

DRAFT - TO BE FINALIZED IN JANUARY 2014

Seminar: Baseball and American History
HIST 455 601
Spring 2014, Wednesday, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
University of Pennsylvania

Instructor: Neil Lanctot, Ph.D. (pronounced "Lank-toe" - French, like "merlot")
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Office hours: After/before class on Wednesday 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.

Steven Riess, *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999.

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.

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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.

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.** You will also present a brief oral report on the reading for that week and assist in leading discussions for that class.
3. **Research paper (50%).** Each student will write a 15-20 page primary source-based research paper dealing with one aspect of baseball history. A list of available topics will be provided by the instructor. **Papers are due by 9:30 p.m. on May 7.**

Tentative schedule of classes:

January 22	INTRODUCTION
January 29	The contested origins of baseball Reading: Block, <i>Baseball before We Knew It</i> Video: <i>Base Ball Discovered</i> Paper topic: Baseball's origins owe far more to European influences than American.
February 5	Baseball becomes a business (part I) Reading: Goldstein, <i>Playing for Keeps</i> . Paper topic: Baseball's rapid transformation from a local amateur game to national professional sport was inevitable.
February 12	Baseball becomes a business (part II) Reading: Seymour, Chapters 7-20, 26 Paper topic: TBA

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February 19 Baseball and the Progressive Era
Reading: Riess, *Touching Base*.
Paper topic: TBA

February 26 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.**

March 5 Baseball and the new culture of celebrity of the 1920s
Reading: Creamer, *Babe*, Part 1.

March 12 Spring break

March 19 Reading: Creamer, *Babe*, Part 2.
Video: *Babe Ruth*

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

March 26 Baseball and Race
Reading: Lanctot, *Campy*, Chapters 1-10.

April 2 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.**

April 9 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 16 Baseball and the changing American society of the 1960s
Reading: Bouton, *Ball Four*, Through June 6 (diary).

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April 23, 30 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.**

May 7 Final Paper due

Notes:

1. Paper grades are based on content as well as clarity, organization, and coherence of argument. Correct grammar, punctuation, and style are also essential.
2. You will be deducted a letter grade for each day the paper is late. If there are extenuating circumstances (i.e. illness, death in the family, etc.), you **MUST** provide documentation from a physician or the University.
3. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Any student caught or suspected of plagiarizing will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct for a hearing on academic dishonesty. Typically, the **minimum** penalty in these cases is "F" for the assignment with the potential for failure of the course itself. If you are unclear as to what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.
4. Excessive absences are grounds for failure of the class
5. All grades are final. Regardless of the impact on your GPA, etc., **I do not and will not** alter paper/test grades under any circumstances (except in the case of a mathematical error).

Classroom behavior:

1. Please turn off and put away all cell phones **before entering the classroom**. **ANY USE OF A CELL PHONE, BLACKBERRY ETC. DURING CLASS TIME (INCLUDING FILMS) WILL RESULT IN AN AUTOMATIC 10 POINT DEDUCTION ON THE NEXT ASSIGNMENT.**
2. Laptops are not needed in a seminar and should not be used in this class.
3. Please be respectful of your fellow students during class discussions.