# **American Studies 346-01**

# **American Culture Through Spectator Sports (17908)**

Spring 2025

Tuesday & Thursday 2:30-3:45 pm (MH- 463)

**Faculty Information:**

Professor Ashley Loup

Email: aloup@fullerton.edu

Office: GH-215

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:00 PM and by appointment.

**Response time:** I will do my best to respond to your emails within 96 hours. If I do not respond in this time frame, feel free to send me another email.

**Course Information:**

AMST 346-01, Spectator Sports through American Culture

Schedule Code (17908), Spring 2025

Canvas URL: https://csufullerton.instructure.com/courses/3486913

This is an in-person class that meets on Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-3:45 in MH-463

**Course Requisite(s):**

Completion of G.E. category D.1

# **Catalog Description:**

This course examines the development of American sports from the 19th century to the present. Throughout the course, we will consider how American sports have been and continue to be shaped by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, age, and technology. Beyond the big three American sports of baseball, football, and basketball, it will deal with a wide range of other sports including boxing, soccer, Track and field, and eSports.

# **Course Materials & Equipment:**

**Required text(s):** This is a zero-cost class. All readings/required resources will be posted on our class Canvas page.

**Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concept of culture by analyzing the functioning of American cultural texts within historical contexts, using knowledge developed by different disciplines.
2. Students will express an understanding of American cultural diversity that recognizes the historical construction and functioning of categories of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, or region.
3. Students will interpret and analyze critically a range of cultural documents and expressive forms.

# **Grading Policy:**

## **Attendance and participation policy:** This class is built around the discussion that takes place in the classroom; therefore, your attendance is paramount. The most straightforward way to do well is to participate in class by speaking, asking questions, and engaging with peers. You can also show your engagement/participation by asking questions over email/zoom, coming to my office hours, etc. I will be assigning points for attendance and participation over the semester, and I will be taking attendance at each class session.

## **Make-up and late submission policy:** No make-up assignments are given, and late work is not accepted. If for some reason you are unable to complete an assignment due to reasons of illness, verified emergency, or other serious and compelling reasons, please send me an email or come to office hours and we can discuss it.

**Grading Breakdown:**

| **Assignment** | **Points** |
| --- | --- |
| **Library Workshop Response Paper**  | **150** |
| **Article Annotations Assignment** | **100** |
| **Research Presentation** | **200** |
| **Presentation Response Paper** | **250** |
| **Forum Responses (10 pts \*20)** | **200** |
| **Attendance/Participation**  | **100** |
| **Total**  | **1000** |

## **Points/Grade Breakdown**

925-1000 A

895-924 A-

875-894 B+

825-874 B

795-824 B-

775-794 C+

725-774 C

695-724 C-

675-694 D+

625-674 D

595-624 D-

594↓ F

This course uses a +/- system.

**Authentication of student work:** Student work will be authenticated by submission through our class Canvas page and Turnitin software.

\*For this course, students must be the author of all work. The use of generative AI, such as ChatGPT, is not permitted. Use of these tools will be considered a violation of the CSUF Academic Dishonesty Policies and may be subject to disciplinary action. **If there are any issues with the legitimacy of your work, it will be submitted directly to the office of Academic Dishonesty.**

**Penalty for academic dishonesty:** Students must be familiar with the policy on academic integrity, found on the [student information](http://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php) website and in [UPS 300.021](http://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications_policies_resolutions/ups/UPS%20300/UPS%20300.021.pdf). The penalty in this course for academic dishonesty is a failing grade [or other penalties, if applicable], and the incident is reported to the [Office of Student Conduct](http://www.fullerton.edu/sa/assessment/engagement/judicialaffairs.php).

**Extra credit:** There are no extra credit options in this course.

## **Required Course Assignments:**

* **Forum Responses.** **I am asking you to complete 10 forum responses over the semester**. These forum posts will be in response to the question posed that week based on lecture and reading materials.The purpose of these forums is to help manage the workload and get you to think critically about weekly topics. You are responsible for responding to the forum prompt for that week **BEFORE THE START OF OUR CLASS ON THURSDAY**. These responses should be around 300 words each and include direct evidence (quotes!) from the readings, podcasts, and videos (give page citations where possible). If your post does not show much engagement with the sources and does not reach the word count, the grade may be cut by 50% or result in a 0. I am also asking you to provide **TWO** potential questions for class discussion, based on the assigned material, at the bottom of **EVERY** forum post. Late posts will **NOT** be accepted.

