

First-Year Seminar

From Brooklyn to the Babe: Baseball and the American City, 1850-1930

Course Description and Objectives: This first-year seminar will introduce you to the practice of history through an exploration of the relationship between the growing popularity of baseball and the rise of urban culture in the United States between 1850 and 1930. Using the argument that cities spurred the emergence of baseball as the national pastime as our starting point, we will learn how historians test such hypotheses in their work. Using both primary and secondary sources as our guides, we will learn how to assess evidence from a wide variety of texts and to construct an argument based on the evidence we discover. If this process sounds dry, fear not; we will be uncovering a fascinating story of play, work, entertainment, race, gambling, and celebrity, beginning in New York before the Civil War and traveling around the world before returning to that city in the peak of the Jazz Age. You will work hard, but if you have any curiosity about these topics you will enjoy the process, and I hope you will emerge from the class with both an appreciation and an enthusiasm for “doing history”: interpreting documents, synthesizing diverse perspectives, building and presenting historical arguments, writing good prose, and constructively criticizing and encouraging your colleagues’ interpretations.

Readings:

The assigned readings for this course will consist of both “primary” and “secondary” sources. Primary sources are documents – letters, diaries, novels, treaties, newspaper accounts among others – that date to a particular event or moment in America’s past. Secondary sources offer a historian’s interpretation of past events. You will be expected to complete all the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss them in class.

Copies of the following books are available on reserve at Smith Library and for purchase in the University bookstore.

John Thorn, *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*

Michael Isenberg, *John L. Sullivan and His America*

Eliot Asinof & Stephen J. Gould, *Eight Men Out: The Black Sox and the 1919 World Series*

Lawrence S. Ritter, *The Glory of Their Times: The Story of Baseball As Told By the Men Who Played It*

Ring Lardner, *You Know Me Al*

Course Requirements

1. Participation and Reading: All students are expected to be active participants in this course. This means you must attend class regularly and on time, complete all reading assignments in a timely fashion, and come to class prepared to engage your fellow classmates in a lively discussion. In addition, on a rotating basis students will be “on call,” which means they will produce questions for the day’s class discussions and assist me in leading those discussions.

Your performance in the classroom will serve as the primary basis for your class participation grade.

2. Attendance and Classroom Behavior: In order to succeed in this class, you must be present at nearly all of the class sessions. Habitual absenteeism negatively impacts both you and your classmates. Consequently, I have a strict attendance policy in my class. You are allowed two absences over the course of the semester. High Point University makes no distinction between excused and unexcused absences, and leaving class early counts as an absence. Beginning with the third absence, you will be placed on class probation and will receive a 1/3 of a grade penalty on your class participation grade for every additional absence. If this attendance policy will be a problem for you, come see me **IN ADVANCE**. I will not consider explanations or requests for leniency after the fact.

In addition to attending class, you must also behave in a mature and respectful manner in the classroom. To help facilitate this process, please turn off all handheld electronic devices at the beginning of class and drop them at the front of the room; you may pick them up again at the end of class. As a general rule, I will not allow the use of laptops in class; if you have a particular reason why you need to use your laptop, you may ask for permission. Holding private conversations during the class is also unacceptable. Students who violate these standards of behavior will have their devices confiscated for the remainder of the class and will receive a significant penalty in their class participation grade.

2. Writing Assignments: You will have two options for writing assignments in this class. You must inform me which option you wish to choose by **Friday, January 20th at 5 pm**. Students who do not inform me of their choice by that date will automatically be assigned Option A.

Option A. Students will complete three take-home essay assignments, each of which will require them to write an approximately 1500-word answer to a question I will assign. The assignments will be due on **February 17 at 5pm, March 30 at 5 pm, and April 27 at 8:30 am**. Students will have the opportunity to rewrite the first two assignments (they will be required to do so if they earn a 71 or below) provided they follow revision procedures that I will provide. The rewrite on the first assignment can replace the original grade; the rewrite on the second assignment will be averaged with the original grade. There will be no opportunity to rewrite the final assignment.

