

Instructor: Professor Rashida K. Braggs
Class Location: Griffin 2
Class Time: Wednesdays/Fridays 11:00 AM-12:15 PM
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1.30-3.30 pm
and by appointment at Hollander 312
Contact info: rkb2@williams.edu

Africana Studies 217
Race(ing) Sports: Issues, Themes and Representations of Black Athletes

Course Description

Althea Gibson to the Williams Sisters. Julius (Dr. J) Irving to Michael Jordan. Jesse Owens to Tommie Smith and John Carlos. Throughout the 20th century, black athletes have broken through Jim Crow restraints, challenged racial stereotypes, and taken their sports to new heights of achievement. In this course, students will explore a range of black athletes in the 20th century, paying particular attention to the attitudes, stereotypes and experiences they endured. In addition, this course will prompt students to analyze the representation, perception, and commodification of black athletes in popular media forms. Students will trace trends, shifts and themes in representations of blackness across different sports and historical periods. Topics under study may include resistance against and affirmation of athletes as role models, racial slurs in sports broadcasting, common themes in commercialized images of the black male athlete, and distinctions in media coverage based on race and gender. Texts will include everything from critical essays and sociological studies to commercials and documentary films. In their final projects, students may put their newfound knowledge to the test by exploring their campus or hometown to investigate the role that race plays on their own playing field. Note that *Race(ing) Sports* is an EDI course and counts toward credit for majors in Sociology, English and American Studies.

Goals of the Course

- To discover signal subjects and moments of black athletic achievement in U.S. and global history
- To critique stereotypical and problematic images of blackness in the media
- To reflect on key trends, shifts and themes in representations of black athletes in the media
- To investigate and critique diverse media, from advertisements to art
- To identify differences and similarities in racialized experience and perception across gender, historical period, and sport
- To become more cognizant of the social impact of race in popular culture and everyday life

Required Texts

- ***Sport and the Color Line: Black Athletes and Race Relations in Twentieth-Century America*** available for purchase at Water Street Books
- Course Reader available in the basement of Hollander
- **Required Viewing of *Unforgivable Blackness***. The film is also on reserve at Sawyer Library and is on Netflix Streaming Video.
- **Required Viewing of *Uneven Fairways: The Story of the Negro Leagues of Golf***. The film is also on reserve at Sawyer Library.
- Audiovisual Clips on **Glow** at glow.williams.edu
- Forum Postings, Paper Dropboxes and Sign-Ups will all be also on Glow. (So please be sure that you have access to Glow and check it regularly for the most current assignment information).
- When needed, **supplementary materials** will be provided in class.

Assignments

- **Class participation** includes the below:
 - In-Class Discussion & Exercises 20%
 - Oral Sports Commentary 10%
- **Social Analysis Essay** (4-5 pages) 20%
- **Close Analysis Essay** (7-8 pages) 30%
- **Final group project** (including a meeting with professor, written pre-proposal, final proposal, report, and peer evaluation form) 20%

Class Participation

Since class participation makes up a total of 30% percent of the final grade, strong participation can really improve the student's overall grade. Class attendance to this course is essential to improving your critical thinking skills. Missing classes and/or showing up late may cause students to fall behind in class activities and assignments. In class, we not only learn and practice important skills we also build a community of thinkers and colleagues. In other words, this course is as much about individual excellence as community building and achievement. Thus, I deliberately utilize exercises that not only boost individual listening/speaking/writing skills but also exercises that urge students to serve as leaders in groups and work collectively to analyze and critique texts. Given this focus on communal learning, I expect every student to respect and listen to other opinions, engage in discussions, share the stage for others to contribute and build upon previous discussions and comments. In order to achieve ideal participation in this course, students should consult the participation criteria and contribute to the tasks below:

In-Class Participation Criteria

Participation will be evaluated on the following guidelines, which stress the quality rather than the quantity of contributions to discussion. This means that good participation not only demonstrates the student's ability to vocally contribute but also the student's contribution to listening to class discussions, adding ideas to augment others' comments and working together on group tasks.

A range. The student is fully engaged and highly motivated. This student is well prepared, having read the assigned texts, and has thought carefully about the texts' relation to issues raised in class. This student's ideas and questions are substantive (either constructive or critical) and are located specifically in the text or previous discussions; they stimulate class discussions. This student exhibits a good balance between listening and responding to the contributions of other students.

