

**Male Fantasy Sports  
(Nationalism, Masculinity, and Sexuality  
in American Baseball and English Football)**

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Office Hrs: M: 4pm-5pm; W: 3pm-4pm. Dining room in Stuart basement.

**Course Description:** After the Red Sox won the World Series in 2004, the team website firmly linked the concept of baseball fandom with nationalism by selling fans citizenship in the “Red Sox Nation.” During this course, we will investigate the connections between being a fan (of baseball or football) and being a member of a nation. Out of the interplay of these two forms of identification, we will attempt to draw larger topographies incorporating ideas of the (heteronormative) family and (heteronormative) masculine into our sports nationalism.

The course will begin with establishing a common terminology that we will use with the literary texts in the middle of the quarter. We will read about nationalism, sexuality, masculinity and sports. From these readings, we will move to three baseball literary objects—in this case, novels: *The Great American Novel* (1973), *The Natural* (1952), and *Shoeless Joe* (1982). These novels emphasize an outsider’s approach to the game, and are not simply novels about teams or about athletes. We then transition to football with a day’s worth of reading about the sport and England. The three literary objects about English football, *Fever Pitch* (1992), *Among the Thugs* (1993), and *The Football Factory* (1996), cover both novel and memoir genre. The quarter will end with some totalizing gestures, helped by contemporary writings on baseball and football in the era of globalization. Interspersed will be extracts from film versions of the literary objects, or other film-based sources for what we are investigating.

**Course Requirements:** The reading of all texts *not* marked with an asterisk, yet mentioned in the syllabus, is required. The final grade will be calculated from class participation (30%), the first paper (30%), and the final paper (40%).

**Class participation:** This portion of the grade is made up of attendance, the small writing journal on chalk, presentation/discussion, and office hours. Attendance in class is mandatory, and that includes intellectual attendance. Students are expected to have the day’s reading completed and to have a small set of questions of observations planned out.

As a check for preparation, students are required to post, starting Week Two (14 Jan), a small (< 300 word) working out of questions or concerns based on the discussion of class to come. The little journals will be posted to chalk by 23:00 the day before class, and they must be posted weekly. Reading each other’s posts is mandatory. Responding on chalk is strongly encouraged, so that class can begin with the proverbial feet already on the ground. Additionally, the chalk posts are ungraded, so students are encouraged to branch out—even including current examples of whatever they are discussing.

Additionally, during class, one or two students will be assigned to open the day’s discussion with some thoughts and questions developed from the readings and chalk postings for the class (5–10 minutes). After this introduction, I expect students to be engaged, as this class will be largely, if

not entirely, discussion-driven. Hence, a lack of participation hurts not only the individual student's grade, but also the ability of the rest of the class to get much out of the session.

Finally, every student must meet with me for a brief meeting during office hours by Week Five (8 Feb). This will be a casual opportunity for us to interact outside of the classroom, permitting me and the student to talk both about what we've liked about the class so far and about what needs improvement.

**First Paper:** A first paper, of about 1750 words, is due at 23:30 on the second class meeting of Week Six (19 Feb). It must be submitted to me, fully formatted, via e-mail or chalk drop-box, as either a .doc, .pdf, .rtf, or .ps file. The paper should be a close reading of a section of one of the baseball novels, informed by the critical reading and discussion we have also done to date. It should not, however, be a recap of a class discussion. The close reading cannot be about any of the film clips we have watched. No reading beyond the scope of the course is necessary.

**Final Paper:** A final paper is due at 23:30 on the Thursday of Finals Week (20 Mar). It should be about 2000 words long, and it must be submitted to me following the same procedures as the first paper. It should focus on the literary texts we read about football, but it should also incorporate the critical material and discussions from the first half of the quarter. It should also stretch beyond a close reading of a single text, and it can incorporate the film clips we have watched. Again, no external reading is necessary, and it is, in fact, discouraged.

**Your Requirements of Me:** The only materials presented to me that will receive a grade are the first and final papers. Your chalk posts are there only to show me that you are engaged with the course of the class, and, though ungraded, contribute to your participation grade. I will also make myself available, via office hours and email, to answer any concerns or problems you have finding secondary texts or understanding the reading, or to answer pretty much anything else related to the course. I will try to respond to emails promptly. All course materials, save books that are to be purchased from the Seminary Co-Op, will be available for download from chalk. I will also try to create an atmosphere in class where you can all learn from each other.

**Course / Reading Schedule:** († denotes text on e-reserve/chalk)

*Note: The current reading load is very ambitious. I have often scanned far more of each text than I plan to assign.*

**Introduction.**

1.1 (8 Jan) Signup sheet distributing, name-remembering, goal describing, and comfort zone establishing (assignments for the benefit of the instructor and students alike).

