

African-Americans Through Sports
History 305
Fall 2006

In the United States, a country obsessed with sports, race and athletics are inextricably linked. But it is a subject that is often difficult to discuss because of our long and deeply antagonistic racial history.

Jon Entine, author of *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It*

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to attain a fundamental understanding of the important connection between the institution of sport and race relations in American society. Through examining books, periodicals, and films, we will study examples of the social, economic, and political implications of sports on American culture and African-Americans over time.

Readings

1. Entine, Jon, *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It*
2. Payton, Walter (with Don Yeager), *Never Die Easy: The Autobiography of Walter Payton*
3. Rhoden, William, *Forty Million Dollar Slaves: The Rise, Fall, and Redemption of the Black Athlete*
4. Ruck, Rob, *Sandlot Seasons: Sport in Black Pittsburgh*
5. Wiggins, David, *Glory Bound: Black Athletes in a White America*
6. Wigginton, Russell, *The Strange Career of the Black Athlete: African Americans and Sports*

Grading

Grades will be determined from the following course requirements:

1. **45%** - Three 5-6 page "reaction" papers. Throughout the semester, students will write three essays in response to questions that arise from the readings, lectures, films, and discussions. Note: Be sure to use a "normal" size font. If you have any questions about the font you plan to use, please ask before turning in the paper.
2. **15%** - Book Review. Each student will write a 5-7 page book review from the list distributed in class. The review should provide the reader with a sense of the author's primary argument as well as an analysis of the book's strengths and weaknesses.

3. **25%** - Final Exam. This comprehensive exam will consist of two major essays and several short answer/identification terms.

4. **15%** - Attendance/Participation. Although lectures will be a part of the course, student dialogue and discussion will be critical to the success of the class. Thus, students are expected to attend class and be prepared to discuss the major themes (as well as specifics, at times) from the readings.

***Late Policy** - There will be no extensions given on any written assignments without penalty (one letter grade per day). The only exceptions will be those deemed “acceptable” by the College Handbook.

Class Assignments

The Ideology of Sport and Race

8/28 Introduction; Entine, chapters 1-3 (pgs. 3-28); Wiggins, chapter 9 (pgs. 177-199)

9/11 Entine, chapters 4-6, 18-20 (pgs. 29-80, 232-291); Wiggins, chapters 10-11 (pgs. 200-240)

“Nadir” in Sports

9/18 **Paper #1 Due (15%)** Wiggins, chapter 1 (pgs. 3-20); Ruck, chapters 1-3 (pgs. 8-113)

9/25 Ruck, chapters 4-6 (pgs. 114-210); Wiggins, chapter 3 (pgs. 34-57)

10/2 **Paper #2 Due (15%)**

Integration/Civil Rights of Sports

10/9 Wigginton, Preface and chapters 1-5 (pgs. 1-106)

10/23 Wiggins, chapters 4-5 (pgs. 61-103); Entine, chapters 13-16 (pgs. 172-217)

10/30 Wiggins, chapters 6-8 (pgs. 104-174); Entine, chapters 17, 21-23 (pgs. 218-231, 295-328)

“Modern Era” Race and Sports

11/6 **Paper #3 Due (15%)** Payton, chapters 1-9 (pgs. 3-131)

11/13 Payton, chapters 10-19 (pgs. 132-264)

11/20 Rhoden, 1st half of book

11/27 Rhoden, 2nd half of book

12/4 **Book Review Due (15%)**

12/08 Final Exam (25%)