Dr. Todd Boyd  
CTCS 464: Sports and Film  
Thursdays 1:00-5:50 pm/SCA 108/Fall 2018

Dr. Boyd’s Office Hours  
Wednesdays & Thursdays: 12:00 – 12:45pm

Appointments for Dr. Boyd’s Office Hours must be made in advance through the Cinema and Media Studies Office, SCA 320, Email: mediastudies@cinema.usc.edu, Tel: 213.740.3334.

Teaching Assistant  
Emma St. Lawrence, ejlawren@usc.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 12:45-1:45 pm in SCA 220

Course Description

This course looks to analyze the representation and misrepresentation of athletes and sports in fiction film, documentary, and in the larger American media culture. The objective of this course will be to critically examine various films that feature numerous sporting examples, for the purpose of exposing the underlying themes that illuminate the role of sports in American society. While the course is critical of the popular “inspirational” sports narrative, it is otherwise especially interested in sports films that offer complex representations of identity around issues such as race, class, gender, and the American Dream. In addition to celebrated feature films that explore sports, the course is also keenly interested in the explosion of recent sports documentaries, such as those that fall under the ESPN 30 For 30 banner. Finally the course will also address the changing nature of sports representation in the digital age of video games and fantasy sports.

Required Text  

All other readings available on Blackboard.

Reading/Screening Schedule  
8/23:  
Screening: *Any Given Sunday*, Oliver Stone (1999)

Readings:  
“The Unhinged Madness Behind the Making of *Any Given Sunday*” by Thomas Golianopoulos  
“Re-watching *Any Given Sunday*, the Sloppy, Overstated Epic the NFL Deserves” by Tom Keiser
“The Power of Any Given Sunday, 15 Years Later” by Stephen Marche
“Football Has Always Been a Battleground in the Culture War” by Vann R. Newkirk II

**8/30:**
Screening: 42, Brian Helgeland (2013)

Readings:
“A Review of 42: Jackie Robinson’s Bitter Pill” by Dave Zirin
“The Real Story of Baseball's Integration That You Won't See in 42” by Peter Dreier
“How Accurate is 42?” by Ron Briley
“Not Beyond Jackie Robinson: Baseball, Civil Rights and Cultural Memory” by Mabel Rosenheck
“How Today's Activist Athletes Reclaimed the Heritage” by Howard Bryant

**9/6**
Screening: Raging Bull, Martin Scorsese (1980)

Readings:
“Brutal Attraction: The Making of Raging Bull” by Richard Schickel
“Animal Instinct” by David Thomson
“A Look Behind the Scenes of Raging Bull” by Jordan Hoffman
“Esquire Cover Commemorates Boxing’s Prime” by Todd Boyd

**9/13:**

Readings:
“Tonya Harding Would Like Her Apology Now” by Taffy Brodesser-Akner
“I, Tonya is the film about a 1994 figure-skating scandal that America needs in 2017” by Alissa Wilkinson
“A Fact-checked Guide to I, Tonya” by Jordan Crucchiola

**9/20:**
Screening: He Got Game, Spike Lee (1998)

Readings:
“How exactly did Ray Allen become Jesus Shuttlesworth in Spike Lee’s He Got Game?” by Aaron Dodson
“20 Years After Its Release, Spike Lee’s Basketball Epic He Got Game Remains Searing and Essential” by K. Austin Collins
“He Got Balls” by David Edelstein
“Film Review; A Spike Lee Explosion Roams All Over the Court” by Janet Maslin
9/27:

Readings:
“Hard Knocks, Both Given and Gotten” by A. O. Scott
“On Point, On Top, In Pain,” by Manohla Dargis
“Ric Flair’s Life Is Too Real and Lies Too Big for a Documentary” by David Shoemaker

10/4:
Screening: When We Were Kings, Leon Gast (1996)

