

History of Sports in America

Last Updated: Thu, 12/04/2025

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 2015

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):
91129

Instructor First Name: John

Instructor Last Name: Smith

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

In this course students will examine the American sporting experience from the nineteenth century through the twentieth century. The class will focus especially on the rise of organized sports institutions and the historical relationship between sport and society. The class will investigate fundamental questions about the history of sports, including: Why have Americans invested so much time, money, and energy into sports? What have sports meant to Americans at different points in the past? And how have politics influenced the history of American sports?

Course learning outcomes:

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify critical events and changes in the history of American sports
- Describe the importance of sports throughout American history
- Explain how politics influenced the history of American sports
- Evaluate historical facts and interpretations in sports history based on secondary and primary sources

Required course materials:

Johnny Smith and Randy Roberts, *The Fight of His Life: Joe Louis's Battle for Freedom During World War II*

Johnny Smith, *Jumpman: The Making and Meaning of Michael Jordan*

Grading policy:

Exams: Three (3) in-class exams will be given, each worth up to 100 points. Each exam will include a multiple-choice/true-false section and an essay section. You are required to write your essay answers in a blue book. Blue books can be purchased at the Georgia Tech bookstore.

Primary Source Quizzes: Five (5) in-class quizzes will be given, each worth up to 10 points. For quizzes, students will be asked to evaluate primary sources provided by the instructor. Primary source quizzes will be graded based on whether a student demonstrates that they have examined the documents, and how well a student answers the questions using evidence from the sources.

It is a student's responsibility to be in class for all exams and quizzes. If you miss an exam or a quiz, then you will receive a zero. If you have a verifiable medical emergency or a waiver from the dean of students, then I will allow you to make-up an exam or quiz. You must have documentation of an emergency; otherwise, I will not grant a make-up.

Grading Scale

A: 100 – 90% (350 – 315 points)

B: 89 – 80% (314 – 280 points)

C: 79 – 70% (279 – 245 points)

D: 69 – 60% (244 – 210 points)

F: 59% or lower (209 points or lower)

Attendance policy:

This course requires regular attendance and engagement from students. Although I do not grade attendance, students are strongly encouraged to participate in all class meetings.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content,

and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcomes:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion