

**George Mason University  
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism**

**SPMT 321, Section A01 – America Through Baseball  
Three (3) Credits**

Instructor: Richard Hardesty  
Location: Online  
Day/Time: Online  
Email: [rhargest@masonlive.gmu.edu](mailto:rhargest@masonlive.gmu.edu)  
Office Hours: **While I do not have a physical office, I would be happy to Skype with you provided you make an appointment in advance.**

**Course Description:**

Baseball has often been considered America's national pastime, a game that has helped define the history of the country. As Terrance Mann told Ray Kinsella in the film *Field of Dreams*, "The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game: it's a part of our past, Ray. It reminds us of all that once was good and it could be again." Mann's quote highlights the centrality of baseball in America.

This course is an examination of the role of baseball in American culture. The course studies baseball as a cultural and social institution in the United States over the past 150 years. This class will **not** engage in baseball trivia, or enter into debates over the greatest player or team. Instead, this class will focus on how baseball highlighted many of the promises, perils, and paradoxes inherent in American history. Baseball tells the story of American democracy and progress. Yet, it also tells the story of the conflicts that arose, specifically rural against urban, labor against capital, and civil rights against racial segregation and the struggle for racial equality. Studying the history of baseball can help us better understand the history of the United States.

**Course Objectives:**

The student will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the role of baseball in American culture
- Present an understanding of baseball as a cultural institution
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social, political, and legal issues that have affected baseball
- Analyze using a variety of primary sources
- Analyze baseball through film and literature
- Reflect on his or her relationship with baseball

**Structure:**

**This will be an intensive reading, viewing, and writing course. After all, we are compressing a fifteen week class into five weeks.** The class will be broken into five (5) modules. Each module will cover baseball during a specific period, containing readings from the required texts, selected primary and secondary sources, and films for you to view. Furthermore, each module contains notes that will help you identify important people, events, and themes from that period. All the primary and secondary sources will be made available on Blackboard unless specified otherwise.

### **Adding and Dropping the Class:**

The last day you may add or drop the class without a tuition penalty is May 20, 2015. The deadline to drop the class with a fifty percent (50%) tuition penalty is May 22, 2015. Complete tuition liability for dropping the class begins on May 23, 2015.

### **Academic Integrity:**

All assignments are governed by the George Mason University honor code, online at <http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/masons-honor-code/>. You are expected to work independently and to acknowledge all sources, including assigned texts and materials found online.

### **Students with Disabilities:**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at (703) 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>.

### **Email:**

I encourage you to use email as a means of sharing any questions or concerns you may have. To ensure that I receive your message, **please send it from your George Mason address**. Your messages should be grammatically correct with proper spelling. Do not use text messaging abbreviations. Please allow me at least twenty-four (24) hours to reply. **Emails containing additional module information may occur during the course, so it is important for you to regularly check your email.**

### **Campus Resources:**

*Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS):* The George Mason University Counseling and Psychological Services staff consists of professional counseling 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. <http://caps.gmu.edu>.

*Writing Center:* 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 as they work to construct and share knowledge through writing. <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 at <http://rht.gmu.edu>.

### **Required Texts:**

- Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- Rob Ruck, *Raceball: How the Major Leagues Colonized the Black and Latin Game* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011).

### **Required Films:**

- *Baseball* by Ken Burns
- *Eight Men Out*
- *The Natural*
- *A League of Their Own*
- *42*
- *61\**

- *Moneyball*
- *Field of Dreams*

**A Note on Films:** Most of the films can be streamed online from the course Blackboard website. **To do so, you will need to download Microsoft Silverlight.** If you are unable to stream the videos, the films are also available through Netflix, Redbox, Amazon, and on reserve at the George Mason library.

