

WHY SPORTS MATTER?

University of Florida

IDS2935

African American Studies

FALL 2022

Tue, Periods 5-6 (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM) Room: CSE E221

Thu, Period 6 (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM) Room: CSE E220

Instructor: [Drew D. Brown, Ph.D.](#)

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Office: 1012 Turlington Hall

Office hours: Tuesday 2-3pm

Primary General Education Designation: Humanities

Secondary General Education Designation (if seeking): Diversity (D)

Writing Designation (if seeking): Writing Designation (WR) 2000 words

Course Description:

Sports continue to hold a significant place in society. The structure and grandeur of sports in the U.S. systemically impact the construction of African Americans identity. For people, sports are a way of life, a spaceship out of the pitfalls of poverty, a platform for cultural heroes, and/or a display of national exceptionalism. For others, it is a neo-colonial institution that perpetuates self-destruction. In this course, we examine the significance of sports in society. Additionally, we will use the context of sport to explore many salient issues in American society such as racism, blind patriotism, capitalism, sexism, violence, oppression, etc. This will allow students to see both the pervasiveness of social issues that exist in and out of sports as well as the way people have used sports to fight against them.

In this course, students will analyze the experience and impact of sports (particularly in the U.S.) in relation to their historical, cultural, social, economic, and political dynamics. They will also identify, analyze, discuss and critique theories related to sports and society. Students will develop critical thinking and analytical skills by comparing the experiences of different groups.

Course Goals:

In this course, student will learn the role that sports have played in U.S. history while enhancing the following:

- Critical thinking skills
- Information literacy
- Ability to examine historical events through a variety of interdisciplinary disciplines
- Understanding of historical and contemporary issues in context

- Engagement, both locally and globally, in the issues of our day

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to answer the following questions:

- What did sports say about race in the early 1900s, and why couldn't Blacks compete against whites?
- What does sports teach us about integration in the US?
- What racial stereotypes do sports reinforce?
- How does sports impact patriotism?
- Why is sports an important place for culture?
- What was the impact of sports on US culture?
- Why sports are a platform for social activism, justice, and change?
- What gender stereotypes do sports reinforce?

On the first quiz, you will be asked, "what is the 'keyword' according to the syllabus." The answer is "**think**".

Required Texts:

Rhoden, William C., *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete*. Broadway Books, 2010.

Brown, Drew D., *Sports in African American Life: Essays on History and Culture*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2020.

Films:

Journey of African American Athletes

1968 Olympic Power Solute

Unforgivable Blackness

Any Given Sunday

Supplemental readings for the semester will be provided via Canvas along with any other pertinent course information (syllabus, guidelines for assignments, etc.) Students are responsible for printing out all assigned readings unless otherwise noted or instructed. *All students enrolled in this class have been automatically enrolled in Canvas. Please make sure to check Canvas and your UF email accounts regularly for any announcements, information or changes that may be made to the class schedule.*

Communication:

There may be additional readings/commentaries/news stories sent via email or posted on Canvas. Each student must have a UF e-mail account in order to receive e-mail announcements sent via Canvas. You are responsible for logging on to Canvas and reading the announcements and obtaining assigned material.

Email: Please use your University of Florida email account for all correspondence in this course. It is appropriate to start all email correspondence with a salutation (Professor _____: Dear Dr. _____, Hi Professor _____, etc.) and end with your name (Sincerely, _____).

My goal is to answer all emails in a timely manner. However, students can anticipate a delay after business hours.

Class Schedule:
(Tentative and subject to change)

The Meaning of Race and Sport

Week 1: The meaning of “Sport”
What is sport, athlete, leisure, play, and recreation?

Week 2: Why sports matter?
Why do people play sports?

Early Significance of U.S. Sports

Week 3: History of sports in America
Pre- and post-war times

Segregation and Integration

Week 4: Jockey Syndrome, Jack Johnson vs. Joe Louis, Wilma Rudolph

Week 5: Negro Leagues and Jackie Robinson
The integration of football

Week 6: Integration of NCAA Integration of College Football
Civil Rights Era in Sports

Sports and Nationalism

Week 7: Patriotism and Nationalism

Social/Cultural Politics in Sports

Week 8: Tommie Smith, John Carlos, & the 1968 Olympics
Watch 1986 Documentary

Week 9: Muhammad Ali, Colin Kaepernick, and the Dilemma of Patriotism

Sports communication and marketing

Week 10: Journalism and (new) media
Black Aesthetics in Sports

Week 11: Jordan vs. Serena: The Model for Commodifying Athletes
Style: “Blackness” of Athletes and Dress Code

Stereotypes of Intelligence and Leadership

Week 12: The Black Brut: Intelligence vs. athleticism
Stacking
Black in positions of power: Quarterbacks, Coaches and Owners

Gender and Sexuality

Week 13: Gender stereotypes/Black Men/Masculinity: The making of men
Women's rights, Title IX, and Equal Pay, de-feminizing of Black women

Week 14: Gender identity and sexuality: Caster Semenya, WNBA culture, trans athletes

The Future of Sports

Week 15: Should College Athletes be paid?
Delusions of Grandeur

Ground Rules:

1. Everyone is required to do their own work individually unless stated otherwise.
2. Papers are to be submitted electronically. NO late work will be accepted.
3. Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a '0' for the assignment.
4. Some of the material in this course uses slang, profanity, and what some might consider derogatory racial and sexual terminology. If you find such language offensive, please let me know.

