

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
College of Education and Human Development
School of Sport, Recreation and Tourism Management
SPMT-321 – 001 —America Through Baseball (3)
Summer 2020
Session C 2020

PROFESSOR: Dr. Matt Gilchrist EMAIL ADDRESS: Mgilchr1@gmu.edu
OFFICE LOCATION: Online PHONE NUMBER: 703-861-9642
OFFICE HOURS: Email or by appt

PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

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.

COURSE OVERVIEW

The learning experiences in this course are afforded through film, readings and completion of assignments. After films and discussions, students complete written unit assignments, citing examples from the readings/films.

COURSE DELIVERY METHOD

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using an asynchronous format via Blackboard Learning Management system (LMS) housed in the MyMason portal. You will log in to the Blackboard (Bb) course site using your Mason email name (everything before @masonlive.gmu.edu) and email password. The course site will be available no later than June 6th, 2020, 12:01AM.

Under no circumstances, may candidates/students participate in online class sessions (either by phone or Internet) while operating motor vehicles. Further, as expected in a face-to-face class meeting, such online participation requires undivided attention to course content and communication.

Technical Requirements

To participate in this course, students will need to satisfy the following technical requirements:

- High-speed Internet access with a standard up-to-date browser, either Internet Explorer or Mozilla Firefox is required (note: Opera and Safari are not compatible with Blackboard).
- Students must maintain consistent and reliable access to their GMU email and Blackboard, as these are the official methods of communication for this course.
- Students may be asked to create logins and passwords on supplemental websites and/or to download trial software to their computer or tablet as part of course requirements.
- The following software plug-ins for PCs and Macs, respectively, are available for free download:
 - o Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/>
 - o Windows Media Player: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14209/get-windows-media-player>
 - o Apple Quick Time Player: www.apple.com/quicktime/download/

Expectations

- Course Week: Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Monday, and finish on Sunday.
- Log-in Frequency:
Students must actively check the course Blackboard site and their GMU email for communications from the instructor, class discussions, and/or access to course materials at least 3 times per week.

- **Participation:**

Students are expected to actively engage in all course activities throughout the semester, which includes viewing all course materials, completing course activities and assignments, and participating in course discussions and group interactions.

- **Technical Competence:**

Students are expected to demonstrate competence in the use of all course technology. Students who are struggling with technical components of the course are expected to seek assistance from the instructor and/or College or University technical services.

- **Technical Issues:**

Students should anticipate some technical difficulties during the semester and should, therefore, budget their time accordingly. Late work will not be accepted based on individual technical issues.

- **Workload:**

Please be aware that this course is not self-paced. Students are expected to meet specific deadlines and due dates listed in the Class Schedule section of this syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to keep track of the weekly course schedule of topics, readings, activities and assignments due.

- **Instructor Support:**

Students may schedule a one-on-one meeting to discuss course requirements, content or other course-related issues. Those unable to come to a Mason campus can meet with the instructor via telephone or web conference. Students should email the instructor to schedule a one-on-one session, including their preferred meeting method and suggested dates/times.

- **Netiquette:**

The course environment is a collaborative space. Experience shows that even an innocent remark typed in the online environment can be misconstrued. Students must always re-read their responses carefully before posting them, so as others do not consider them as personal offenses. Be positive in your approach with others and diplomatic in selecting your words. Remember that you are not competing with classmates, but sharing information and learning from others. All faculty are similarly expected to be respectful in all communications.

- **Accommodations:**

Online learners who require effective accommodations to insure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of baseball in American culture.
2. Present an understanding of the operation of baseball as a cultural institution.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the legal and political issues that have impacted baseball.
4. Critically analyze baseball themed film and literature.
5. Reflect on his/her relationship to baseball.

Additional Expectations:

1. All assigned reading/film viewings should be completed before submitting written assignments.
2. All written assignments must be typed (computer word processing is recommended) and submitted in Hard Copy (emailed only in extreme circumstances).
3. Students must abide by the Honor Code, guided by the spirit of academic integrity.

