

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

PRLS 601 – History of Leisure and Sport in American Society

DAY/TIME:	Mon. 4:30 – 7:10pm	LOCATION:	Blueridge Hall 127
PROFESSOR:	Dr. David K. Wiggins	EMAIL ADDRESS:	dwiggin1@gmu.edu
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OFFICE HOURS:	Mon 3:00 – 4:00 pm or by appointment	FAX NUMBER:	703.993.2025

PREREQUISITE

Graduate Standing

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Examines the role of leisure and sport in American Society from the early colonial period to the present day. Investigates the pattern of leisure and sport as America moved from a largely agrarian to a highly industrialized nation.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Identify important individuals and the major events and organizations that have impacted and contributed to the evolution of leisure and sport in America.
2. Explain the interconnection between leisure, sport, and other societal institutions such as educational, political, religious, business, and the family.
3. Describe how leisure and sport in America have evolved from more informal, unorganized activities to more highly structured and organized phenomenon.
4. Enhance skills in the methods of historical inquiry
5. Appreciate the value of history and historical methods
6. Strengthen careful reading skills (both written texts and visual images).
7. Improve skills in synthesizing and conveying information through oral and written expression.

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course, through the utilization of both scholarly interpretations and primary documents, examines the history of leisure and sport in America. A decided emphasis will be placed, moreover, on drawing connections between leisure and sport and other important societal institutions in America.

Sport and leisure occupy a fundamental place in American history. Sports and leisure pastimes are rarely “just fun and games”; rather, they are loaded with cultural meanings—sometimes read as serious morality plays, sometimes as patriotic pageants, and other times as mere consumer spectacles. This course is designed to

make students conversant in the history and historiography of American sport and leisure. The lectures, readings, and discussions will give attention to the major narratives and interpretations amongst historians as well as the dominant discourses within American society. As such, the thrust of this course is not that of memorizing anecdotal details and regurgitating the “received wisdom” about America’s sporting and leisurely history; rather, students are expected to integrate the readings, lectures and discussions so as to formulate critical, personal analyses of these aspects of American culture.

We will examine the myriad ways in which American sport and leisure pursuits have shaped American culture from the colonial times to the present. We will explore the relationship between sports and the development of American national identity; the ways in which sport informs ideas of class, gender, race, and ethnicity (as well as the ways by which group identities inform notions of sport and athleticism); the impact of urban, industrial changes and political developments upon American sporting culture at home and abroad; the nature of community and sport in the United States; the place of American sport within global culture; and the pervasiveness of sporting and leisurely nostalgia in contemporary discourses about the American past.

- You are expected to attend all class sections, actively participate in class discussions, complete in-class exercises and fulfill all assignments. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the specified date due or **no credit will be given**.

NATURE OF COURSE DELIVERY

Seminar

REQUIRED TEXTS

- D.K. Wiggins, ed., *Sport in America: From Colonial Leisure to Celebrity Figures and Globalization*, Volume II (Human Kinetics, 2010).
- J. Kasson, *Amusing the Million: Coney Island at the Turn of the Century* (Hill & Wang, 1978).
- A. Markovits and L. Rensmann, *Gaming the World: How Sports Are Reshaping Global Politics and Culture* (Princeton University Press, 2010).
- S. Ware, *Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Exams – 40%

There will be two exams during the semester, each of which account for 20% of a student’s grade. The exams will include a variety of questions (i.e. short answer, multiple choice, and essay) that are designed to evaluate students’ knowledge of key issues/topics in the assigned readings and addressed in the course lectures, discussions, and film clips.

Paper – 30%

The term paper will take up a specific person, event, or moment within the history of American sport and leisure. This paper should demonstrate that the student a) has thought about the significance of the person, event, or moment to the study of culture

and sport, physical activity, physical education, health, or leisure. The paper should be 6-8 pages (or approximately 2000 words not including references).

Participation - 30%

This component consists principally of asking questions, contributing to discussions, and engaging with the course. Valuable class participation does not involve simply talking for the sake of it; rather, one should provide evidence that s/he is keeping up with the readings and is giving the themes serious thought and sustained inquiry. Obviously, one cannot actively participate in a significant way if one fails to do the assigned readings or does not attend class.

