

HTS 2015 Syllabus

History of Sports in America, Section HP, 3 Credits
Fall 2026

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Johnny Smith

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General Course Information

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 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

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify pivotal 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 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*

Note: Both required books can be purchased at the Georgia Tech bookstore or online at Amazon.com. In addition, students are required to read secondary articles and book chapters as well as primary sources, all provided by the instructor.

Readings and Primary Source Evaluation Assignments

In this course, I have assigned two kinds of required readings: secondary sources and primary sources. Secondary sources, often written by historians and biographers, synthesize information

and provide interpretations of historical events. For secondary sources, students will read the required books listed above as well as excerpted book chapters and journal articles.

Students will also be asked to read primary sources. Historians use primary sources—original documents and artifacts—to record, describe, and interpret the past. Primary sources provide direct links to past events and allow historians to understand those events. Historians use primary sources as evidence for making arguments about the past. Newspaper articles, diaries, letters, and court transcripts produced in the past are some examples of primary sources. We will discuss primary sources throughout the course.

Grading Policy

Grading Scale: 350 Total Points

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)

Description of Graded Components

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 asking you to respond to a prompt based on an assigned reading. You are required to write your essay answers in a blue book. Blue books can be purchased at the Georgia Tech bookstore. The dates for the exams can be found in the course schedule below.

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. The dates for the primary source quizzes can be found in the course schedule below.

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 an officially excused absence from the Institute, then I will allow you to make-up an exam or quiz. All make-up exams will be completely written tests. You must have documentation of an emergency; otherwise, I will not grant a make-up.

Course Policies

Attendance and/or Participation

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. If a student must miss class due to illness, they should get lecture notes from a classmate and meet with the instructor to discuss any questions they may have about the lecture material.

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity and obey the **Georgia Tech Honor Code**. Students must take exams and quizzes entirely on their own without the assistance of any other person or the use of search engines or artificial intelligence. 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. Furthermore, unauthorized use of any previous semester course materials, such as tests, quizzes, homework, and any other coursework, is prohibited in this course. Using these materials will be considered a direct violation of academic policy and will be dealt with according to the GT Academic Honor Code.

Students must complete all writing assignments on their own. Students are prohibited from plagiarizing or cheating of any kind on written assignments. Plagiarism is defined by Webster's as "to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own; use another's production without crediting the source." That means that students are prohibited from copying the words of others and presenting them as their own. This includes submitting written work generated by artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT. **Students are not allowed to use ChatGPT or any AI tools or applications in this course. Using ChatGPT or AI to complete written assignments will be considered cheating.**

If I suspect any student has violated the Georgia Tech Honor Code, I will report them to the Office of Student Integrity. **Students who cheat on exams or quizzes or plagiarize written work will receive an F on the assignment and may also fail the course.** All students are responsible for understanding and complying with Georgia Tech rules.

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 Outcome:

- 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

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. **The Student-Faculty Expectations** articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Recordings of Class Sessions and Required Permissions

Classes may not be recorded by students without the expressed written consent of the instructor. Class recordings, lectures, presentations, and other materials posted on Canvas are for the sole purpose of educating the students enrolled in the course. Students may not record or share the materials or recordings, including screen capturing or automated bots, unless the instructor gives permission.