

DRAFT - NOT FINAL

HISTORY 204-303, BASEBALL AND AMERICAN HISTORY

Spring 2017, Thursday, 3-6 p.m.

Instructor: Neil Lanctot, Ph.D. (pronounced "Lank-toe")

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Office hours: Thursday, 2-3, 6-7 or by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVE: Through readings, videos, discussion, and written assignments, students will achieve a deeper understanding of how baseball has both shaped and been shaped by critical developments in modern American history. Throughout, we will consider the question: how does baseball help us to better understand the American experience?

REQUIRED TEXTS: (available new at Penn Book Center, 130 S. 34th Street or you may look into getting used copies at www.bookfinder.com or similar websites):

David Block, *Baseball before We Knew It: A Search for the Roots of the Game*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005.

Warren Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps: A History of Early Baseball*, 20th Anniversary Edition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009.

Harold and Dorothy Seymour, *Baseball: The Early Years*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Bruce Kuklick, *To every thing a season: Shibe Park and urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Robert Creamer, *Babe: The Legend Comes to Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992 (originally published in 1974).

Neil Lanctot, *Campy: The Two Lives of Roy Campanella*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011.

Jennifer Ring, *Stolen Bases: Why American Girls Don't Play Baseball*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009.

Jim Bouton and Leonard Shecter (editor), *Ball Four - Twentieth Anniversary Edition*. New York: Wiley, 1990.

REQUIREMENTS: Final grades will be based upon the following:

1. **Class participation (25%).** You should come to class each week prepared to discuss the reading assignment intelligently. The quality of your commentary in class is as important as the quantity. Regular attendance is expected. Readings should be brought to class each week, ideally with key passages highlighted to facilitate discussion.

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This grade will be determined by a) attendance; b) class participation; c) mastery and knowledge of the course readings during discussions; d) peer evaluations.

Peer evaluation: At the end of the semester, you will also be responsible for turning in a ranking and brief evaluation of the performance of each student in the seminar.

2. **Response paper (25%).** Each student will be responsible for writing one short paper (5 page minimum) responding to an assigned reading for a particular week. The paper should take a position (pro/con) on one issue (provided by the instructor) raised in the book. **Do not use any outside sources to support your arguments.**
3. **Research paper (50%).** Each student will write a primary source-based research paper (15 page minimum/1 inch margins) dealing with one aspect of baseball and American history. A list of available topics will be provided by the instructor. **Papers are due by 9:30 p.m. on April 27.**

Grades will be based on the History Department's research paper rubric:

- Employs a range of primary sources appropriate to the thesis of the paper
- Organization of argument is logical, succinct and comprehensible with a clear analytical framework and narrative sequence
- Well-substantiated argument; proper citation of evidence
- Mechanics, i.e., spelling, punctuation, grammar and construction
- Frames historical issues in a thoughtful, critical manner with a clear articulation of analytical questions and key terms
- Demonstrates an understanding of the key historical events related to the thesis and the complexity of their causes and effects

Tentative schedule of classes:

January 12 INTRODUCTION

January 19 The contested origins of baseball
Reading: Block, *Baseball Before We Knew It*, 1-66, 80-93, 152-162.

Deborah Shattuck, "Women's Baseball in the 1860s - Reestablishing a Historical Memory," *Nine: A Journal of Baseball History and Culture*, Volume 19, Number 2, Spring 2011, pp. 1-26. **(ON CANVAS)**

Video: *Base Ball Discovered*

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Paper topic: **Baseball's origins owe far more to European influences than American.**

January 26 Baseball becomes a business (part I)
Reading: Goldstein, *Playing for Keeps*.

Paper topic: **Baseball's rapid transformation from a local amateur game to national professional sport was inevitable.**

February 2 Baseball becomes a business (part II)
Reading: Seymour, Chapters 7-18

February 9 Baseball becomes a business (part III)
Reading: Seymour, Chapters 19 to end

Paper topic: **Between 1876 and 1894, a series of industry-wide decisions by the owners of professional baseball teams guaranteed the future profitability of the sport.**

February 16 Baseball and the rise of the American City
Reading: Kuklick, *To every thing a season*.

Paper topic: **The rise and fall of Shibe Park provides us with a valuable window into the history of Philadelphia in the twentieth century.**

February 23 Baseball and the new culture of celebrity of the 1920s
Reading: Creamer, *Babe*, Part 1.

March 2 Reading: Creamer, *Babe*, Part 2.
Video: *Babe Ruth*

Paper topic: **Babe Ruth was the first "modern" athlete in America.**

March 16 Baseball and Race
Reading: Lanctot, *Campy*, Chapters 1-10.

March 23 Reading: Lanctot, *Campy*, Chapters 11-20.

Paper topic: **Given the realities of race relations in America in the 1940s and 1950s, Roy Campanella's cautious approach to civil rights issues was appropriate and justifiable.**

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- March 30 Baseball and gender
Reading: Ring, *Stolen Bases*.
- Paper topic: **From the earliest days of baseball, men have intentionally and systematically excluded women from full participation in the sport.**
- April 6 Baseball and the changing American society of the 1960s
Reading: Bouton, *Ball Four*, Through June 6 (diary).
- April 13 Reading: Bouton, *Ball Four*, June 7 through end of season (diary).
Video: *The Curious Case of Curt Flood* or *Fields of Fire - Sports in the 60s*
- Paper topic: **Four decades after publication, *Ball Four* still provides remarkable insight into the life of a professional baseball player.**
- April 20 Catch-up and discussion of final papers
- April 27 Final Paper due