

LET THE GAMES BEGIN! : AMERICAN SPORTS POETRY

ENG 199: American Sports Poetry
CRN: 17554
Fall 2013
MWF 11:00-11:50
101 Volcanology Building

Instructor: Corbett Upton
Office: 375 PLC
Hours: M 2:00-3:00, TR 10:00-12:00
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Course Description: Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, American poets have turned to popular (and not so popular) sports as subjects and figures to express themes of human achievement, love, struggle and suffering, deep philosophical and spiritual contemplation, and public life. Moving chronologically, this course will examine sports poetry and the role of sports in public and private life in the United States as expressed by American poets. Some questions we will examine are: How do sports lend themselves to poetic contemplation? How do sports poems address questions about race, gender, class, sexuality, and the nation? How do sports and sports poems participate in discourses about equality and discrimination? How have the concerns of sports poems changed over time?

Course Objectives: By the end of this course, you will not only have improved your understanding of American poetry and poetic form and the ever increasing presence of sports in American life, you will also be able to examine written texts more critically. You will be able to compose, format, and revise short and long college-level analytical essays. You will be able to effectively participate in and facilitate discussions. This course is designed to help you attain core competencies to succeed in the college classroom.

Required Texts:

Regular access to Blackboard (BB)—all course readings are posted on Blackboard.

Check your UO email account daily.

Recommended: A good dictionary and a guide to MLA format. Active reading will require marking significant passages. Plan to access texts accordingly.

Assignments and Grading:

Attendance and Participation	10%
Creative Work	5%
Daily Assignments	5%
Leading Discussion	10%
Quizzes	5%
Recitation	10%
Writing Assignment #1	15%
Writing Assignment #2	15%
Writing Assignment #3	25%

Attendance and Participation: Punctual, regular attendance is a requirement for this class. You are allowed three absences; each subsequent absence lowers your final grade by 1 step (A to A-, B+ to B, C to C-, etc.). You must be prepared to discuss the reading assignment on the day that it is due, and to participate in a respectful and lively discuss. Be prepared to read assigned texts closely, share your ideas and ask questions of your peers and your instructor. **Turn off** cell phones and music during class. You may **not** use a laptop in class though exceptions will be made for those with applicable documentation from Disability Services.

Assignments:

Reading Assignments: All **readings** are due by the beginning of the class time indicated on the course schedule attached to this syllabus. You are responsible for printing all Blackboard readings and bringing them to class on the days they are due. Failure to bring the appropriate texts to class on the assigned days will affect your participation grade.

Writing Assignments: All **writing** assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date listed in the course schedule attached to this syllabus. I am happy to help you in advance of the due date on any assignment. All written work will be graded for form as well as content, so be sure to get help on writing and essay form (including grammar) in plenty of time if you need it. English classes are writing intensive and expect you to write at your best and use writing assignments to demonstrate and improve your writing skills. Refer to the “Essay Checklist” at the end of this document for formatting guidelines.

Creative Work: You will compose five poems using specific forms over the course of the term that relate to sport in some way (i.e. poems informed or inspired by sport): one ballad, one sonnet, one blank verse, one in a traditional form of your choice, one in any form you choose (or invent).

Daily Assignments: For each reading assignment, write one informal paragraph (at least 3-5 sentences) that asks and attempts to answer a question you have about the reading. Keep these questions in a notebook, and bring them to class with you each day. You may miss one written question without penalty.

I will call on you in class to read these questions aloud, and they will serve as the springboards for our discussions. If I call on you, and you are unprepared, you will lose participation points.

Discussion Leaders: With a partner, you will be responsible for leading class discussion once during the term. This assignment consists of three parts: (1) Before your discussion, thoroughly read the material you will be discussing, meet with your partner and formulate at least six questions you would like the class to discuss; (2) On the day of your discussion, you will facilitate class discussion and turn in a list of questions; (3) After your discussion, you will submit a brief 200 word discussion reflection. See “Discussion Leader Guidelines” on Blackboard. You must attend class on the day of your scheduled discussion. No make-ups will be allowed. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first week of class.

Peer Support: An important part of your coursework in this class will include peer support. You will thoroughly read and respond to your classmates’ work during in-class workshops. If you neglect to bring the required copies on the day of peer review, you will not receive the participation points for that class period. More guidelines will be given as the quarter progresses.

Reading Quizzes: An unspecified number of quizzes will be given throughout the term. These quizzes will ask questions specific to the reading assignments and literary terms for the day or previous days. All quizzes are “take-home” and will be due the following class period. There are no make-ups: late quizzes will not be accepted.