Grading Scale

A+ = 97 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C = 70 – 79
A = 93 – 96	B = 83 – 87	F = 0 – 69
A- = 90 – 92	B- = 80 – 82	

Course Expectations:

- *Readings:* Students are expected to read the assigned material prior to the beginning of the lecture to which it is assigned. This is crucial for meaningful and informed class discussion (which will be a very significant component of this course). Please bring assigned readings to class.
- *Discussions:* Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions. This requires that students come prepared to discuss the readings/films and issues or questions they raise in a respectful and intellectual manner. While the articulation of conflicting viewpoints will be welcomed and encouraged, it is important that at all times everyone contribute to creating a classroom environment that promotes civil debate.
- As an aid to discussion students will be asked to prepare a one page, single-spaced synopsis/comment of the week's readings and distribute them to the other students and the professor. These should include a statement of the theme and author's thesis and a brief assessment of how the reading illuminates a course theme(s)? What types of sources did the author use? Can you think of any sources or related issues that the author might have used to improve the article? What key aspect of the American sporting and leisure past did you glean from the particular reading?
- In addition, each student will take her/his turn at leading the week's discussion.

COURSE SCHEDULE

<i>I. Pre-modern Sport and Leisure</i>	
Monday, August 27	Objectives and expectations of the course

Monday, September 10	Lecture: Key themes/issues in “pre-modern” leisure history, II Wiggins, <i>Sport in America</i> , 1-83, 105-22
II. Modern Sport and Leisure	
Monday, September 17	Lecture: Social Orders, Early Spectacles, Muscular Christianity, and Urban Social Reform, 1800-1860 Wiggins, 153-173, Kasson, 1-54
Monday, September 24	Lecture: Making American Sport/Leisure Spaces and Traditions: Baseball, Football and Amusement Parks Wiggins, 175-192, Kasson, 55-112
Monday, October 1	Lecture: The First “Golden Age” of American sport Wiggins, 199-256
Tuesday, October 8 (Columbus Day Monday)	Students report on selection of term paper Read: Markovits, 157-206
Monday, October 15	First Exam Lecture: Female Physicality and the Battle over Women’s Sport and Leisure Read: Wiggins, 257-282, Markovits, 157-206, Ware, 1-214
Monday, October 22	Lecture: Jim Crow Games: The Struggle over African American Sport and Leisure Read: Wiggins, 309-376; Markovits, 1-42, 207-270
Monday, October 29	Lecture: Resistance and Transformation in Late Modernity Read: Wiggins, 381-404
Monday, November 5	Group Presentations on Reputations, Redemption, and Reconstructing Fame

III. Postmodernity	
Monday, November 12	NO CLASS MEETING TODAY----PAPERS DUE

Monday, November 19	Lecture: The Globalization of the Sport and Leisure Industries Read: Markovits, 206-326; Wiggins, 405-438
Monday, November 26	Research Presentations
Monday, December 3	Second Exam

Note: Faculty reserves the right to alter the schedule as necessary.

Student Expectations

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>].
- Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the George Mason University Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform their instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See <http://ods.gmu.edu/>].
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing [See <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/1301gen.html>].
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their George Mason University email account and are required to activate their account and check it regularly. All communication from the university, college, school, and program will be sent to students solely through their Mason email account.
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.
- Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.



Campus Resources

- The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) staff consists of professional counselors and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors who offer a wide range of services (e.g., individual and group counseling, workshops and outreach programs) to enhance students' personal experience and academic performance [See <http://caps.gmu.edu/>].
- The George Mason University Writing Center staff provides a variety of resources and services (e.g., tutoring, workshops, writing guides, handbooks) intended to support students; they work to construct and share knowledge through writing [See <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>].
- For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism, please visit our website [See <http://rht.gmu.edu/>].

CORE VALUES COMMITMENT: The College of Education and Human Development is committed to collaboration, ethical leadership, innovation, research-based practice, and social justice. Students are expected to adhere to these principles.