Assignments:

No late assignments will be accepted without a legitimate excuse (unexpected, life-threatening illness or family emergency which will require a conversation and **sufficient evidence** that will be determined by the professor). The semester grade for assignments will be the percentage of total assignment points earned (out of the total points possible).

Readings:

All readings will be listed on Canvas. Depending on current events, there may be additional readings/commentaries/news stories sent via email or posted on Canvas. Each student must have a UF e-mail account in order to receive e-mail announcements sent via Canvas. You are responsible for logging on to Canvas and reading the announcements and obtaining assigned material.

Quizzes (20%):

There will be several quizzes given to ensure that the students are doing the assigned readings and watching the assigned lectures. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the course. Because the lowest quiz will be dropped, there will be no make-up for missed quizzes. If I believe that the assigned readings are not being/have not been done, I will give pop quizzes. The point value will be determined once the decision is made to give a quiz.

Writing Assignment: Literature Review on the significance of sports Commercials (10%):

Sports commercials contain many visual and audio messages, both explicitly and discreetly. You will find existing literature that outlines the racial stereotypes and trends that exist on Black athlete in sports commercials and write a paper summarizing the findings. More information will be provided in the writing prompt that will be distributed later in the semester.

Video Assignment: Racial Analysis of Sports Commercial (20%):

Sports commercials are made up of the story being told by companies, athletes, and teams. You are to choose a major sports commercial that has aired over the last 2 years, one that includes a major athlete. You are to write and orally deliver a brief (3-4 min) analysis that critically assesses the ways in which different races are represented through these sports commercials. You will need to show whether the commercial is consistent to inconsistent with the claims of the literature you reviewed. Presentations will be graded on completing the assignment, organization of presentation, clarity and depth of analysis, and use of literature review. More information will be provided in the writing prompt that will be distributed later in the semester.

Test 1 and Test 2 (25% each):

The Test 1 and Test 2 examinations will cover selected information and consist of fill-in-the-blank, short answer and multiple-choice questions. Students should be prepared to answer questions on a variety of topics covered over the course of the semester.

Course Grade Consists of the Following Components, Weighted as Follows:

Quizzes	20%
Written Assignments (2)	30%
Test 1	25%
Test 2	25%
Total	100%

A 92 and above	B- 80-81.99	D+ 68-69.99
A- 90-91.99	C+ 78-79.99	D 62-67.99
B+ 88-89.99	C 72-77.99	D- 60-61.99
B 82-87.99	C- 70-71.99	F 59.99 and below

Course Policies:

This is an asynchronous class. Students should expect to put a minimum of 6 hours of work per week doing the following: (Reading texts, summarizing texts, outlining major points, understanding perspectives, researching concepts or historical moments that they are unfamiliar with, outlining texts, articles, and notes.)

No predetermined “grade curve” will be applied to quizzes, exams, essays, oral presentations, or the final grade. Your grade will depend upon your own individual effort and performance. I cannot make you study, I cannot do the work for you, but I will be able to tell easily if you did or did not do your work.

Statement of Principles:

1. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial (or other) matter which has no relation to their subject. The faculty member is responsible, however, for maintaining academic standards in the presentation of course materials.
2. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for the truth.
3. Faculty members in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
4. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the information or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but students are responsible for learning the content of the course of study in which they are enrolled. The validity of academic ideas, theories, arguments, and views should be measured against the relevant academic standards.
5. Students should have protection through orderly grievance procedures against prejudiced or capricious evaluations that are not intellectually relevant to the subject matter under consideration. At the same time, students are responsible for complying with the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

Controversial Subject Matter:

In this class, we will be discussing subject matter that some students may consider controversial. Some students may find some of the films, readings and/or comments in class very challenging. Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter deeply and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to listen to the instructor and to one another respectfully, but of course are free to disagree, respectfully, with views expressed in class or in readings. Your grades will by no means be penalized or rewarded if you agree or disagree with anyone's opinion even mine. However, it will depend on your ability to substantiate and support your claims.

Disability Statement:

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

Students Requiring Accommodations: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

University Honesty Policy:

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code

(<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Writing Studio:

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.