**Course Requirements:**

*Syllabus Quiz:* The syllabus quiz is designed to help you understand the course policies outlined. On the first official day of class, the syllabus quiz will be emailed to you. The quiz will be due by **11:59 p.m. (EST) on May 19.** Your responses should be emailed to me in Microsoft Word or RTF formats only. **You are responsible for notifying me in the event you do not receive the email. Please do so as soon as possible.**

*Argument Essays:* You will be required to write three (3) argument essays during the course of the summer session. Within the course schedule, you will find three (3) open ended questions designed to get you to critically analyze the required readings and films. This is **not** an assignment that asks you to simply paraphrase the materials. Rather, in **three-to-four double-spaced pages**, you must formulate an argument on the question being asked, and then use the assigned readings and videos to support your position. **Please make sure you cite the sources you use.**

**I have prepared some Tips and Tricks to Good Writing and an Argument Essay Guide** that will help you craft your papers. Equally important, the Argument Essay Guide will outline the things that I will be looking for as I grade your work. The Tips and Tricks to Good Writing and Argument Essay Guide can be found on Blackboard. **Please take the time to use the guides. They are there to help you improve and succeed!**

Your argument essays must be submitted to me via email attachment in Microsoft Word or RTF formats only. **The deadlines for your argument essays are outlined in the course schedule.**

*“Oral History” and Research Project:* You will be required to reach out to a friend, neighbor, relative, a loved one, or a coworker to conduct a brief oral history and research project. First, I want you to select a subject and conduct an interview. The interview should help you determine a topic. To illustrate, your topic can focus on (select **only one**) your subject’s favorite baseball player (e.g. Brooks Robinson), favorite baseball team (e.g. 2004 Boston Red Sox), favorite stadium (e.g. Ebbets Field), or favorite baseball memory (e.g. Game 5 of the 1970 World Series).

Once you have determined your topic, you will undertake some light primary research, finding five newspaper and/or magazine articles on your topic. The George Mason libraries provide students with free online access to ProQuest Historical Newspapers. Also, *Sports Illustrated* has an archive of every issue dating back to August 1954. The primary sources are designed to provide you with different perspectives to help you better understand your topic.

From your interview and research, you will then be asked to write a **three-to-four-page, double-spaced paper** that integrates your topic with a theme or themes we explored during the summer session. What can we learn about America from a particular player, team, memory, or stadium? For instance, your topic could spark feelings of nostalgia, which has been a driving force of baseball. A particular player could exhibit traits of hard work, hustle, and humility which

define some of America’s best qualities. Or, a particular team could represent an underdog story that captivates a country given the nation’s past. To guide you in answering this question, you are welcome to use your assigned readings, videos, or module notes.

Because the summer session is five weeks long, **this is not an assignment to put off until the last minute**. Consequently, this assignment has been broken down into several parts: 1) “Oral History” Interview Worksheet; 2) annotated bibliography; 3) outline; and 4) final paper. The George Mason libraries have provided documents to assist you in your research. I have also prepared an **“Oral History” and Research Project Assignment Guide** to help you with your interviews, annotated bibliographies, and your outlines. **These documents can be found on Blackboard.**

**Improvement Credit:**

While there will be no extra credit, I believe you should be rewarded if your argument essays improve during the semester. You can therefore earn improvement credit. Here is how improvement credit works: I will take the lower of your first two argument essays, and, if you score higher on the third argument essay, I will divide the difference by two (2). For example, if you scored an 80 on your first argument essay, an 87 on your second argument essay, and a 96 on your third essay. I would add eight (8) points to your first argument essay (96 – 80 = 16; 16 divided by 2 = 8).

**Late Assignments:**

Because this is an online course, you are expected to regularly have access to the internet, especially concerning the timely submission of required assignments. Please make sure you have contingency plans in place in the event that your computer crashes or your internet goes out at an inopportune time. Equally important, please make sure you back up your assignments in the event that your files become compromised. **Computer and internet-related issues will not be considered a reason for late submissions.** I will deduct five (5) points for each day any assignment is submitted late, **unless documentation of illness or family emergency is provided.**

**Grade Breakdown:**

Syllabus Quiz:	5%
Argument Essay One:	20%
Argument Essay Two:	20%
Argument Essay Three:	20%
“Oral History” and Research Project:	
a) “Oral History” Interview Worksheet:	5%
b) Annotated Bibliography:	5%
c) Outline:	5%
d) Final Paper:	<u>20%</u>
Total:	100%

**Grading Scale:**

A: 93-100	B: 83-87	C: 73-77	F: 0-59
A -: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	
B+: 88-89	C+: 78-79	D: 60-69	