Option B. Students will write a 3000-3500 word research essay that will explore the history of a single legal issue of your choosing. You must submit the topic for my approval by **Friday January 20 at 5 pm**. You will need to employ both primary and secondary sources in your paper, and you will need to submit the following assignments as part of the project:

1. An annotated bibliography (10% of the paper grade) due **February 10 at 5 pm**.

2. A 500-750 word paper proposal (10% of the paper grade) due **February 24 at 5 pm.**
3. A complete rough draft (30% of the grade) due **March 30 at 5 pm.**
4. A final version of the paper (50% of the grade) due **April 16 at 5 pm.**

Students who choose this option will not write the first two take-home assignments but will have to complete the final take-home assignment. Students who choose this option may also have the opportunity to orally present their work for extra credit, but this opportunity is not yet certain and should not be relied upon in deciding which option to pursue.

I expect my students to be able to construct coherent arguments and to express themselves in clear, grammatically correct English. If you struggle with writing, I suggest you contact the HPU Writing Center, located on the fourth floor of Smith Library. The Writing Center provides writing assistance at any stage in the writing process, from invention through revision, for students at all levels, from freshman to graduate. The Center is staffed by student writing consultants and will be open Sunday through Thursday from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m., starting Tuesday, September 6th. Appointments for twenty-five or fifty-minute sessions may be made on the fourth floor of Smith Library at the Grades First kiosk using an HPU Passport or student ID number. Consultants at the Writing Center do not proofread or edit students' papers for them, but they do work with students to help them develop strategies for improving their writing in light of their respective assignments, instructors, and personal writing styles. For more information, please visit the Writing Center in 430 Smith Library, or contact the Center's Faculty Coordinator, Dr. Joe Goeke, at jgoeke0@highpoint.edu or (336) 841-9633.

3. Grading and Assessment:

The final grade will be computed from a weighted average of the individual grades you earn for your class participation, written assignments, and exams. Your class participation grade will be determined both from the quality and quantity of contributions to the class.

The course requirements will be weighted as follows in determining your final grade for the course:

Option A		Option B	
Take Home Assignments	25% each	Research Paper	50%
Class Participation	25%	Take Home Assignment	25%
		Class Participation	25%

4. The Fine Print

1. This syllabus is a road map for this class but it is not set in stone. I reserve the right to make changes in the syllabus with proper advance notice given to you.
2. You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade.
3. All papers are due at the times stated below. All papers must be submitted electronically. Late papers will automatically be marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late (beginning at 2 pm on the day they are due) unless you have written documentation from your advisor, an

academic Dean, or from University medical services. Computer problems are **never** an acceptable excuse for late work.

4. If you have a question about a grade you receive on a paper, test, or for the course, please come to my office hours or make an appointment. I will not discuss grades over the phone or e-mail. However, I am happy to discuss questions about the course material via e-mail.

5. Academic Honesty: The work you submit for this course should be completely and solely your own. This means that any and all quotations from the words and thoughts of others must be appropriately acknowledged in your assignments. To do anything less is stealing. Any evidence that you have failed to follow these rules will be immediately and thoroughly investigated, and any violations of the honor code will be submitted to the Honor Court. Be forewarned: I consider cheating to be a very serious and utterly avoidable offense. Expect no leniency from me in cases of suspected cheating/plagiarism.

6. Students who require classroom accommodations due to a diagnosed disability must submit the appropriate documentation to Disability Support in the Office of Academic Development, 4th Floor Smith Library. Requests for accommodations should be made at the beginning of a course. Accommodations are not retroactive. Contact Rita Sullivan, Coordinator of Disability Support, rsulliva@highpoint.edu, 336-841-9061 for additional information.