B range. The student attends and participates consistently in discussion. This student comes to class well-prepared and contributes regularly by sharing thoughts and questions that show some insight and familiarity with the material. This student's contributions may be more general rather than specific to the text; they may also lack a good balance between listening and talking.

C range. The student meets the basic requirements of class participation. This student participates once in a while but not regularly. This student's contributions may lead to incoherent, distracted and unproductive discussion. Additionally, this student may have come late or missed multiple classes, thus lapsing in their contributions to the course.

Failure to fulfill satisfactorily any of the criteria for C-range participation will result in a grade of "D" or below.

Sports Commentary

Each student will facilitate a three-minute oral sports commentary. Groups will be able to sign-up on Glow after the course enrollment settles. Each student will initiate one specific topic relevant to the representation of black athletes in the media. The topic should be a contemporary topic and the student should work outside of class to research and plan the presentation. The student will be graded on the significance of the topic, the polish and organization of the presentation, and the content shared. Grading criteria and sign-up sheets for the sports commentary will be posted soon on Glow for further information. Note that students may consult in advance with me to brainstorm or share ideas. The purpose of this assignment is for students to build awareness of current sports events and to apply course topics to their everyday lives.

Social Analysis Essay

Students will write a 4-5 page paper identifying and analyzing a topic that portrays a racial stereotype, construction or assumption. The topic type can vary from essay to event to broadcast. Students may choose a topic already identified in class or explore a new topic, but students should draw primarily on course texts to support their analysis. The specific prompt and grading criteria of the paper will be posted on Glow.

Close Analysis Essay

Students will write a 7-8 page paper closely analyzing the representation of race in a particular sports medium. Drawing on skills practiced in class such as analyzing film and advertisements, students will closely analyze 1-3 media; i.e. 2 films, 3 newspaper reports. Next, students will make an argument about the social implications and issues these media illustrate. Note that while this is a close analysis essay, students are still expected to have a thesis, cite the text, and are free to bring in minimal additional historical/social contextual texts for support. The specific prompt and grading criteria of the paper will be posted on Glow.

Final Group Project

For the culminating assignment in this course, students will work together to research and analyze the influence of race on media representation in a large-scale study. Students will identify one common thread, such as one sport, one figure, one magazine or one TV channel. As a group, students will have more capabilities to study one topic across a broader time period and/or through multiple representations. For example, last year students researched multiple news outlets and eras to investigate racialized rhetoric in reporting on the Celtics.

During the semester, students should begin to think of other group members and potential projects; groups will range from 4-5 students. Some class time will be given to work on projects but the crux of the assignment will require external meetings between members and with myself. A successful project will demonstrate thorough, collective collaboration on research, analysis and presentation. While this is a group project, individual contribution will be assessed through a peer evaluation form. In addition to presenting final projects on the last day of the course, students will also be responsible for submitting a group report, bibliography and sample cited resources. The purpose of this project is for students to practice teamwork and presentation skills, develop in-depth research, and apply course themes to a larger scale study. As the date nears, grading criteria for the final group project will be posted on Glow for further information.

Grading Scale

This course follows the grading scale of Williams College, in which A=excellent, B=good, C=fair, D=passing, and E=failing. These letters may be amended with a plus or minus and having the below values:

A+ (97-100)= 4.33	A (94-96)= 4.00	A- (90-93)= 3.67
B+ (87-89)= 3.33	B (84-86)= 3.00	B- (80-83)= 2.67
C+ (77-79)= 2.33	C (74-76)= 2.00	C- (70-73)= 1.67
D+ (67-69)= 1.33	D (64-66)= 1.00	D- (60-63)= 0.67
E (59-60)= 0	I= Incomplete	

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day (e.g., A to A-). For the argumentative essay, students still need to turn in a hard copy and post it online when it is late. The turn in time will be judged by the time it was posted online.

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to turn in their own work and to give credit to any sources that have contributed to their research, whether from classroom discussion, lectures or readings. Accordingly, I expect students to follow Williams' honor code. More information on the honor code and support with how to cite can be found in the Student Handbook and in the Eph Survival Guide at http://web.williams.edu/resources/acad_resources/survival_guide/.

