



Sports, Ethics & Religion

Religion 65

Fall 2013

Topics & Readings

September 17 & 19

Introduction	Bederman*
Feminization of Religion	Mathisen*
Muscular Christianity	Naismith, 13-28, 181-189

September 24 & 26

Origins of Baseball	Giamatti, 1-94 Updike*
Origins of Football	Price, 113-136 Wilson*

October 1 & 3

Origins of Basketball	Naismith, 29-142 Price, 163-170
Origins of Hockey	Prebish* Robidoux* Price, 185-202

October 8

1st Debate: Should athletes be role models?

October 10

Spectacle as Religion	Geertz* Price, 137-140, 171-184
Stadium as Sacred Space	Borer, 1-132, 179-196 Price, 15-38

October 15 & 17

Sabbatarian Scruples	Lucas*
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Course Description

A survey of the origins and development of the culture of athletic competition in America, with roots in the “Muscular Christianity” movement of nineteenth-century England. We’ll examine the peculiar (religious?) passion that Americans invest in sports as well as the role that sports has played as an engine for social change. We look, finally, at some of the ethical issues surrounding organized sports.

Randall Balmer

208C Thornton Hall
randall.balmer@dartmouth.edu
603-646-9389

Office Hours
Tuesday, 9:00 & 12:00
Thursday, 9:00
Or by appointment

* Articles appear on Blackboard



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 Women into the Game
A League of their Own
 Sports as Violence

Fairinu-Wada, ix-85, 110-
 Naismith, 161-180
 Pierman*
 Cooky*
 Branch*
 Fairinu-Wada, 142-224

October 23 (X-hour)
 Mid-term Examination

October 24
 Thorpe & Robinson
 Simons*
 Martin*

October 29
 2nd Debate: *Do Clemens and Bonds belong in the Hall of Fame?*

October 31
 Sports as Social Change
 Adams*
 Stout*

November 5 & 7
 Sports & Upward Mobility
 Riess*
Hoop Dreams
 Sports & Money
 Smith*
 Swindell & Rosentraub*

November 12 & 14
 Sports Converts
 Bendroth*
 Jews in Sports
 Simons*
 Sports & Proselytization
 Mazer*
 Balmer*
 All for Allah
 Farred*

November 19
 3rd Debate: *Should taxpayers finance sports stadiums?*

Textbooks

Borer, Michael Ian. *Faithful to Fenway: Believing in Boston, Baseball, and America's Most Beloved Ballpark*. New York: New York University Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0814799772.

Fainaru-Wada, Mark, and Lance Williams. *Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO, and the Steroids Scandal that Rocked Professional Sports*. New York: Gotham Books, 2006. ISBN: 978-1-592-40268-7.

Giamatti, A. Bartlett. *Take Time for Paradise: Americans and their Games*. Foreword by Jon Meacham. New York: Bloomsbury, 1989. ISBN: 978-1-60819-224-3.

Naismith, James. *Basketball: Its Origin and Development*. Edited by William J. Baker. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996. ISBN: 0-8032-8370-9.

Price, Joseph L., ed. *From Season to Season: Sports as American Religion*. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2001. ISBN: 0-86554-694-0.



Grading

In addition to attendance and informed participation in class discussions (40 points), you will be given a mid-term and final examination (60 points each). The class includes three ethical debates; by the end of the second week of class, you will sign up for one side or another in each of the debates (instructor reserves the right to adjust membership in the teams so that they are roughly equal in size). You will prepare your argument with other members of your team and write it up (8-10 pages); on the day of the debate, each side will have 45 minutes to present its case, using whatever devices it chooses (arguments, statistics, video, etc.). Every member of the debate team will receive the same grade, an incentive for teamwork (similar to team sports). Possible 65 points for each debate. The final assignment (55 points) is a review (6-8 pages) of a book listed on Blackboard, due November 12.