

ETHN 0024 - AFRICAN AMERICANS IN SPORTS

Catalog Description

Hours: 54 lecture

Description: This course examines the historical and contemporary racial inequalities in sports, with a specific focus on African American athletes and coaches; This course explores how sports institutions were historically closed to people of color and the barriers that had to be overcome. The course will analyze the role of sports as a means of social mobility and social justice. Students will examine the ongoing issues of race, representation, and economic disparities in collegiate and professional sports. Topics include slave games, Black jockeys, Racial Segregation in sports, the Negro Baseball Leagues, Sports Civil Rights, and the history and current policies surrounding student-athlete compensation. (CSU, UC)

Course Student Learning Outcomes

- CSLO #1: Analyze the historical exclusion and patterns of racial segregation of African American athletes in sports institutions and the systems that upheld these barriers.
- CSLO #2: Evaluate the economic and political role of sports as a vehicle for social mobility and resistance within African American communities and analyze how African American athletes have historically used their platforms to advance civil rights and promote racial justice.
- CSLO #3: Analyze and articulate concepts such as race and racism, racialization, ethnicity, equity, ethno-centrism, eurocentrism, white supremacy, self determination, liberation, decolonization, imperialism, and anti-racism as analyzed in African American Studies.
- CSLO #4: Contrast and compare the diversity within the African American experience, and the relationship between African ethnicity and racism in the formation of African America.
- CSLO #5: Apply theory and knowledge produced by African American communities to describe the critical events, histories, cultures, intellectual traditions, contributions, lived experiences, and social struggles with special emphasis on agency and group affirmation.

Effective Term

Fall 2026

Course Type

Credit - Degree-applicable

Contact Hours

54

Outside of Class Hours

108

Total Student Learning Hours

162

Course Objectives

1. Identify key historical milestones and patterns of racial exclusion in sports institutions with an emphasis on African American athletes and coaches.
2. Describe and interpret the cultural significance of slave games, Black jockeys, and Negro Baseball Leagues in the development of African American resistance and identity.
3. Analyze systems of racial oppression embedded in collegiate and professional sports, including NCAA regulations and economic disparities.
4. Compare and contrast the experiences of African American male and female athletes through an intersectional lens that includes race, gender, and class.
5. Evaluate the impact of athlete activism from Jackie Robinson to Colin Kaepernick in broader movements for civil rights and racial justice.
6. Critically assess media representations of African American athletes and how those narratives reinforce or disrupt racial and gender stereotypes.
7. Apply Ethnic Studies concepts to contemporary debates around Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL) compensation and racial equity in the NCAA.
8. Construct an evidence-based argument on how African American participation in sports has challenged dominant ideologies and contributed to cultural change.
9. Synthesize multiple disciplinary perspectives (e.g., history, sociology, cultural studies) to explain the role of sports in African American community empowerment.

General Education Information

- Approved College Associate Degree GE Applicability
 - AA/AS - Ethnic Studies
 - AA/AS - Social and Behavioral Sciences
- CSU GE Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU approval)
- Cal-GETC Applicability (Recommended - Requires External Approval)
 - Cal-GETC 3B - Humanities
 - Cal-GETC 4 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Cal-GETC 6 - Ethnic Studies
- IGETC Applicability (Recommended-requires CSU/UC approval)

Articulation Information

- CSU Transferable
- UC Transferable

Methods of Evaluation

- Objective Examinations
 - Example: Students will take objective exams that include multiple choice and short answer questions that apply to the content of the course. Example(s): Which of the following best exemplifies a major barrier African American athletes faced during the era

of Jim Crow?? (Objective 1). Explain how the Negro Leagues were more than just a sports league. In your answer, describe at least one cultural or social impact these leagues had on African American identity and resistance.

- Projects
 - Example: Students will collect a total of 10 media examples (e.g., commercials, social media posts, news clips, sports commentary, print ads, or magazine covers) that feature Black athletes. Students will analyze each example for recurring patterns in representation, framing, tone, and narrative. Students are expected to draw upon course materials and concepts such as racialized media narratives, intersectionality, stereotype reinforcement/disruption, and cultural erasure or hypervisibility. The final product will include a 2-3-page analytical essay accompanied by a visual storyboard with evidence i.e. screenshots, links, or citations. (Objectives 4 and 6)
- Reports
 - Example: Students will write a 4–6-page analytical report evaluating the evolution and effectiveness of African American athlete activism from the Civil Rights era to the present day. The report should highlight key figures such as Jackie Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, Colin Kaepernick, and others. Students must analyze the sociopolitical context, tactics used, and the public response and outcomes of these activist efforts.

Repeatable

No

Methods of Instruction

- Lecture/Discussion
- Distance Learning

Lecture:

1. Instructor will provide a lecture using contemporary films and current events {for example, *The Legacy of Black Horsemen*, *The Journey of the African-American Athlete* (Parts 1 & 2), and *Black Exploitation in College Sport*}. Instructor will help students identify the how the African Americans athletes and coaches continue to fight systemic exclusion and economic exploitation in Sports. Students are expected to understand the evolution of oppression over time and its' pervasiveness in all U.S institutions. Students will work in groups to reflect on the lecture and then report back to the whole class on key takeaways.

Distance Learning

1. Instructor will post a lecture slide presentation on major historical developments in African American sports history (for example, *Slave Games*, *Black Jockeys*, the *Negro Baseball Leagues*, *Athlete Activism during the Civil Rights Movement*, *NCAA Exclusion*). The lecture will highlight the presence, resistance, and contributions of African American athletes throughout U.S. history. Students will read/watch the lecture along with related film clips and articles that further conceptualize the evolution of race and power in sports. Students will then draw parallels between these historical moments and modern-day systems of racial oppression in collegiate and professional athletics. Reflections and analysis will be shared through discussion board posts and peer interactions, applying key concepts such as

institutional racism, economic exploitation, intersectionality, and representation.

Typical Out of Class Assignments

Reading Assignments

Upon completion of identified readings: Students will identify 3 African kingdoms and explain how trade influenced their development. Discuss how this challenges common Western assumptions about Africa.

Writing, Problem Solving or Performance

Drawing from course readings, lectures, and outside sources if desired, post at least one full comment and two responses to the comments of other students on the Discussion Board. 1. Historians and cultural scholars often note that enslaved Africans developed games, contests, and physical displays of skill that served as more than just recreation. They were also tools of cultural survival, identity formation, and subtle resistance to oppression. In what ways did sports or physical competition serve as acts of resistance, resilience, or cultural identity for enslaved Africans in the U.S. and the Caribbean? How can understanding these early practices help us better understand the evolution of African American sports culture today?

Other (Term projects, research papers, portfolios, etc.)

Required Materials

- *We Will Win the Day: The Civil Rights Movement, the Black Athlete, and the Quest for Equality*
 - Author: Louis Moore
 - Publisher: The University Press of Kentucky
 - Publication Date: October 15, 2021
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- *More Than a Game: A History of the African American Experience in Sport*
 - Author: David K. Wiggins
 - Publisher: Rowman and Littlefield
 - Publication Date: October 1, 2018
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- *Why We Kneel, How We Rise*
 - Author: Michael Holding
 - Publisher: Simon and Schuster UK
 - Publication Date: June 24, 2021
 - Text Edition:
 - Classic Textbook?:
 - OER Link:
 - OER:
- *There's Always This Year: On Basketball and Ascension*
 - Author: Hanif Abdurraqib
 - Publisher: Random House

- Publication Date: March 26, 2024
- Text Edition:
- Classic Textbook?:
- OER Link:
- OER:

Other materials and-or supplies required of students that contribute to the cost of the course.