1.2 (10 Jan) Anderson† / Mosse “Introduction”†

2.1 (15 Jan) Mosse “Fascism and Sexuality”† / Theweleit†

[chalk posts begin]

2.2 (17 Jan) Connell, “The Social Organization of Masculinity”† / Miller†

**Baseball and Mom.**

3.1 (22 Jan) Roth, *The Great American Novel*

3.2 (24 Jan) Roth

4.1 (29 Jan) Malamud, *The Natural* (1952)

4.2 (31 Jan) Malamud

5.1 (5 Feb) Kinsella, *Shoeless Joe* (1982)

[mandatory office hours meetings end]

5.2 (7 Feb) Kinsella

**Men’s National Team.**

6.1 (12 Feb) Gilroy† / Giulianotti, “The Cultural Politics of Play”† / Crawford, “Conceptualizing Sport Fans”† / Kuper “Gazza, Europe, and the Fall of Margaret Thatcher,” “Celtic and Rangers, or Rangers and Celtic” /

6.2 (14 Feb) Hornby, *Fever Pitch* (1992)

[first paper due]

7.1 (19 Feb) Hornby

7.2 (21 Feb) Buford, *Among the Thugs* (1993)

8.1 (26 Feb) Buford

8.2 (28 Feb) King, *Football Factory* (1996)

9.1 (4 Mar) King

**Conclusion.**

9.2 (6 Mar) Giulianotti, “The Twentieth-century Sport”† / Kuper “FC Barcelona and the Scottish Question,” “Dutch and English: Why Bobby Robson Failed in Holland,” “Short, Dark, Americans,” “Argentina, Campeon!” and “From Boston to Bangladesh: At the 1994 World Cup” / Crawford “Sport Fan Communities”†

10.1 (11 Mar) Kelly / James† / Brown “Meaning of Baseball...”†

### **Texts to purchase:**

- Buford, Bill. *Among the Thugs*. 1993. New York: Vintage. 978-0679745358.
- Hornby, Nick. *Fever Pitch*. 1992. Riverhead. 978-1573226882.
- Kelly, John D. *The American Game: Capitalism, Decolonization, World Domination, and Baseball*. Prickly Paradigm, 2006. 978-0976147558.
- King, John. *The Football Factory*. 1996. New York: Vintage, 2004. 978-0099474623.  
(NOTE: This novel is *unavailable* from a US distributor. Please consult your preferred online used bookseller to get a copy ASAP. Please try to use US booksellers to make sure you have the book in time!)
- Kinsella, W.P. *Shoeless Joe*. 1982. Mariner. 978-0395957738.
- Kuper, Simon. *Soccer against the Enemy: How the World's Most Popular Sport Starts and Fuels Revolutions and Keeps Dictators in Power*. 1994. Nation (2006 edition). 978-1560258780.
- Malamud, Bernard. *The Natural*. 1952. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 978-0374502003.
- Roth, Philip. *The Great American Novel*. 1973. New York: Vintage, 1995. 978-0679749066.

### **Texts on chalk/e-reserve:**

- Anderson, Benedict. "Introduction," "Cultural Roots," and "Memory and Forgetting." *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 1983. London: Verso, 1991. 1–36, 187–206.
- Brown, Bill. "The Meaning of Baseball in 1992." *Public Culture* 4.1. (Fall 1991). 43–69.
- Connell, R. W. "Male Bodies" and "The Social Organization of Masculinity." *Masculinities*. 1993. Cambridge: Polity P, 2005. 44–86.
- Crawford, Garry. "Conceptualizing Sport Fans: Fan Culture and Social Power," "Sport Fan Communities," and "Social Control and Supporter Violence." *Consuming Sport: Fans, Sport and Culture*. London: Routledge, 2004. 30–38, 52–62, 89–101
- Gilroy, Paul. "'Has It Come to This?'" *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia UP, 2005. 87–120.
- Giulianotti, Richard. "The Twentieth-century Sport: Football, Class and Nation" and "The Cultural Politics of Play: Ethnicity, Gender and the 'Post-fan' Mentality." *Football: a Sociology of the Global Game*. Cambridge: Polity P, 1999. 23–38, 146–165.
- James, C.L.R. "What Do Men Live By?" *Beyond a Boundary*. 1963. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993. 151–158.
- Miller, Toby. "Bodnam: Body, Nation, Media." *Sportsex*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2001. 15–46.
- Mosse, George L. "Introduction: Nationalism and Respectability" and "Fascism and Sexuality." *Nationalism and Sexuality: Respectability and Abnormal Sexuality in Modern Europe*. New York: Fertig, 1985. 1–22, 153–182.
- Theweleit, Klaus. "PEACE." *Male Fantasies, 2: Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*. 1978. Trans. Erica Carter and Chris Turner. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1989. 388–423.

### **Useful supplemental/relegated reading:**

- Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
- Brown, Bill. "Waging Baseball, Playing War: Games of American Imperialism." *Cultural Critique* 17. (Winter 1990–1991). 51–78. Available on JSTOR.
- Connell, R. W. Part I. *Masculinities*. 1–86.
- Crawford, *Consuming Sport*.
- Giulianotti, *Football*.
- Giulianotti, Richard. "Supporters, Followers, Fans, and *Flâneurs*: A Taxonomy of Spectator Identities in Football." *Journal of Sport & Social Issues* 26.1. (February 2002). 25–46.
- James. *Beyond a Boundary*.
- King, John. *England Away*. London: Johnathan Cape, 1998.
- Lipsyte, Robert. "Introduction," "Welcome to SportsWorld" and "Please Rise for Our National Pastime." *SportsWorld: An American Dreamland*. New York: Quadrangle, 1975. ix–49.
- Miller, *Sportsex*.