

George Mason University
College of Education and Human Development
School of Sport, Recreation and Tourism Management

RMGT 601 DL1 – History of Leisure and Sport in American Society
3 Credits, Spring 2024
Asynchronous

Faculty:

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Prerequisite:

Graduate Status or permission by instructor

University Catalog Course Description:

Examines 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 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 participate in class discussions and fulfill all assignments. Assignments must be turned in on the specified date due or **no credit will be given**.

Course Delivery Method

This course will be delivered online (76% or more) using [select either a synchronous or 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 on Friday, January 18th.

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 standard up-to-date browsers. To get a list of Blackboard's supported browsers see: https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Student/Ultra/Getting_Started/Browser_Support
- 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.

Expectations

- Course Week:
Because asynchronous courses do not have a “fixed” meeting day, our week will start on Friday, and finish on Thursday.
- 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 uploading on Discussion Board.
- 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. 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 ensure accessibility must be registered with George Mason University Disability Services.

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.

Professional Standards:

Courses offered in the Sport and Recreation Studies (SRST) graduate program are guided by the principles of the Commission of Sport Management Accreditation (COSMA). COSMA (2010, p. 1) “bases its accrediting process on principles, rather than standards.” The eight recommended principles are: outcomes assessment; strategic planning; curriculum; faculty; scholarly and professional activities; resources; internal and external relationships; and educational innovation. For more information, please see: Commission of Sport Management Accreditation. *Accreditation principles and self-study preparation*. Retrieved May 12, 2016 from <http://www.cosmaweb.org/accreditation-manuals.html>

Required Texts:

Bachynski, K. (2019). *No game for the boys to play: The history of youth football and the origins of a public health crisis*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Wiltse, J. (2007). *Contested waters: A social history of swimming pools in America*. The University of North Carolina Press.

Course Performance Evaluation

Students are expected to submit all assignments on time on Blackboard.

Course Performance Evaluation:

Exams – 25 points each

Take Home Test One will be Due Thursday, Mar. 21st

Take Home Test Two will be Due Thursday, Apr. 25th

There will be two Take Home exams during the semester, each for a possible 25 points of a student’s grade. The exams will include a variety of questions 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. The Honor Code will be in effect.

Biographical Video Presentation – 40 points

Due by April 26th on Assignments

The presentation will discuss a person who has made a significant contribution to the history of American sport and/or leisure. This presentation should assess the individual’s early life, major accomplishments, post retirement career and historical legacy. In addition, please provide a summary of the individual’s philosophical approach and personal values and mores.

A rubric will be provided, and references required. No websites may be used, only journal articles and books. A

Participation – 10 points

This component consists of contributing on Discussion Board to questions regarding both texts and engaging with the class in other ways in the course. Valuable class participation will mean providing evidence that s/he is keeping up with the readings and giving the topics 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 upload on Discussion Board.

Discussion Boards: After week one and as an aid to learning the text material, students will be asked to prepare a one-page, single-spaced synopsis/comment of the week's readings and upload on Discussion Board. These should include a statement of the theme and author's thesis and a brief assessment of how the reading illuminates the 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 reading?

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 each week.
- *Discussion Boards:* As an aid to learning the text material, students will be asked to prepare a one-page, single-spaced synopsis/comment of the week's readings and upload on Discussion Board. These should include a statement of the theme and author's thesis and a brief assessment of how the reading illuminates the 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 reading?

Professional Dispositions

See <https://cehd.gmu.edu/students/policies-procedures/>

Class Schedule:

Tentative Course Calendar:

Date	Topic	Assignment
Week 1 Jan 19 th	<i>Syllabus</i>	Introduction to the course including expectations. <i>Contested waters: A social history of swimming pools in America</i> will be the first book to read.
Week 2 Jan. 26 th	<i>Pre-modern Sport and Leisure</i> Key themes/issues in “pre-modern” leisure history, II	Discussion Board
Week 3 Feb. 2 nd	<i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i> Social Orders, Early Spectacles, Muscular Christianity, and Urban Social Reform, 1800-1860	Discussion Board
Week 4 Feb. 9 th	<i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i> Making American Sport/Leisure Spaces and Traditions: Baseball, Football and Basketball	Discussion Board
Week 5 Feb. 16 th	<i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i>	Discussion Board

	The First "Golden Age" of American sport	
Week 6 Feb. 23 rd	Students select an individual for the Biographical Video Presentation <i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i>	Selection Due by Feb. 29th We will provide list of individuals will be provided to choose from
Week 7 Mar. 1 st	<i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i> Female Physicality and the Battle over Women's Sport and Leisure	Discussion Board
Week 8 Mar. 8 th	<u>Spring Break</u>	Discussion Board
Week 9 Mar. 15 th	Take Home Test Distributed <i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i> Female Physicality and the Battle over Women's Sport and Leisure	Due Thursday, Mar. 21st
Week 10 Mar. 22 nd	<i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i> Jim Crow Games: The Struggle over African American Sport and Leisure	Begin reading, if not before, <i>No game for the boys to play: The history of youth football and the origins of a public health crisis.</i>
Week 11 Mar. 29 th	<i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i> Resistance and Transformation in Late Modernity	Discussion Board
Week 12 Apr. 5 th	Progress Report of Biographical Video Presentation <i>Modern Sport and Leisure</i>	Due Thursday April 11th - Turn in Progress Report of Biographical Video Presentation to include an outline and references to date. Turn in on Blackboard
Week 13 Apr. 12 th		Discussion Board
Week 14 Apr. 19 th	Take Home Test <i>Postmodernity</i> The Globalization of the Sport and Leisure Industries	Due Thursday April 25th
Week 15 Apr. 26 th		Due Friday, April 26th - Turn in Biographical Video Presentation on <i>Assignments</i>

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

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 <https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/honor-code-system/>).
- Students must follow the university policy for Responsible Use of Computing (see <https://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 <https://ds.gmu.edu/>).
- Students must silence all sound emitting devices during class unless otherwise authorized by the instructor.

Campus Resources

- Support for submission of assignments to VIA should be directed to viahelp@gmu.edu or <https://cehd.gmu.edu/aero/assessments>. Questions or concerns regarding use of Blackboard should be directed to <https://its.gmu.edu/knowledge-base/blackboard-instructional-technology-support-for-students/>.
- For information on student support resources on campus, see <https://ctfe.gmu.edu/teaching/student-support-resources-on-campus>

Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, sexual harassment, interpersonal violence, and stalking:

As a faculty member, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, sexual harassment, 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 or support measures 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/students/>.