**\*As a reminder, if you plagiarize or utilize AI to write these posts, you will be recommended to the CSUF Academic Integrity Office and receive a zero in the course.**

* **Final Project: Studying Sports Critically.** In this final project, you will select a topic from the class and do your own research. This project will consist of FOUR major due dates where you will have portions of the final project due, that will culminate in the completed Studying Sports Critically portfolio. We will discuss the specifics of this project during week 9.

**\*As a reminder, if you plagiarize or utilize AI to write these posts, you will be recommended to the CSUF Academic Integrity Office and receive a zero in the course.**

## **Technical Problems**

If you encounter any technical difficulties, contact the instructor immediately to document the problem. Then, contact for help: For technical difficulties: [student IT help desk](http://www.fullerton.edu/it/students/helpdesk/index.php), email, phone = 657-278-8888, walk-in [student genius center](http://www.fullerton.edu/it/students/sgc/index.php), online chat - log into the [portal](http://my.fullerton.edu); click “Online IT Help”; click “Live Chat.” For issues with Canvas: Canvas Support Hotline = 855-302-7528, [student support chat](https://cases.canvaslms.com/liveagentchat?chattype=student&sfid=001A000000YzcwQIAR), [faculty support chat](https://cases.canvaslms.com/liveagentchat?chattype=admin&sfid=001A000000YzcwQIAR).

\*In the event of a technical problem that would prevent you from being able to submit your work, I will communicate with you through posted announcements via our class Canvas page.

## **Technical Competencies**

## The website with [student information for course syllabi](http://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php) describes the student information technology (IT) services and competencies. In brief, students should have access to a current and reliable computer or tablet (Windows or Mac) and internet connectivity. Students are also expected to have basic computer skills. Visit the student information website above for more details and how you can receive technology assistance if needed.

## **Student Resources Website**

It is the student’s responsibility to read and understand the required and important [student information for course syllabi](https://fdc.fullerton.edu/teaching/syllabus.php). Included is information about:

* University learning goals
* General Education learning outcomes
* Netiquette
* Students’ rights to accommodations
* Campus student support resources
* Academic integrity
* Emergency Preparedness
* Library services
* Student IT services and competencies
* Software privacy and accessibility
* Accessibility statement
* Diversity Statement
* Land acknowledgment
* Final exam schedule
* Semester calendar

## **Classroom Expectations**

**Cell phones:** Out of courtesy and respect for your professor others, you should turn off/silence your cell phones during class.

**Headphones:** Out of courtesy and respect for your professor and others, you need to remove any headphones when entering the classroom.

\*If technology use becomes an issue, I will ask you to print your own class resources and bring them with you to discussion.

**Recording:** Any requests to record class meetings will be decided on a case-by-case basis by the instructor. If permitted, any approved recordings are for private study and “shall not be made publicly accessible without the written consent of the instructor and any students recorded in the class” ([UPS 330.230](https://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications_policies_resolutions/ups/UPS%20300/UPS%20330.230.pdf)). Any approved recordings must be deleted at the end of the semester.

**Technology:** If you need any assistance with technology, including checking out a laptop computer for the semester, obtaining ancillaries (e.g., webcam, microphone), accessing mi-fi, downloading free software for class or personal use, or other help, you can find what you need at the [student technology services](https://www.fullerton.edu/IT/students/) website. Another useful website is [IT Essential Resources](http://www.fullerton.edu/it/essential-resources/).

## **General Education Requirements (**[**UPS 411.201**](https://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications_policies_resolutions/ups/UPS%20400/UPS%20411.201.pdf)**)**

1. Meets G.E. Requirement: D.2 (American History, Institutions, and Values) The learning objectives for this and all GE areas are listed in [UPS 411.201](https://www.fullerton.edu/senate/publications_policies_resolutions/ups/UPS%20400/UPS%20411.201.pdf).
2. Statement of the way in which the course meets the GE writing requirement. Consider: This course meets the GE writing requirement with written assignments to be assessed by prompt and careful grading from an approved set of guidelines. Assignments will be returned in a timely manner, with feedback, for improvement on subsequent writing.
3. A grade of “D” (1.0) or higher is required to meet this General Education requirement. A grade of “D-“ (0.7) or below will not satisfy this General Education requirement.

