HISTORY 362  
BASEBALL AND AMERICAN HISTORY  
UNC CHAPEL HILL

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Baseball seems to have been invented solely for the purpose of explaining all other things in life.  
- Roger Angell

COURSE THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

This course will explore the significance of baseball in American history. As a folk game, an organized sport, a commercial business, and an entertainment spectacle, baseball has been one of our nation’s most popular and enduring institutions. Because of this, the study of baseball provides an accessible lens through which to view many facets of American history and life. Though we will hear and read many entertaining accounts of home runs hit, shut outs pitched, and pennant races won, our focus will be on what the history of baseball can tell us about the following themes in American history:

- the impact of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration on American life;
- patriotism and the articulation of an American identity;
- the conflicts between labor and capital;
- racial prejudice, segregation, and integration in American society;
- evolving ideas about men and women and their “place” in public life;
- and the role of myth in American life.

In other words, during this semester we will work to make connections between the game of baseball and the larger story of American culture and society. Throughout, I will ask you to not only consider how baseball has reflected larger trends in American life, but also to analyze the different ways that the game itself has influenced American history and the world we occupy today.
CLASS STRUCTURE AND ATTENDANCE

The rhythm of this course is as follows: there are two 75-minute lectures every week (Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30-10:45 a.m.). Ten times during the semester, students will also meet for Document Workshops (the UNC Registrar’s Office calls them “recitations”). Your document workshop will be led by one of the Teaching Assistants and will last 50 minutes. Depending on which one you registered for, your document workshop takes place on Thursdays or Fridays.

Though I will not usually take attendance in lecture (I may on occasion), I expect you to attend every lecture meeting. You are also expected to attend every scheduled document workshop. Your co-teacher will take attendance in these workshops and your attendance will help determine your course grade.

Please note that the instructor reserves to right to make changes to the syllabus, including project due dates and test dates (excluding the officially scheduled final examination), when unforeseen circumstances occur. If this occurs, these changes will be announced as early as possible so that students can adjust their schedules.

COURSE READINGS

Benjamin Rader, *Baseball: A History of America’s Game*
Eric Rolfe Greenberg, *The Celebrant: A Novel*
Jules Tygiel, *Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*
Bernard Malamud, *The Natural*
Documents on Course Sakai Page

The readings are listed under each lecture/document workshop topic and should be read before coming to class. This is especially essential for all non-textbook readings assigned for lecture and all readings assigned for document workshops. Carefully read the assigned piece(s) before class meetings and always bring the material for reference.

You can access the documents on the Course Sakai Page by clicking the “Resources” tab on the left side of the page. I have listed the documents in the order that we will be reading and discussing them.

Please note that lectures and textbook readings will not repeat each other. Instead, I will try to challenge and add nuance to what you have already read, not merely echo it.

A note about textbook reading: textbooks are dense. They are filled with a tremendous amount of information packed into a small number of pages. This is their value, but it also means you cannot possibly digest all of the material in one reading. I suggest that you read each assigned textbook segment twice. The first time, read with focus, but read with a goal of understanding the big themes and ideas in preparation for lecture. Later, go back and reread the assigned segments with an eye toward sifting out specific information that you can use to answer the essay questions that I have posed.

I can tell you one thing for sure—if you do not attend and take notes in lecture, and if you do not read the textbook and use the information to help you answer the essay and exam questions, you will not do well in this course.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Your course grade will be determined by the quality of your two Argument Essays (each about 6 pp.), your Baseball and 1968 Research Essay (about 4pp.), your in-class final exam, and your document workshop input (attendance, think pieces, and quality of participation).

The argument essay prompts will be posted on Sakai and discussed in lecture at least two weeks before each essay is due. We will give you a “final exam study guide” at least two weeks before the final exam.
For the **Baseball and 1968 Research Essay** you will conduct primary-source research about baseball during 1968 and then write an essay that makes links between the game and the wider American culture in that year. Using primary sources like *Sport, Sports Illustrated, Life, Time, The Sporting News,* and major American newspapers, students might explore topics such as: how organized baseball reacted to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; how baseball parks were used as sites to either protest or support the American war in Vietnam; the links between baseball and black power; baseball and the modern feminist movement; the role and reaction of baseball players to the protests at the Democratic Party convention in Chicago; the reaction of ballplayers and professional teams to urban unrest in cities like Detroit; or other topics.

During the semester we will discuss this project further, as well as discuss the craft of primary-source research in our document workshops.