Class Attendance/Participation:

It is expected that you keep up with your work, and submit your assignments on time. I reserve the right to take points away for late work. If there are issues that are preventing you from submitting your work on time, I expect you to contact me in a timely manner, and discuss whether or not an exception is warranted and/or granted. Please note that in addition to the papers to be submitted, there may be discussion questions posted for students to respond to.

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to exhibit professional behaviors and dispositions at all times.

REQUIRED TEXT:

Jules Tygiel, *Past Time: Baseball as History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
 Rob Ruck, *Raceball*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011).

RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Jonathan Eig, *Opening Day: The Story of Jackie Robinson's First Season* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2007).

REQUIRED FILM VIEWING: All films readily available on Vudu, Netflix, Amazon etc .

Ken Burns, <i>Baseball</i>	61
<i>Field of Dreams</i>	42
<i>The Natural</i>	<i>A League of Their Own</i>
<i>Eight Men Out</i>	<i>Moneyball</i>
<i>Bull Durham</i>	

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week One	July 6-12	Intro- Complete Discussion Question by Fri, July 10 Unit One: The Rise of Baseball as an American Institution	Watch Ken Burns- Innings 1-3 Read Tygiel- Past Time
Week Two	July 13-19	Unit Two: Baseball & Scandal Unit Three: Baseball's Golden Age Unit 1-3 Papers Due- July 19th @ 11:59 pm	Read Tygiel -Ken Burns- Innings 4 & 5 - <i>Eight Men Out</i>
Week Three	July 20-26	Unit Four: Baseball, Exclusion & Colonization Unit Five: Baseball, New York & the 1950s	Read Tygiel Read Ruck Watch: <i>Ken Burns- Innings 6-7</i> <i>-A League of Their Own</i> -42 - 61
Week Four	July 27-Aug 2	Unit 6: Baseball, Business & Strife Unit 4-6 Papers Due- Aug 2nd @ 11:59 pm	Read Tygiel <i>Ken Burns- 8-10</i>
Week Five	Aug 3-8	Unit 7: Baseball and the Popular Imagination: Nostalgia, Religion, American? Discussion Question: Due Thursday, Aug 6th Submit Unit 7 Paper- Thursday, August 6th	<i>-Field of Dreams</i> <i>-The Natural</i> - <i>Bull Durham</i> - Ken Burns- 9 th Inning

COURSE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

This course will be graded on a point system, with a total of 100 possible points. All written work should be submitted in electronic copy (doc or pdf), emailed to me by 11:59 pm, on the dates they are due. Unit Papers may be submitted all together on or before the date they are due, or you may submit them individually. You can expect grades for your papers to be posted no later than the Friday following the deadlines, with grades posted on Blackboard.

Requirements	Points
Intro Discussion Question	5
Discussion Question #2	8
Written Assignments	
#1 Units 1-3 (12 points each)- Due Sunday, July 19 th @ 11:59 pm	42
#2 Units 4-6 (12 points each)- Due Sunday, Aug 2 nd @ 11:59 pm	42
#3 Unit 7 (15 points each)- Due Thursday, Aug 6 th @ 11:59 pm	42
TOTAL	100

Grading Scale

A = 94 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A- = 90 – 93	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	

*Any circumstance arising that is not explicitly addressed in this syllabus, or by George Mason University policy, is implicitly governed under the auspices of common sense and will be dealt with using the instructor's discretion.

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

FOR EACH UNIT, YOU SHOULD ANSWER THE QUESTIONS THOROUGHLY, USING EXAMPLES FROM EACH OF THE REQUIRED SOURCES. EACH UNIT SUBMISSION SHOULD BE APPROXIMATELY 2-3 PAGES.

UNIT ONE: The Rise of Baseball as an American Institution

Assignment: Watch the first three “innings” or episodes of the Ken Burns series, read the relevant chapters in the textbook (NOTE: YOU MUST INCLUDE REFERENCES TO THE READING AND THE VISUAL MATERIAL IN EACH UNIT ESSAY) and complete the following essay question in 2-3 pages:

What factors led to the rise of baseball as an American pastime? Why was baseball the “national” sport by the early 1900s? Be sure to include key events and people in your discussion.