# **Course Schedule**

**This syllabus may be subject to change. I also will occasionally add shorter news stories to the Canvas site because I think they will help us understand the issues more clearly. For the most up-to-date list of readings and instructions, check the current week’s page on Canvas.**

## **Unit I Sports, Media, and Identity**

We will be exploring the relationship among sports, the media, and identity throughout the course, but in this section, we deal with the issue directly through readings and conversations about our own experiences with sports and sports fandom. Sports obviously can exist apart from the media but, since the 19th century, the two have been thoroughly intertwined so that how we think about sports is deeply shaped by the media narratives we encounter about them. After this Unit, you will choose your own sports narrative and analyze it for what it says about the role of sports in society and individual and community identity.

### **Week 1 Course Introduction**

**Tues 1/21 How to Study Sports in American Culture**

LECTURE Course Introduction

**Thurs 1/23**

READ Susan Birrell & Mary G. McDonald, “Reading Sport Critically: A Methodology for Interrogating Power” (1999)

### **Week 2 Sports and Media**

**Tues 1/28 Media Narratives and the Meaning of Sports**

LECTUREMedia Narratives and the Sporting Landscape

**Thurs 1/30**

READ Travis Vogan. *Keepers of the Flame: NFL Films and the Rise of Sports Media,* (2020)

Jennifer McClearen, *Fighting Visibility: Sports Media and Female Athletes in the UFC*, Introduction, (2021)

Jules Boykoff, “Toward a Theory of Sportswashing: Mega-events, Softpower, and Political Conflict,” (2022)

### **Week 3 Imagining Sports**

**Tues 2/4 Imagining Sports Through Film & Television**

LECTURE Film, Television, and Mediated Athlete

**Thurs 2/6**

READ Buzz Bissinger, *Friday Night Lights*, “Boobie,” (1990)

Samantha N. Shepard, “Boobie Miles: Failure and Friday Night Lights,” *Journal of Sport and Social Issues (2019)*

### **Week 4 Sport, Memory, & Space**

**Tues 2/11 The Politics of Public Art and Sport**

LECTURE Sports Statues, Public Spaces, and Political Perspectives

**Thurs 2/13**

READ Jaime Schultz, “Contesting the Master Narrative: The Arthur Ashe Statue and Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia” (2011)

Maureen Smith, “Frozen Fists in Speed City: The Statue as Twenty-First-Century Reparations” (2009)

LISTEN *99% Invisible* “Beneath the Ballpark”

Link: https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/beneath-the-ballpark/

## **Unit II Ordering and Consuming Play**

In Unit II, we will explore the historical origins of America’s sporting culture from the 19th century when America’s national sports were invented and segregated to the 1960s when they were integrated. In this section, we will pay particular attention to the origins of the games as participatory activities and how they transformed with the rise of spectatorship and the mass media. After this section, you will write an essay that draws on course materials as well as one additional academic book on the sports of your choice. A list of potential books will be included alongside the prompt.

### **Week 5 The Rise of Boxing**

**Tues 2/18 Boxing, Race, and “Civilization”**

LECTURE The Rise of Boxing: Race, Masculinity, and the Male Body

**Thurs 2/20**

READ Cathy Van Ingen, “Seeing What Frames Our Seeing: Seeking Histories of Early Black Female Boxers.” (2013)

Adrian Matejka, “The Battle of the Century” from *The Big Smoke*

WATCH *Joe Louis: America’s Hero, Betrayed* (YouTube link on Canvas)

### **Week 6 Inventing the National Game**

**Tues 2/25 Race, Gender, and the National Game**

LECTURE Playing the National Game: The Battle over Baseball

**Thurs 2/27**

READ Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Women’s Sports,* Chapter 6, (1994)

Adrian Burgos, *Playing America’s Game: Baseball, Latinos, and the Color Line,* Introduction (2007)

### **Week 7 Inventing and Transforming Basketball**

**Tues 3/4 Sports and the Regulation of Bodies Through Basketball**

LECTURE Building the Body of Christ: Basketball, Muscular Christianity, and Race

**Thurs 3/6**

READ Gena Caponi-Tabery, *Jump for Joy: Jazz, Basketball, and Black Culture in 1930s America*, Chapter 6 (2008)