Absence Policy

Students must attend all classes and are expected to participate in discussion and contribute their homework. **If a student misses more than two unexcused classes, his or her grade will be affected.** For all absences, students should notify me—especially in cases where the student knows in advance he or she will miss class due to an athletic competition, for example. If a student has an emergency, such as a prolonged illness, which may lead to more than two absences, the student should contact me before missing section.

Meetings and Conferences

I encourage you to come and talk to me during office hours (Thursdays 2-4pm at Hollander Hall 213) about paper topics, class concerns, etc. The best way to do this is to arrange a meeting time in advance. You can also reach me through email at rkb2@williams.edu. Note that email is the best form of contact and not my office phone. I will do my best to respond within 24 hours (save for holidays).

Assignment Schedule

On your Mark, Get Set, Go...

Dates	Topics	Assignments (Homework due on the date it is noted)
WEEK 1		
Friday, Feb. 1	Introduction to Race(ing) Sports Racial Exclusion in Soccer	

Why Race Matters in Sports

WEEK 2		
Wed., Feb. 6	Racial Differentiation— Still an Issue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Byrd, J. and M. Utsler (2007) “Is Stereotypical Coverage of African-American Athletes as ‘Dead as Disco’? An Analysis of NFL Quarterbacks in the Pages of Sports Illustrated.” <i>Journal of Sports Media</i> 2(1): 2-28. Toure. “What if Michael Vick were White?” ESPN.com. August 25, 2011. Maller, Ben. “Green Bay Packers Receiver Jordy Nelson Says His Race is Part of the Reason for His Success.” www.thepostgame.com. Accessed 11.17.2011.
Fri., Feb. 8	Reading Sports with a Racialized Lens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrington, Ben. "Introduction- Sport, the Black Athlete and the Remaking of Race," <i>Race, Sports and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora</i>. 1-23. Kevin Hylton, "Introduction- defining key terms," <i>'Race' and Sport: Critical Race Theory</i>, 1-21.

False Starts: Stereotypes & Racialized Assumptions

WEEK 3		
Wed., Feb. 13	Scientific Racism: Promoting Racial Inferiority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patrick B. Miller, “The Anatomy of Scientific Racism: Racist Responses to Black Athletic Achievement,” <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, New York: Routledge, 2004,” 327-344. L.R. Davis, “The articulation of difference: white preoccupation with the question of racially linked genetic differences among athletes.” <i>Sociology of Sport Journal (SSJ)</i>, 7(2), 179 - 187.
Fri., Feb. 15	NO CLASS (WINTER CARNIVAL)	
WEEK 4		
Wed., Feb. 20	“Great Speed but Little Stamina”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Viewing of Video on Running in Kenya (ON GLOW) John Bale and Joe Sang, “Altitude or Attitude: Regions and Myths.” <i>Kenyan Running: Movement, Culture, Geography and Global Change</i>.138-162. David K. Wiggins, “Great Speed But Little Stamina:” The Historical Debate Over Black Athletic Superiority.” <i>Journal of Sport History</i>, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Summer, 1989). 158-185. <p>OPTIONAL: Epstein, David. “Sports Genes.” <i>SIVault</i>. www.cnsi.com. May 17, 2010.</p>

Fri., Feb. 22	Presumed Violent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “LeBron James' 'Vogue' cover called racially insensitive.” <i>USAToday</i>. March 24, 2008. (ON GLOW) • Hill, Jemele. “LeBron should be more careful with his image.” ESPN.com. March 20, 2008. • Ben Carrington, “Fear of a Black Athlete: Masculinity, Politics and The Body,” <i>New Formations</i> 45: 91-110. <p>**Social Analysis Paper due on Glow on Sunday, Feb. 24 at 5pm. Hard copies should also be handed in at the next class.**</p>
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Sprinting through the Color Line: Sports and Civil Rights Reform