**Policies regarding late work:** Argument Essays are due at the beginning of class on the day noted in this syllabus. If you must miss class on the due date, your essay should be emailed to your co-teacher before our class begins, and then you **MUST** give your co-teacher a paper copy at our next class meeting. Any essay not handed in during class (or emailed before class begins) will be considered late. Essays will be marked down one full letter grade (ten points) for every class (lecture) meeting they are late. Think pieces (see below) are not accepted late.

Your **final grade** will be calculated as follows:

- First Argument Essay: 20%
- Second Argument Essay: 25%
- 1968 Newspaper Research Essay: 20%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Document Workshop Engagement: 10%
- **Total**: 100%

**THINK PIECES**

You are required to write a **think piece** for most Document Workshops. Think pieces are typed reactions to readings assigned in Document Workshops. I want you to do these think pieces for two important reasons: (1) having to write about what you read will stimulate you to closer reading and sharper analysis—in other words, it will help you think more interestingly—and (2) it will give you practice in a skill that should serve you for the rest of your life—effective communication through writing.

Think pieces are your short essay answers to specific questions that I have posed about the readings. The questions are in this syllabus, listed under the relevant date.  *(Note to UGSC: I have not come up with these questions yet)*

At the conclusion of your prose **you must skip a line and then pose one question** prompted by that day’s readings. Your co-teacher may call on you to ask your question to further the classroom conversation.

**Specifications:** Think pieces should be between 350-500 words (your question can count as part of your word count). Think pieces must be typed, double-spaced, and use 12-point font and one-inch margins. They should have titles and the pages MUST be stapled together. You do not need to use footnotes in your think pieces.

Think pieces will be turned in as paper copies at the end of each document workshop. **Once the co-teacher has collected the think pieces, you may no longer turn one in.** If you did not write one before class, sorry. If you forgot to print it, sorry. If you were not in class, sorry. In other words, plan ahead! There will be no exceptions to this rule.

Think pieces are not graded. Your TA will read them, but I have asked them not to spend time commenting on them—they have plenty to do! If the Think Piece is unacceptable—that is, if the TA believes that you either did not read the assigned material or did not appropriately consider the readings or the assigned question—you will be asked to rewrite your think piece and turn it in at the next document workshop.
ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

The College of Arts and Sciences has developed several support programs to assist students. Accessibility Services provides individual support to students with diagnosed learning disabilities (962-7227). The Learning Skills Center offers free instruction in a variety of academic learning strategies (http://learningcenter.unc.edu/, 962-3782, 962-6389). The Writing Center, which fills up quickly, provides free tutorial services (http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/about.html, 962-7710, 962-4060).

HONORABLE AND COURTEOUS BEHAVIOR

THE HONOR CODE: It shall be the responsibility of every student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing when these actions involve academic processes or University, student, or academic personnel acting in an official capacity.

THE CAMPUS CODE: It shall be the further responsibility of every student to abide by the Campus Code; namely, to conduct oneself so as not to impair the welfare or the educational opportunities of others in the University community.

COURTESY DURING CLASSES. It is disruptive to others to arrive late to class or to leave early. If you must do it (which I strongly discourage), please be unobtrusive. Also, please turn off all cell phones. Checking your phone and/or texting during class—be it in lecture or in the document workshops—is the height of DISCOURTESY.

Laptop computers may only be used in class for taking notes. If you are checking your email, looking up sports scores, or shopping for shoes, your classmates who can see your screen will not be able to concentrate on our course. If I learn that you are using your laptop for any reason other than note-taking while in class, I will bar your laptop from our classroom for the rest of the semester. I am serious.

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACTING ME

I am glad you are in this class and I want you to do well. One of the best ways of doing so is to come and ask questions or just chat with me (or the co-teachers) during office hours. I genuinely enjoy meeting students and learning from and about them. If you cannot make my office hours (they are listed on the front page of this syllabus) please contact me and we will arrange a meeting time convenient to us both.

Likewise, as college students of the 21st Century, I expect that you will check your email regularly between classes. Always check your UNC email account the evening before a class meeting to confirm that I have not announced any changes to the next day’s schedule (I will try not to do this).
COURSE SCHEDULE

20 August (Tue)  Opening Day

22 August (Thu)  The Myth of Baseball
Read: Albert G. Spalding, *America's National Game* (1911) [excerpt].

27 August (Tue)  The Origins of the Game
Read: New York Knickerbockers Rules for Base Ball (1854).
Read: *Baseball*, chs. 1-2.

