A. Introduction

The history of sport in the United States provides a record of but one dimension of American cultural development and achievement. And, like other American cultural institutions, for well over a century sport and exercise in the United States has been an important influence on the direction of physical culture in much of the greater international world, including, of course, Canada. For that reason alone, such a history should be better understood.

B. Calendar / Catalogue Course Description

Kinesiology 9061b is a basic examination of those factors related to the origin, growth, and development of the sporting movement in the U.S.A. from the 17th century to the present, with emphasis on examination and interpretation of literature relative to those roles played by the “American character” and its attendant “change-agents,” including religion, government, population, economics, politics, race, crisis, technology, geography, international affairs, immigration and entrepreneurship.

C. Course Objectives

To provide graduate students interested in the area of sports history with opportunities to:

Explore and evaluate important aspects of the history of American sport in the context of greater American history, as well as to examine that history’s influential forces in the rise of Canadian sport.

Become familiar with significant contributions to the body of current knowledge upon which the history of American sport is based;
Engage the tools and techniques of gathering, organizing, and writing one’s personal research as applied to the various dimensions of historical method;

Interest individuals in the area of sports history to the point where they might, in due time, become the future scholars of the field and carry on the work of those who all too soon will be relegated to the past.

D.  Course Requirements

60% -- A major research paper dealing with a selected aspect of American sport history. Due no later than Friday, December 16th.

20% -- Individual seminar discussion involvement dealing specifically with debate and commentary on weekly reading assignments. You must be involved.

20% -- A scholarly written critical review of a major literary work (monograph) related to the course. Due no later than Friday, October 28th.

E.  COURSE TEXT: None, Course readings listed below will be supplied to you in PDF form.

Topical Course Outline and Readings for Each Section

I.  Introduction

Thursday, September 15th

No readings

II.  A British Thing: Protestantism and America’s European Sport Inheritance

Thursday, September 22nd


III. In Detestation of Idleness: Sport in Colonial America

Thursday, September 29th


IV. Pre-Modern Sporting Pastime in Revolutionary and Young Republic America

Thursday, October 6th


V. The Triumph of Industrialization and the Rise of Sport in 19th Century America

Thursday, October 13th


VI. Flexing Muscles: America’s Indulgence in Olympic and International Sport

Thursday, October 20th


VII. Personal Presentations of Book Reviews

Thursday, October 27th

VIII. Dollars and Profits: The Rise of American Commercialized Sport

Thursday, November 3rd


IX. Money and Power: The United States and Its Olympic Father

Thursday, November 10th

X. Niche Sport: The Lure of the Outdoors and the Sky Above

Thursday, November 17th


XI. King Football and American Intercollegiate Sport

Thursday, November 24


XII. The National Pastime: Baseball and the American Mind

Thursday, December 1st


XIII. Wrap Up

Thursday, December 8th
*** Denotes books, rather than articles, of which there are two to read during the course. At an appropriate time a free “loan copy” will be placed in your hands. There are 16 articles to read in the course. For your convenience, a photocopy of each placed in a binder is available at nominal cost.