WEEK 5		
Wed., Feb. 27	Setting Precedents: The first black heavyweight champion of the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing of <i>Unforgivable Blackness</i> (Sawyer Reserve) • Jack London, “Jack Johnson vs. Jim Jeffries.” <i>The Greatest Boxing Stories Ever Told: Thirty Six Incredible Tales from the Ring</i>. Ed. Jeff Silverman, 53-61. • Randy Roberts, “Year of the Comet: Jack Johnson versus Jim Jeffries, July 4, 1910.” <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, 45-62
Fri., Mar. 1	Segregation on the Field & Court	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerald Early. “American Integration, Black Heroism and the Meaning of Jackie Robinson.” <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i>. May 23, 1997, B4-B5. • “The Showcase African-American: Paul Robeson, Jackie Robinson, and the Politics of Cold War Prosperity and Repression.” <i>Globetrotting: African American Athletes and Cold War Politics</i>. 13-40. • Tygiel, Jules. “Jackie Robinson: ‘A Lone Negro’ in Major League Baseball.” <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, New York: Routledge, 2004, 305-325. 196-222.
WEEK 6		
Wed., Mar. 6	Review & Guest Talk by Poet Earl Braggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REVIEW • Selected Sports Poems by Poet Earl Braggs

Commercialization, Commodification, and Branding

<p>Fri., Mar. 8</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speakers TBD • Branch, Taylor. "The Shame of College Sports." <i>The Atlantic Monthly</i>. October 2011.
<p>WEEK 7</p>		
<p>Wed., Mar. 13</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Hoberman, "Introduction: Flying Air Jordan, The Power of Racial Images," <i>Darwin's Athletes: How Sport Has Damaged Black America and Preserved the Myth of Race</i>, xiv-xxvi. • D. Kellner. "The Sports Spectacle, Michael Jordan, and Nike." <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, New York: Routledge, 2004, 305-325. • Andrews, David and Ron Mower. "Spectres of Jordan." <i>Ethnic and Racial Studies</i>. March 2012. • Michael D. Giardina, Jennifer L. Metz. "Women's sports in Nike's America: body politics and the corporo-empowerment of 'everyday athletes.'" <i>Sport, culture, and advertising: Identities, commodities, and the politics of representation</i>. Jackson, S.J., & Andrews, D.L. (Eds.). Praeger Press: Westport, CT. 59-80.
<p>Fri., Mar. 15</p>		<p>Visit WCMA The "Branded: Series of Hank Willis Thomas, Discussion with Coordinator Liz Gallerani and Curatorial Fellow Maurita Poole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • De Guzman, Rene. "Nothing Better." <i>Hank Willis Thomas</i>. 94-99. • Kelley, Robin D.G. "Burning Symbols: The Work of Art in the Age of Tyrannical (Re)production." <i>Hank Willis Thomas</i>. 102-109. <p>Final Project Pre-Proposal due on Glow by Friday, <u>March 15 at 10am</u></p>

NO CLASS (Spring Break Mar. 16-31)

Blacks in Predominantly White Sports

WEEK 8		
Wed., Apr. 3	Golf Precedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View <i>Uneven Fairways: The Story of the Negro Leagues of Golf</i> (Sawyer Reserve) Woods, Tiger. Foreword. <i>Uneven Lies: The Heroic Story of African-Americans in Golf</i>. Greenwich: The American Golfer, 2000. 8-9. (ON GLOW) Kennedy, John H. <i>A Course of their Own: A History of African American Golfers</i>. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005. 1-48. (ON GLOW)
Fri., Apr. 5	Tennis Precedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from Arthur Ashe and Arnold Rampersad, "The Burden of Race." <i>Days of Grace</i>, 139-186. Nancy E. Spencer, "From 'Child's Play' to 'Party Crasher': Venus Williams, Racism and Professional Women's Tennis," <i>Sport Stars: The Cultural Politics of Sporting Celebrity</i>, Ed. David L. Andrews and Steven J. Jackson, 87-101. Supplemental Materials on Serena Williams (On Glow) <p>**Close Analysis Paper due on Glow on Friday, April 5 at 10am. Hard copies should also be handed in at class.*</p>

