutal.
- Analyze the socio-economic and technological factors that arose in the nineteenth century that gave rise to modern sports.
- Assess the concurrent operation of sports such as harness racing, boxing, rat pits, and marathoning as examples of how and why pre-modern and modern sports co-existed into the early twentieth century.

#### **2. Social Class and Sports in Nineteenth Century America**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Compare and contrast the meaning of sport in the lives of working-, middle-, and upper-class Americans in the late nineteenth century.
- Evaluate ways in which capitalism and technology furthered class divisions in America and in sport.
- Describe modes of social control exhibited through sport onto working-class Americans.
- State the instrumental role that a class-paranoid American middle-class played in furthering the development of organized sport.
- Identify such trends as the bicycling fad, the country club explosion, and the park movement as examples of contrived community and increasing social segregation.

#### **3. The Commercialization and Professionalization of American Sports, 1840-1920**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Explain how and why the first semi-professional and professional sports started in the mid-nineteenth century.
- Trace the early origins and development of baseball in America.
- Describe the social, economic, and cultural reasons that baseball emerges as the national game by the end of the nineteenth century.
- Evaluate the relationship between and among athletes, team management, individual spectators, and communities in early professional sports.

- Tie changes in technology and the American economy to the commercialization of sport through the creation of mail-order catalogues, department stores, sporting-goods companies, the mass media, and mass advertising.

#### **4. The Amateur Ideal to 1920: Class, Masculinity, and American Ingenuity**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Describe the socio-economic origins and meaning of the Amateur Ideal in America.
- Analyze the Amateur Ideal for its unique appeal to the middle class.
- Compare and contrast the Amateur Ideal as theory and its application in collegiate and Olympic sport.
- Assess the growing concerns over the loss of masculinity in the late nineteenth century and how this impacts the growth of certain more violent sports.
- Examine how and why ingenuity in sport was a unique American trait.

#### **5. Women: Spectators and Participants in American Sport, 1840-1920**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Describe the class differences for women participation in sports in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Explain the gender stereotypes that pervaded American society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
- Evaluate how women both lived up to those stereotypes and struggled to break those barriers through sport.
- Analyze women writers (when addressing sport) in the late nineteenth century as examples of early feminism.
- Address why women spectators were as significant to breaking gender stereotypes and women participation in sport.
- Assess the role of the country club in promoting women's competitive sport.
- Identify major women athletes and women's sports that gave women a place, albeit a small one, in the growing pantheon of American sport.

#### **6. Race and Ethnicity in American Sport, 1840-1920**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Describe the types of sports immigrants brought with them and how they shaped America.
- Assess the different role sports played and meaning of games between first- and second-generation Americans.
- Explain why racial minorities and immigrants found opportunities to play sports limited by discrimination.
- Analyze the pros and cons of cultural assimilation through sport and how this enabled some immigrants to become "Americans" much faster than others.
- Examine the gentlemen's agreement, Oorang Indians of the NFL, and Jack Johnson as examples of the limitations to assimilation and continuing discrimination in sport and society.

### **Unit II: The Golden Age of American Sports, 1920-1960 (SLO 1-7)**

#### **7. The Age of Heroes: Homogenizing America**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Assess the absence of the frontier and World War I as reasons why Americans started looking to sports for their heroes during the 1920s.
- Evaluate the impact that the Age of heroes had on homogenizing America.
- Describe how technological changes furthered heroes.
- Explain some of the problems and difficult adjustments that faced communities in the face of national sports and national heroes.
- Discuss the economic impact of heroes in consumer culture.

## **8. The New Woman and Old Stereotypes, Gender and Sport to 1960**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Describe the meaning of the New Woman in society and sport.
- Identify the first women athletes as national heroes and understand their limitations as compared to white men.
- Assess the role of collegiate athletics in both furthering gender stereotypes and breaking new ground for women.
- Compare and contrast the origins and development of women's professional teams and leagues (LPGA and the All-American Girls' Professional Softball (later Baseball) League).

## **9. Assimilation and Breaking Barriers: Ethnicity and Race in American Sport to 1960**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Discuss the development and meaning of separate ethnic and racial teams and leagues such as the Negro Leagues, Harlem Globetrotters, and the House of David baseball team.
- Assess the ways in which integration of sports and ways were a slow and difficult process by examining the cases of the Joe Louis and Jesse Owens.
- Identify collegiate and professional players such as Benny Friedman, Andy Cohen, Hank Greenberg, and Tony Lazzeri and assess their role as athlete, role model to assimilation, and gate puller.
- Analyze the pros and cons of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in baseball in 1947.
- Evaluate the speed, depth, and impact of integration in American sports at the professional and collegiate level in the 1950s.
- Discuss racism and ethnic discrimination in sport and the contradictions of Cold War American ideals of democracy, equality, and opportunity.