Poem Memorization and Recitation: Your task for this assignment is to choose a poem from the course’s reading list that is at least 14 lines long, memorize it, recite it to me during office hours and discuss your interpretation of it. Recitations must occur during the week the poem is assigned. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first week of class. More guidelines and suggestions are posted on Blackboard (“Preparing Recitations”).

Extra Credit: You will notice several activities outside class time listed in the course schedule. The purpose of attending these events is to introduce you to the UO and surrounding community and enrich the course content. You are not required to attend these events. You will receive extra credit points added to your final “attendance and participation” grade for attending these events.

Policies:

Please review the University policy regarding academic honesty (in *Schedule of Classes*), which will be strictly enforced in this class. If you plagiarize or cheat, you will automatically fail the course.

No late assignments will be accepted (unless you’ve made arrangements with me well in advance of the due date). Incompletes will be given for documented medical emergencies only.

Accommodation: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to meet with me soon, and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

Broken Printers & Computer Crashes: These things happen. However, you should always back up your files. If your computer crashes and you are unable to produce a copy of your work before the beginning of class, your paper will be late. If your printer breaks and you are unable to produce a copy of your work before the beginning of class, e-mail it to me. Do not submit it via attachment; simply paste it into the body of the e-mail. This will not take the place of a hard copy. You must produce a hard copy and deliver it to my office no later than the next day. Remember, your e-mailed paper must arrive before the beginning of class or it will be considered late.

Course Schedule:

Note: All writing and reading assignments are due on the day listed. This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1: *Sports and Poetry in the Colonial and Early National Periods*

- M 9/30 Introduction. American Poetry, Sports in American Life, American Sports Poetry.
- W 10/2 **Poems:** Anne Bradstreet, “The Flesh and The Spirit” (BB); Edward Taylor, “Meditation. 1 Joh. 2.2. He is a Propitiation for Our Sin” (BB)
Terms: personification, apostrophe, metonymy, didactic poetry
- F 10/4 **Read:** “Speaker, Listener, and Context” (BB), “Tone of Voice” (BB)
Poems: Philip Freneau, “To Mr. Blanchard, the Celebrated Aeronaut in America” (BB); Wm. Cullen Bryant, “Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood” and “My Autumn Walk” (BB)
Terms: diction, concrete, abstract, occasional poetry

Week 2: *American Romanticism and Frontier and Backcountry Sport*

- M 10/7 **Poems:** Richard Henry Dana, “The Pleasure Boat”; Edgar Allan Poe, “The Coliseum” (BB)
Terms: stanza, closed form, blank verse, quatrain, couplet, tercet, fixed form
- W 10/9 **Poems:** Lydia Sigourney, “To a Shred of Linen”; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Spirit of Poetry” and “The Arrow and the Song”
Terms: rhythm, stress, end-stopped, run-on line, meter, iambic pentameter, pentameter
- F 10/11 **Poems:** Richard Henry Wilde, from *Hesperia*; Frances Sargent Osgood, “A Dancing Girl” and “New England’s Mountain-Child”
Terms: denotation, connotation, dramatic poetry, narrative poetry

SATURDAY 10/12: *The Eugene Poetry Slam! Tsunami Books, 7:00-11:00*

Week 3: *Antebellum Health Reforms, Modern Sport, and the American Renaissance*

- M 10/14 **Poems:** Epes Sargent, “The Heart’s Summer”; Walt Whitman, “I Sing the Body Electric”
- W 10/16 **Poems:** John Greenleaf Whittier, “The Barefoot Boy” (BB); Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, “As when, down some broad river dropping, we”
Terms: figures of speech, metaphor, implied metaphor, allusion, pun, simile
- F 10/17 **Poems:** Emily Dickinson, “[I Cannot Dance Upon My Toes]” and “My Life had Stood a Loaded Gun”
Terms: stanza, common meter, symbol, traditional symbols

Week 4: *Americanism, Modernism, and Progressive Era Games*

- M 10/21 **Poems:** Oliver Wendell Holmes, “Nearing the Snow-Line”; Sara Orne Jewett, “A Country

Boy in Winter,”; James Whitcomb Riley, “The Old Swimmin’-Hole” (BB); Louise Imogen Guiney, “The Wild Ride”; Rose Terry Cooke, “The Squire’s Boar Hunt”
Terms: poetic diction, level of diction

- W 10/23 **Poems:** Ernest Lawrence Thayer, “Casey at the Bat: A Ballad of the Republic, Sung in the Year 1888”
Terms: verse, refrain, ballad, ballad stanza, myth, archetype
Peer Review: bring 1 copy of Writing Assignment #1 to class.
- F 10/25 **Poems:** Maurice Thompson, “A Flight Shot”; Ednah Proctor Clark, “The Dancer”; Richard Henry Stoddard, “The Flight of the Arrow”
Due: Writing Assignment #1

Week 5: Americanism, Modernism, and Progressive Era Games (cont.)