**Course Schedule:**

<p><b>Module One May 18 to May 23</b></p>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “It’s our game – the American game”: The Origins and Growth of Baseball</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tygiel, 3-34</li> <li>• Ruck, 1-25</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Required Readings (on Blackboard):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Nine Surviving Descriptions of Baseball-like Games Written and Published Before 1845,” in David Block’s <i>Baseball Before We Knew It</i></li> <li>• “The Cricket Mania,” <i>Harpers Weekly</i>, October 15, 1859</li> <li>• “Why Discriminate?” <i>Sporting Life</i>, March 14, 1888</li> <li>• “Nowhere So Sharply Drawn as in Baseball,” <i>Sporting Life</i>, April 11, 1891</li> <li>• “Nation’s Game is Purely American,” <i>Sporting Life</i>, March 14, 1908</li> <li>• “An Early Quest for Equality on the Diamond,” <i>Philadelphia Media Network</i>, September 13, 2010</li> <li>• “Myth of Baseball’s Creation Endures, With a Prominent Fan,” <i>New York Times</i>, November 12, 2010</li> </ul> <p><b>Videos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Base Ball Discovered,” Link on Blackboard</li> <li>• “Inning 1”: Burns’ <i>Baseball</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Argument Essay - Module One</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite baseball’s international origins, baseball grew into an American institution on par with the U.S. Constitution by the late-nineteenth century. From the notes, readings, and videos, what makes baseball American?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deadlines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus Quiz due on <b>May 19 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)</b></li> <li>• “Oral History” Interview Worksheet due on <b>May 23 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)</b></li> <li>• Argument Essay One due on <b>May 23 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Module Two May 25 to May 30</b></p>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Say it ain’t so”: The Birth and Survival of the Major Leagues</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tygiel, 35-86</li> <li>• Ruck, 26-71</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Required Readings (on Blackboard):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Players’ Combine,” <i>Sporting Life</i>, April 7, 1900</li> <li>• “Players To Organize,” <i>Sporting Life</i>, April 7, 1900</li> <li>• “Pennant Winners to Meet,” <i>The Washington Post</i>, September 2, 1903</li> <li>• “The Reserve Rule is the Corner-Stone of Organized Ball,” <i>Sporting Life</i>, February 24, 1912</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Baseball Proves Real Help to Country in War Crisis,” <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i>, September 2, 1917</li> <li>• “1918 Baseball Badly Wounded But Recovering,” <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i>, December 29, 1918</li> <li>• “Babe Ruth, Baseball’s Great Star and Idol of Children....,” <i>The New York Times</i>, August 17, 1948</li> <li>• “Sports-Loving Nation Mourns Death of Homer King Babe Ruth,” <i>The Los Angeles Times</i>, August 17, 1948</li> <li>• Arnold Gandil, “This Is My Story of the Black Sox Series,” <i>Sports Illustrated</i>, September 17, 1956</li> </ul> <p><b>Videos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Inning 2,” “Inning 3,” and “Inning 4”: Burns’ <i>Baseball</i></li> <li>• <i>Eight Men Out</i></li> <li>• <i>The Natural</i></li> </ul>
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<b>Deadlines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annotated Bibliography due on <b>May 30 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)</b></li> </ul>
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<b>Module Three June 1 to June 6</b>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The national tonic”: Baseball in Prosperity and War</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tygiel, 87-115</li> <li>• Ruck, 72-96</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Required Readings (on Blackboard):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “All-Star Game Just What Doctor Ordered for Baseball,” <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i>, June 20, 1933</li> <li>• “Night Baseball Makes Major League Debut,” <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i>, May 23, 1935</li> <li>• “Green Light Letter,” January 15, 1942</li> <li>• “Baseball’s Big Contribution,” April 25, 1942</li> <li>• “Servicemen Want Baseball to Stay,” <i>Atlanta Journal Constitution</i>, March 25, 1943</li> <li>• “Wrigley, Rickey Formed ‘Lipstick League’ as Backstop in Case War Blotted Out Majors,” <i>The Washington Post</i>, May 7, 1952</li> <li>• “Three Reichs, You’re Out,” <i>Slate</i>, April 2, 2013, Link on Blackboard</li> </ul> <p><b>Videos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Inning 5” and “Inning 6” – Top of the 6<sup>th</sup>: Burns, <i>Baseball</i></li> <li>• “Baseball Heroes of World War II,” Link on Blackboard</li> <li>• <i>A League of Their Own</i></li> </ul>