## **10. Community and Sport**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Compare and contrast the place that sport holds within communities and how it changed over the twentieth century.
- Discuss the social and economic impact of having a professional franchise in a community.
- Explain what is meant by contrived community and assess whether or not modern sports are contrived or expressions of true community.
- Compare and contrast the impact of minor and major league franchises to a host community.

## **11. Early Television and American Sport**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Discuss how radio and television changed the economic possibilities of American sport.
- Describe the changes to sport in America brought on by television revenue.
- Analyze new technologies in enhancing broadcasts of sports on television.

- Explain why television has helped some sports attain national prominence while doing little or nothing (even hurting some) others
- Explain the impact of television on local prep, collegiate, and semi-professional teams and leagues.
- Identify pseudo-sports (wrestling, roller derby) and the way they capitalize on the American sporting dollar through television.
- Explain the positive and negative effects of televised sport on community.

### **Unit III: Contemporary Sport and Society, 1960-present (SLO 1-7)**

#### **12. The New Athlete: New Ideas and Problems in Sport**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Discuss how and why steroids and other performance-enhancing drugs have become so prevalent in contemporary sport.
- Discuss the pros and cons of labor unions in sports.
- Assess the promotion of sport through players and teams, why mass marketing of athletes has taken off so much in the past few decades.
- Compare and contrast athletes in the pre-television era with those of the last few decades in terms of on and off-field behavior and national expectations and perceptions.

#### **13. Gender Equity? Women and Sport since 1960**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Assess the role of individual athletes such as Billie Jean King and their impact on gender equity in professional and amateur sport.
- Explain women's collegiate and prep sport before Title IX.
- Evaluate Title IX's original intent, enforcement, and degree of success.
- Describe how and why women are increasingly used as sex objects in sport and how this affects their legitimacy in sport.
- Discuss the stereotype of the lesbian female athlete and the way it continues to hurt women's sport.
- Analyze the problems that women's professional sport faces today and compare and contrast that with the origins of early men's professional sports.

#### **14. Race, Class, and Sport Since 1960: The American Dream or Nightmare?**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Examine the history of the black quarterback and lingering racism within integrated sport.
- Discuss Black Power, the 1968 Olympics, and popular attitudes toward the modern black athlete.
- Analyze how and why Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan have transcended the stigma of race while other black superstars have not been accepted by the media and consumers.
- Identify Muhammad Ali and his place as role model and mirror of the new Black athlete in the 1960s.
- Assess how collegiate sports have offered racial minorities many new opportunities but they come with a terrifically high price.
- Evaluate the pros and cons of the shoe companies and basketball camps.

#### **15. Sports and their Meaning to Contemporary America: From Soccer Moms to Super Sunday**

Learning Objectives: *The student will be able to*

- Describe the cultural, economic, and social significance of major sporting events.

- Explain the reasons behind a growing animosity in regard to professional sports and the increasing trend to celebrate minor-league and alternative (X Games) sports.
- Analyze sport and recreation's place in the daily life of all American, from soccer moms to armchair quarterbacks.
- Assess baseball's role in America, the national pastime or national has been.
- Evaluate the impact of gambling and crime on sport.
- Discuss the failures, successes, and promise of sport in modern America.

### **Evaluation of student learning:**

**Examinations and Required Work.** Describe general guidelines for course work, assignments, tests. Explain how assignments (quizzes, tests, essays, projects, portfolios, practicums, etc.) are designed to evaluate the course objectives.

Instructors have some discretion in determining the format and content of required work. However, written and verbal assignments in any history course should be designed to help students develop the General Education skills (historical perspective, critical thinking, information literacy, writing, and public speaking) listed above. Instructors should emphasize these goals in their assignments and should state them in their written and verbal instructions to the students.

History courses must, therefore, utilize essay examinations, written reports and oral presentations as standard methods of assessing student learning. Below are the parameters within which instructors may operate:

#### **Reading Assignments**

- ♦ Textbook as well as primary documents should be clearly assigned to the students

#### **Exams & Quizzes**

- ♦ At least two (2), one-hour exams
- ♦ A Final Exam
- ♦ Exams must include an essay component.

**Writing Assignments** (to assess discipline specific knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills). Students are expected to develop the ability to construct narratives—written or verbal or both—that clearly present their own thesis based on solid evidence that has been thoroughly and critically evaluated. Students are directed in developing competencies in accumulating evidence from a variety of sources, assessing the validity of the evidence, and extracting substantive generalizations from what they have discovered (Information Literacy).

- ♦ At least two (2), but preferably three (3), writing assignments
- ♦ At least one (1) essay should concentrate on the primary documents
- ♦ At least one (1) one assignment should incorporate library or internet research or both; this assignment may be a term paper or group presentation or some other type of project
- ♦ Length of the essays may be determined by the instructor; short (e.g., two-page) essays are acceptable

Course content related assessments should comprise at least 50% of graded assignments.