29 August (Thu)  Institutionalizing the Game
Read: *Baseball*, ch. 3.

29 and 30 August (Thu and Fri)  Document Workshop – An Urban Game
Read: A Defense of Cricket as the “National Game,” *New York Clipper* (1857).
Read: Henry Chadwick, The “Model Base Ball Player,” *Ball Player’s Chronicle* (1867).
To Do: Hand in Think Piece.

3 September (Tue)  Becoming the National Pastime
Read: *Baseball*, ch. 4.

5 September (Thu)  The Great Baseball Wars
Read: *Baseball*, ch. 5.
5 and 6 September (Thu and Fri)  **Document Workshop — Baseball and Labor Conflict**

Read:  

Read:  
The “Brotherhood Manifesto” (1889).

Read:  
Albert Spalding, “The NL Responds to the Manifesto” (1889).

To Do:  
Hand in Think Piece.

10 September (Tue)  **“Katie Casey Was Baseball Mad” - Women in a Man’s Game**

Read:  

12 September (Thu)  **Jim Crow and Black Baseball**

Read:  

12 and 13 September (Thu and Fri)  **Document Workshop — Baseball and Exclusion**

Read:  

Read:  

To Do:  
Hand in Think Piece.

17 September (Tue)  **1908 and Baseball’s Coming of Age**

Read:  
*Baseball*, ch. 6.

19 September (Thu)  **Baseball and the Immigrant Experience**

Read:  

19 and 20 September (Thu and Fri)  **Document Workshop — Baseball and the American Dream**

Read:  

To Do:  
Hand in Think Piece.
24 September (Tue)  America in 1919: Red Scares and Black Sox

Read:  Baseball, ch. 8.

To Do:  Hand in First Argument Essay.

26 September (Thu)  The Park in the City


1 October (Tue)  Cobb v. Ruth: The Turn to Modern America

Read:  Baseball, ch. 9.

3 October (Thu)  The National Pastime in Hard Times: The 1930s

Read:  Baseball, ch. 10.

3 and 4 October (Thu and Fri)  Document Workshop – Oy! What a Player!

Read:  Assorted Media Images and Descriptions of Hank Greenberg (1930-1944).

To Do:  Hand in Think Piece.

8 October (Tue)  Baseball and World War II


10 October (Thu)  The Negro Leagues

10 and 11 October (Thu and Fri)  Document Workshop – Integrating Baseball

Read:  Jules Tygiel, Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy, 3-210.

To Do:  Hand in Think Piece.
15 October (Tue) Baseball’s Great Experiment I

17 October (Thu) FALL BREAK

22 October (Tue) Baseball’s Great Experiment II

24 October (Thu) Gauging Jackie Robinson

24 and 25 October (Thu and Fri) Document Workshop – Jackie Robinson’s Sad Song?

Read: Jules Tygiel, Baseball’s Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy, 211-344.


To Do: Hand in Think Piece.

29 October (Tue) Baseball in the “American Century”

Read: Don DeLillo, Underworld (1997) [excerpt].

31 October (Thu) Going West: Baseball and the 20th Century Frontier

Read: Baseball, ch. 12.

To Do: Hand in Second Argument Essay.

5 November (Tue.)* No Lecture Meeting Today (Film Tonight)

5 November (Tue.)* FILM: The Natural (1984)

*Please Note: This film will be shown in the evening on Tuesday 5 November (time and place to be announced—but probably around 7:00 p.m.).
7 November (Thu)  
The “Greatest Generation” – Baseball and Nostalgia

Read:  

Read:  

7 and 8 November (Thu and Fri)  
*Document Workshop – Baseball and American Myth*

Read:  

To Do:  
Hand in Think Piece.

12 November (Tue)  
Baseball Abroad – Exporting the American Way

Read:  

14 November (Thu)  
Baseball and “the Sixties”

Read:  
*Baseball*, ch. 13.

14 and 15 November (Thu and Fri)  
*Document Workshop – Baseball and 1968*

Read:  

Read:  

To Do:  
Hand in Baseball in 1968 Research Essay.

19 November (Tue)  
The Bad News Bears and the Death of American Sports

Read:  

21 November (Thu)  
Free Agency and the “Me Generation”

Read:  
*Baseball*, ch. 15.

21 and 22 November (Thu and Fri)  
*Document Workshop – Viva Baseball!*

To Do:  


To Do: Hand in Think Piece.

26 November (Tue) Populist and Postmodern Baseball


28 November (Thu) THANKSGIVING BREAK

3 December (Tue) Last Day: Topic TBA

10 December (Tue) FINAL EXAM