- M 10/28 **Poems:** Harriet Prescott Spofford, “The Hunt”; Paul Laurence Dunbar, “Nutting Song” and “A Boy’s Summer Song”
Terms: rhyme, exact rhyme, slant rhyme, end rhyme, internal rhyme, masculine and feminine rhyme, rhyme scheme
- W 10/30 **Poems:** Charles Henry Webb, “Gil, the Toreador”; Jack Norworth, “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”; Franklin Pierce Adams, “Tinker to Evers to Chance”
- F 11/1 **Poems:** Lew Sarett, “To a Wild Goose Over Decoys”; John Gould Fletcher, “The Skaters”; Carl Sandburg, “Hits and Runs”
Terms: imagery, imagism

Friday 11/1: UO Women’s Volleyball Game vs. Arizona State

Week 6: Americanism, Modernism, and Progressive Era Games (cont.)

- M 11/4 **Read:** “Stanza Forms” (BB)
Poems: Dorothy Parker, “Hymn of Hate: College Boys”; Mary Effie Lee Newsome, “Quoits”; Elizabeth J. Coatsworth, “The Circus Postered Barn”; Sterling Brown, “Checkers”
- W 11/6 **Poems:** William Carlos Williams, “At the Ball Game”; Elizabeth Bishop, “The Fish”
Terms: open form, free verse
- F 11/8 **Poems:** Maxine Kumin, “To Swim, To Believe” and “400-Meter Freestyle”

Week 7: Sport and Civil Rights, Sports as TV Spectacle, Postwar Formalism, Black Arts Movement

- M 11/11 **Poems:** Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”; Marianne Moore, “Baseball and Writing”
Terms: euphony, cacophony, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, anaphora
- W 11/13 **Poems:** Robert Hayden, “The Diver”; Theodore Roethke, “The Pike”; Jack Spicer, “Sporting Life”
Peer Review: bring 1 copy of Writing Assignment #2 to class.
- F 11/15 **Poems:** Muhammad Ali, “Boxing Poem,” “I am the Greatest” and “Clay Comes out to Meet Liston”; Amiri Baraka, “Note to America”
Due: Writing Assignment #2

SATURDAY 11/16: Eugene Generals Hockey Game vs. West Sound Warriors 7:35p.m.

Week 8: *Athletic Icons, Poetic Mythification and TV Spectacle, Title IX, and Cultural Identity.*

- M 11/18 **Poems:** Louise Glück, “The Racer’s Widow”; Randall Jarrell, “Say Goodbye to Big Daddy”; James Tate, “Shadowboxing” and “Lousy in Center Field”
- W 11/20 **Poems:** James Dickey, “For the Death of Vince Lombardi”; Norman Dubie, “Elizabeth’s War with the Christmas Bear” and “The Death of the Race Car Driver”; Bob Dylan, “Catfish”; John Keene, “Jackie Robinson in Sportsman’s Park, 1949”
- F 11/22 Knight Library Tour and Research Class. **Meet at Knight Library 144, Edmiston Classroom.**

Week 9: *Corporate Sporting Culture, Collegiate Athletics and Academics*

- M 11/25 **Read:** James Earl, “Weird About Sports: Football’s Lessons Contradict Higher Education” (BB); Greg Bishop, “Oregon Embraces ‘University of Nike’ Image” (BB)
Guest Speaker: UO Emeritus Professor of English James Earl on academics and athletics.

Cultural Identity

- W 11/27 **Poems:** Michael S. Harper, “Makin’ Jump Shots,” “Archives” and “Homage to the Brown Bomber”
- F 11/29 **No Class. Fall Break.**

Week 10: *Cultural Identity (cont.), and The Era of Globalized Sport and Sports Poetry as a Genre*

- M 12/2 **Poems:** Erik Chock, “The Bait”; Yusef Komunyakaa, “Slam, Dunk, & Hook”; Sherman Alexie, “Penance,” “Why We Play Basketball” and “Defending Walt Whitman”
- W 12/4 **Poems:** Lawrence Ferlinghetti, “Baseball Canto”; Donald Hall, “The Fifth Inning” and “The Eighth Inning”; Kim Addonizio, “Event” and “Late Round”; Jorie Graham, “Reading Plato”; The Red Hot Chili Peppers, “Magic Johnson”; Jay-Z, “Brooklyn (Go Hard)”
- F 12/6 **Conclusions.**
Peer Review: bring 1 copy of Writing Assignment #3 to class.

Finals Week**DUE:** Writing Assignment #3