"Man Up" & "Play Like A Girl"! Gender Biases & Expectations for Black Athletes

WEEK 9		
Wed., Apr. 10	Black Masculinities & Sports In-Class Partial Viewing of <i>When We Were Kings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpt from Kasia Boddy, "Save Me Jack Dempsey, Save Me Joe Louis." <i>Boxing a Cultural History</i>. 257-315. Students read 280-315. K. Woodward, "Rumbles in the Jungle: Boxing, Racialization and the 'Performance of Masculinity,'" <i>Leisure Studies</i> 5-17.
Fri., Apr. 12		Visit Sawyer Library Work on final projects with Reference and Instruction Librarian Lori DuBois
WEEK 10		
Wed., Apr. 17	Black Women's Double Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rita Liberti, "'We Were Ladies, We Just Played Like Boys': African-American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942," <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, 83-99. Susan Cahn, "'Cinderellas' of Sport: Black Women in Track and Field," <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, New York: Routledge, 2004,

		211-232.
Fri., Apr. 19	Black Women and Body Issues & Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speaker: Olympic Track Star Natasha Hastings • Ariel Levy, "Either/Or: Sports, sex, and the case of Caster Semenya." <i>The New Yorker</i>. November 30, 2009. • Articles & Websites on Natasha Hastings (On Glow) • Articles on Gabby Douglass <p>Final Project Proposal with Working Bibliography and Sample Resource due on Glow by April 19 at 10AM</p>

"Man Up" & "Play Like A Girl"! Gender Biases & Expectations for Black Athletes

WEEK 11		
Wed., Apr. 24	Black Women and Body Issues & Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Last Sports Commentaries • Review readings, guest lecture notes, and class discussions on April 5, April 17, and April 19 on Black women athletes. <u>Choose 1 quote</u> from a reading, insight from class discussion, or paraphrase from Natasha Hastings' guest lecture from one of the above dates. <u>Type out the quote/paraphrase</u>; and be sure to write the page number or class date. Next, in a <u>response of 100 words or less</u>, relate this quote/paraphrase to 1 of the <u>black women athletes introduced in our recent classes.</u> ** Glow Responses are due by 9am on Wednesday, April 24.

Race(ing) at the Olympics

Fri., Apr. 26	Race(ing) at the Olympics	<p>Read one of the below assignments and prepare to present it to your classmates in class:</p> <p>GROUP A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins "Introduction." <i>Sport and the Color Line</i>, Ed. Patrick B. Miller and David K. Wiggins, ix-xii. • David K. Wiggins and Patrick K. Miller, "Harry Levette and Herbert Henegan: Two Considerations of the 1932 Olympic Games." <i>The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport</i>, 154-155. • David K. Wiggins and Patrick K. Miller, "Walter White to Jesse Owens on Race Pride and the Nazi Olympics." <i>The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport</i>, 163-165. • David Clay Large, "The Games the Nazis Played." <i>The New York Times</i>. August 8, 2011. <p>OR</p>
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		<p>GROUP B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief Summary of Silent Protest at 1968 Olympics (ON GLOW) • David K. Wiggins and Patrick K. Miller, "Introduction." <i>The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport</i>, 271-272. • David K. Wiggins and Patrick K. Miller, "The Boycott Debate: Tommie Smith on "Why Negroes Should Boycott" the Olympics and Ralph Johnson on "Why They Should Not." <i>The Unlevel Playing Field: A Documentary History of the African American Experience in Sport</i>, 289-295.
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Post-Game Show: Looking inward and onward

WEEK 12		
Wed., May 1	<p>Looking Inward: Race(ing) Sports at Williams</p> <p>**Class today is in Griffin 3**</p>	<p>Guest Panel with Williams Sports Faculty: Bob Peck (Former Athletic Director), Lisa Melendy, Athletic Director, Dick Farley (Track coach, former Hall of Fame football coach), Mike Reed (former Williams College Track star, Vice President for Strategic Planning and Institutional Diversity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD
Fri., May 3	<p>Looking Onward: Sports in a Post-Race Society?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D.W. Houck, "Crouching Tiger, hidden blackness: Tiger Woods and the disappearance of race," <i>Handbook of sports and media</i>, 469-484. • Ben Carrington, "Conclusion," <i>Race, Sports and Politics: The Sporting Black Diaspora</i>, 169-177.
WEEK 13		
Wed., May 8	<p>Post-game Show</p>	<p>Final Presentations</p> <p>(Note that PowerPoint presentations and reports for all groups will be due in class on May 8. The presentation date will be determined in advance.)</p>
Fri., May 10	<p>Post-game Show</p>	<p>Final Presentations</p> <p>(Note that this is your last project, as there is no final exam scheduled for this course.)</p>