 Susan Kahn, “Order on the Court: The Campaign to Suppress Women’s Basketball,” (2015)

 Maya Moore, “(In) Visibility”

LISTEN *99 % Invisible* “The Yin and Yang of Basketball” https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/yin-yang-basketball/

### **Week 8 Title IX and the Inclusion of Women in Sport**

**Tues 3/11 Legislating Women’s Sport Participation & Women’s Physical Education History**

LECTURE Title IX and the Inclusion of Women in Sport

**Thurs 3/13**

READ Susan K. Cahn, *Coming on Strong: Gender and Sexuality in Women’s Sports,* Chap. 3 (1994)

Deborah L. Brake, *Getting in the Game: Title IX and the Women’s Sport Revolution,* Introduction and Chap. 3 (2010)

### **Week 9 The Politics of Athletic Fashion**

**Tues 3/18 Dressing the Athlete**

LECTURE Fashioning the Athlete

**Thurs 3/20**

READ Jaime Schultz, *Qualifying Times: Points of Change in U.S. Women’s Sport,* Chapter 6 (2014) (Break class in half)

 Jaime Schultz, “Reading the Catsuit: Serena Williams and the Production of Blackness at the 2002 U.S. Open,” (2005) (Break class in half)

 Joseph Stromberg, “Bicycle Face: A 19th century health problem made up to scare women away from biking,” (2015)

 Nadra Nittle, “The Serena Williams Catsuit Ban Shows that tennis can’t get past it’s elitist roots,” (2018)

 Anya Alvarez, “Hijab in Sports: How Muslim Women Athletes are Fighting for Acceptance,” (2017)

**Week 10** **Library Workshop**

**Tues 3/25 Final Project Topic Discussion: Studying Sports Critically Portfolio**

**Thurs 3/27** Class will be held in the CSUF library

### **SPRING RECESS No Class March 31 – April 6**

## **Unit III Modern Sporting**

In this final unit of the course, we look at several major transformations in American sports that have accompanied the rise of a global, digital culture. Here, we will be paying particular attention to recent controversies in sports, especially as they relate to the regulation of the body, the rights of athletes, and the nature and purpose of sports and sports fandom. Your final paper will ask you to go more in-depth on one of these controversies or another of your choice.

### **Week 11 Integrating Sports, Empowering Players?**

**Tues 4/8 Integrating Sports**

LECTURE Fists in the Air, Free Agents in the Market: Black Athletes and the Transformation of Sports

**Thurs 4/10**

READ Charles H. Martin, *Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in College Sports 1890 to 1980*, Chapters 1 and 6 (2010)

**Library Workshop Response Paper Due Sunday April 13th by NOON**

### **Week 12 Remaking the Body**

**Tues 4/15 The Politics of Bodies**

LECTURE Remaking the Body in American Sport

**Thurs 4/17**

READ Katie Barnes, “Why Aren’t We Talking About Transgender Men?” in *Fair Play: How Sports Shape the Gender Debates,* 2023.

LISTEN NPR’s *Embedded: Tested* 6-part podcast series (Link on Canvas)

**Article Annotations Assignment due in class on Thursday April 17th**

### **Week 13 E-Sports**

**Tues 4/22 Our Virtual Future**

LECTURE E-Sports and the Pursuit of Gender Equity?

**Thurs 4/24**

READ Carly Kocurek, “Coin Operated Americans: Rebooting Boyhood at the Video Game Arcade,” (2015)

 Nicholas Taylor, Jen Jensen, Suzanne De Castell, “Cheerleaders/Booth Babes/ Halo Hoes: Pro Gaming, Gender, and Jobs for the Boys,” (2009)

 Rayvon Fouche, “Aren’t Athletes Cyborgs?: Technology, Bodies, and Sporting Competitions” (2012)

### **Week 14 Class Conclusion**

**Tues 4/29 Where Do We Go From Here?: Sports & The Current Moment**

LECTURE Our Current Sporting Moment

**Thurs 5/1** **In Class Research Presentations**

### **Week 15 In Class Research Presentations**

**Tues 5/6 In Class Research Presentations**

**Thurs 5/8 In Class Research Presentations**

**Presentation Response Paper Due Thursday, May 15th by NOON**

### **Finals Week May 10th - 16th**