CLASS SCHEDULE

T Jan 10 Class Intro

Th Jan 12 The Doubleday Myth

Reading: *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*, Intro and Chapter 1

T Jan 17 The Origins Debate

Reading: *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*, Chapters 2 and 3:

The Knickerbocker Rules <http://www.19cbaseball.com/image-knickerbocker-baseball-rules.html>

Th Jan 19 American Urban Society

Reading: *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*, Chapter 4; *John L. Sullivan*, Chapters 1-2

Select Option A or Option B Writing Assignments by Jan 20 at 5 pm

T Jan 24 Sport and Society Before the Civil War

Reading: *John L. Sullivan*, Chapter 3; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Saints and Their Bodies"
http://books.google.com/books?id=x463s2i_EusC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Th Jan 26 Baseball and the Civil War

Reading: *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*, Chapter 5

T Jan 31 Capital and Labor

Reading: *The Incorporation of America*, Chapter 3

Th Feb 2 A National Pastime

Reading: *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*, Chapter 6

T Feb 7 Life as an American Athlete

Reading: *John L. Sullivan*, Chapter 4-5

Th Feb 9 The National League

Reading: *Baseball in the Garden of Eden*, Chapter 7

Annotated Bibliography for Research Paper due Friday February 10 at 5 pm

T Feb 14 Sports and Celebrity

Reading: *John L. Sullivan*, Chapters 6-7

Th Feb 16 The First Ballparks

Reading: *Diamonds: The Evolution of a Ballpark* (handout)

First Take-Home Assignment due Friday, February 17 at 5 pm

T Feb 21 Professional Ballplayers

Reading: *Fifty-Nine in '84* (handout)

Th Feb 23 Sports as an American Export

Reading: *John L. Sullivan*, Chapters 6-7

Research Paper Proposal due Friday February 24 at 5 pm

T Feb 29 The Spalding World Tour I

Reading: *Ambassadors in Pinstripes* (handout)

Th Mar 1 The Spalding World Tour II

Reading: *Ambassadors in Pinstripes* (handout)

TTh Mar 6 & 8 NO CLASS- Spring Break

Optional Rewrites for First Take-Home Assignment due Monday March 12 at 9 am

T Mar 13 The Players' League

Reading: *The League That Failed*, Chapters 1 and 2

Th Mar 15 The Clash of the Leagues: National, Western and American

Reading: *Where They Ain't* (handout)

T Mar 20 The World Series

Reading: *The Glory of Their Times*, Chapters 2 & 5

Th Mar 22 Management

Reading: *Past Time*, Chapter 3 (handout)

T Mar 27 The Stars

Reading: *The Glory of Their Times*, Chapters 4 & 11

Th Mar 29 The Non-Stars

Reading: *The Glory of Their Times*, Chapters 7 & 12

Second Take-Home Assignment due Friday, March 30 at 5 pm

Complete Rough Draft of Research Paper due Friday, March 30 at 5 pm

T Apr 3 Sportswriters

Reading: *You Know Me Al*, Chapters 1 and 2

Th Apr 5 Pop Culture and Baseball

Reading: *You Know Me Al*, Chapters 3 and 4

T Apr 10 Gambling and Baseball During WWI

Reading: *Eight Men Out*, Intro and Part 1

Th Apr 12 The 1919 World Series

Reading: *Eight Men Out*, Parts 2 and 3

Optional Rewrites for Second Take-Home Assignment due Friday April 13 at 5 pm

Final Research Paper due Monday April 16 at 5 pm

T Apr 17 Changing Times

Reading: *Eight Men Out*, Part 4

Th Apr 19 The Aftermath

Reading: *Eight Men Out*, Part 5 and 6

T Apr 24 The Babe

Reading: *Past Time*, Chapter 4 (handout)

Exam Period, Friday April 27, 8:30-11:30 am *Eight Men Out* (the movie)

Final Take-Home Assignment due Friday April 27 at 8:30 am