UNIT TWO: Baseball and Scandal

Assignment: Watch relevant material from the Ken Burns series (4th Inning) and the film Eight Men Out. Read the relevant section in the textbooks and complete the following essay in 2-3 pages:

What factors led to the Black Sox Scandal? What happened before, during and after the 1919 World Series? Why does it remain as one of the most remembered incidents in the history of American sport?

UNIT THREE: Baseball’s “Golden Age”

Assignment: Watch relevant material from the Ken Burns series (3-5 Innings) and read the material in the textbook on baseball in the 1920s and 1930s and complete the following in essay format in 2-3 pages:

Why was Babe Ruth such a powerful force in the reshaping of baseball after the Black Sox Scandal? How did baseball advance in the “golden age” of American sport. Include the role of the print media and radio in your discussion. Who were the teams and players that dominated this era and what role did they play in further entrenching baseball as the national game?

UNIT FOUR: Baseball, Exclusion and Colonization

Assignment: Watch the relevant material from the Ken Burns series (5th Inning), the films A League of Their Own and 42 and read the material in the textbook that deals with Negro League Baseball and the role of women in baseball between 1900 and the 1950s and complete the following in essay format in 2-3 pages:

Why was baseball segregated between 1900 and 1946? How did African-American players and entrepreneurs respond to this exclusion? What factors led to the end of segregation in baseball? What were the consequences for the African-American and Latino Game? Why were women always excluded from Major League Baseball? How did they carve out space in the sport? What factors led to the rise of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League? Why did it ultimately fail?

UNIT FIVE: A Golden Age? Baseball, New York and the 1950s

Assignment: Watch the relevant material from the Ken Burns series (6th & 7th Innings) on baseball in the period from the end of World War Two to 1961, watch the movie 61 and read the relevant material in the textbook.

Why did baseball thrive in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s? Why was New York deemed the capital of baseball in this period? What new dynamics emerged in baseball in this era that changed the shape of the game and made it truly “national” at last? What role did television play in this transformation?

UNIT SIX: Baseball, Business and Strife

Assignment: Watch the relevant material from the Ken Burns series on baseball since 1970 (8th-10th Innings), the film *Moneyball* and read the relevant material in the textbook. Address the following in an essay of 2-3 pages:

How did franchise relocations, free agency, fads and gimmicks change the game of baseball in the age of color television? Who were the key personalities and what were key events in this modern era of baseball?

UNIT SEVEN: Baseball and the Popular Imagination: Nostalgia, Religion, American?

Assignment: Watch the movies *Field of Dreams*, *The Natural*, and *Bull Durham*. Read: Ruck, *Raceball*. Answer the following in **3-5 pages**:

At its essence, baseball has often been referred to as THE national pastime, a secular religion, at the core of what was and is good about America and American society. How do these films portray baseball in a nostalgic light? What are the key themes that these films address? Taken as a group, how do these films made between the mid 1980s and 2000 challenge dominant themes that had emerged in professional baseball during the same era? How do the films provide a counter-history to the establishment history of baseball? In what ways do the films and reading on sport and religion suggest that baseball is THE icon of American culture? Can we still say these things about baseball in 2020 given its increased diversity and the impact globalization has had on the game?

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: <http://cehd.gmu.edu/values/>.

GMU Policies and Resources for Students

Policies

- Students must adhere to the guidelines of the Mason Honor Code (see <http://oai.gmu.edu/the-mason-honor-code/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/responsible-use-of-computing/>).
- Students are responsible for the content of university communications sent to their Mason 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 with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services. Approved accommodations will begin at the time the written letter from Disability Services is received by the instructor (see <http://ods.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must follow the university policy stating that all sound emitting devices shall be silenced during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to Tk20 should be directed to tk20help@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/tk20>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <http://course-support.gmu.edu/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

As a faculty member, I am designated as a "Responsible Employee," and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason's Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason's confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-380-1434 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason's Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing titleix@gmu.edu.

For additional information on the College of Education and Human Development, please visit our website <https://cehd.gmu.edu>.