Readings:
“Muhammad Ali, from Beginning to End for the First Time in a Book” by Joyce Carol Oates
“Muhammad Ali versus George Foreman via Norman Mailer” by Michael Wood
“No Film Captures the Greatness of Ali Better Than When We Were Kings” by Matthew Dessem
“The Outsized Life of Muhammad Ali” by David Remnick

10/11
Midterm Exam
Screening: The Thrilla in Manila, John Dower (2009)

Readings:
“The Blood Feud” by Michael Carbert
“The Cruelest Sport” by Joyce Carol Oates
“The Fight’s Over, Joe” by William Nack

10/18
Screenings: Bad Boys, Zak Levitt (2014) and The Fab Five, Jason Hehir (2011)

Readings:  
Young, Black, Rich, and Famous: The Rise of the NBA, the Hip Hop Invasion, and the Transformation of American Culture by Todd Boyd

10/25:
Screening: Venus and Serena, Maiken Baird and Michelle Major (2012)

Readings:
“Venus and Serena Against the World” by John Jeremiah Sullivan
“Venus and Serena Williams: From Compton to the World” by Kelley L. Carter
“Serena Williams on Motherhood, Marriage, and Making Her Comeback” by Rob Haskell
“Serena and Venus Williams’ Powerful Protest Against Racist Tennis Culture” by Evelyn C. White
“Serena Williams Sits Down with Common to Talk About Race and Identity” on The Undefeated

11/1:
Screening: The Fighter, David O. Russell (2010)

Readings:
“The Fighter Tells the Story of the Real-Life Rocky” by Steve Rose
“Guys, Kiss Mom and Come Out Fighting” by A. O. Scott
“With Southpaw, Hollywood Ignores Reality of Today's Boxing Champions” by Howard Bryant

11/8:
Screening: Tyson, James Tobak (2008)

Readings:
“Tyson, the Documentary” by Kaleem Aftab
“SI 60 Q&A: Richard Hoffer on Mike Tyson and his legacy” by Ted Keith
“#RememberWhensdays: Mike Tyson bites off a chunk of Evander Holyfield’s ear” by Ryan Cortes

11/15:
Screening: Friday Night Lights, Peter Berg (2004)

Readings:
“The Real Future of Football is as an Esport” by Brando Simeo Starkey
“Glory Days on the Gridiron: Young Manhood, Texas Style” by A. O. Scott
“Friday Night Takes the Ball and Runs with It” by Sean Daly
“Football Really is America’s Religion. That’s What Made the NFL Protests so Powerful” by Tara Isabella Burton

11/22:
Thanksgiving Break

11/29:
Screening: The Two Escobars, Jeff and Michael Zimbalist (2010)

Readings:
“Life Doesn't End Here: A Review of The Two Escobars” by David Deryder
“30 for 30: The Two Escobars” by Cynthia Fuchs
“The Afterlife of Pablo Escobar” by Jon Lee Anderson
Final Exam
December 11 (SCA 108)
11:00am - 1:00pm

Course Requirements:
Midterm Exam – 50%
Final Exam – 50%
The midterm and final exams must be taken at the established date and time. The class cannot accommodate requests to alter the established date and time of the exams based on the personal schedule of individual students. There are no makeup exams. If there is an unexpected illness or other emergency that would prevent you from taking the exam at the established date and time, you must request an exception. Appropriate documentation must be submitted PRIOR TO the beginning of the exam. Please note acceptance for such a request involves following appropriate procedure. Simply declaring an emergency and/or submitting material does not mean automatic acceptance of the proposed request. The legitimacy of unexpected illness and/or other emergency requests in this regard will be determined as acceptable or unacceptable at the discretion of the Professor.

Attendance Policy
Class attendance is required and will be monitored. A sign-in sheet will be made available during the break between the end of lecture and the beginning of the screening. It is your responsibility to sign-in as proof of your attendance each week. You can only sign-in for yourself. There are no retroactive sign-ins.