<b>Argument Essay – Modules Two and Three</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baseball continued to grow during the early twentieth century, but events threatened to harm the game's popularity. How did baseball manage to survive with its popularity intact? Be sure to discuss the events that threatened baseball’s image.</li> </ul>
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<b>Deadlines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument Essay Two due on <b>June 6 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)</b></li> <li>• Oral History and Research Outline due on <b>June 6 at 11:59 (EST)</b></li> </ul>
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<p><b>Module Four</b> <b>June 8 to June 13</b></p>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “An American Dilemma”: A Time of Grand Expectations and Great Experiments</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tygiel, 116-164</li> <li>• Ruck, 97-171</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Required Readings (on Blackboard):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “An Open Letter to Jackie Robinson,” in <i>Jackie Robinson and Race in America</i></li> <li>• “Jackie Robinson’s Life Threatened in Two Letters,” <i>The Washington Post</i>, May 21, 1951</li> <li>• “Yankees Conquer Baseball World Again,” <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i>, December 23, 1956</li> <li>• “I Love Maris,” <i>The Los Angeles Times</i>, October 3, 1961</li> <li>• “Sport as Social Force,” <i>Baltimore Evening Sun</i>, October 10, 1966</li> <li>• “Happy Series, You-all,” <i>Afro-American</i>, October 15, 1966</li> <li>• “As MLB honors Jackie Robinson, can it reverse a trend?,” <i>USA Today</i>, April 15, 2014, Link on Blackboard</li> </ul> <p><b>Videos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Inning 6” – Bottom of the 6<sup>th</sup>, “Inning 7,” and “Inning 8”: Burns, <i>Baseball</i></li> <li>• 42</li> <li>• 61*</li> </ul>
<p><b>Module Five</b> <b>June 15 to June 20</b></p>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Where have you gone, Joe DiMaggio?": Nostalgia in an Age of Relocation, Labor Disputes, and Steroids</li> </ul> <p><b>Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tygiel, 165-222</li> <li>• Ruck, 172-235</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Required Readings (on Blackboard):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Cronin, Freeney: Curt Flood Suit a Sports Threat,” <i>Chicago Daily Defender</i>, January 19, 1970</li> <li>• “Court Again OKs Reserve Clause,” <i>Chicago Daily Defender</i>, June 20, 1972</li> <li>• “Messersmith Signs A Braves' Contract,” <i>New York Times</i>, April 11, 1976</li> <li>• “Rose’s Grim Vigil,” <i>Sports Illustrated</i>, April 3, 1989</li> <li>• “Baseball Season Ends, Now Aftermath Begins,” <i>The Washington Post</i>, September 15, 1994</li> <li>• “One Sign Fits All: ‘Thank You, Cal, For Saving Baseball’,” <i>Sun-Sentinel</i>, September 7, 1995</li> <li>• “Former Pitcher Tom House Describes Past Steroid Use,” <i>USA Today</i>, May 3, 2005</li> <li>• “Lying About Age Not Uncommon for Dominican Baseball Players,” <i>Houston Chronicle</i>, May 4, 2008</li> <li>• “The Man Who Warned Baseball About Steroids,” <i>Time</i>, February 23, 2009</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Videos:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Inning 9” and “Inning 10”: Burns, <i>Baseball</i></li> <li>• “Roy Firestone on Brooks Robinson,” Link on Blackboard</li> <li>• <i>Moneyball</i></li> <li>• <i>Field of Dreams</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Argument Essay – Modules Four and Five</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this class, we learned that Americans attached certain traditional values to baseball. What were those values? In a game that featured gambling, segregation, labor disputes, relocation, and illegal drug use, do you believe baseball has maintained those traditional values today? Why or why not?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Deadlines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Argument Essay Three due on <b>June 20 at 11:59 p.m. (EST)</b></li> <li>• Oral History and Research Paper due on <b>June 20 at 11:59 (EST)</b></li> </ul>

