

SOCIOLOGY 647: Sociology of Sport.
Summer, 2004

POSSIBLE BOOKS AND VIDEOS FOR BOOK/FILM REPORT

NOVELS.

Lefcourt, Peter. *The Dreyfus Affair*. Harper, 1992. A major league shortstop falls in love with his second baseman.

Malamud, Bernard. *The Natural*. This is the novel that was made into the movie of the same name. It's apparently much better.

BIOGRAPHIES AND EXPOSES

Bouton, Jim. *Ball Four: My Life and Hard Times Throwing the Knuckleball in the Big Leagues*.

Chamberlain, Wilt. *A View from Above*. New York: Random House, 1991. His autobiography.

Coe, Sebastian. *Running Free*. His autobiography

Frazier, Joe. *Smokin' Joe: the Autobiography of a Heavyweight Champion of the World*.

Halas, George Stanley. *Halas by Halas: the Autobiography of George Halas*.

Henderson, Thomas and Peter Knobler. *Out of Control: Confessions of an NFL Casualty*. New York: Putnam, 1987. Drugs in pro football.

Kramer, Jerry. *Instant Replay*. Signet Books. 1969. The inside story of Lombardi's Packers, by an offensive guard..

Louis, Joe. *Joe Louis, my Life*.

Meggyesy, Dave. *Out of their League*. Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1970. An expose of pro football by an outside linebacker.

Navratilova, Marina. *Martina*. Her autobiography.

Parrish, Bernie. *They Call it a Game*. New York: Dial Press, 1971. Another expose of pro football by a former player and official of the players association.

Simmons, Ira. *Black Knight: Al Davis and his Raiders*. The story of a team owner.

Sullivan, John Lawrence. *I can Lick any Sonofabitch in the House*. Autobiography of a famous fighter early in the century.

Underwood, John. *The Death of an American Game: The Crisis in Football*.

Boston: Little, Brown, 1979. Yet another expose.

Webb, Bernice. *The Basketball Man, James Naismith*. Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas. Biography of the inventor of basketball.

Zaharias, Babe Didrikson. *This Life I've Led: My Autobiography by Babe Didrikson Zaharias as Told to Harry Paxton*.

VIDEOS. Entertainment unless specified as documentary. (Look on the web site syllabus for SI's top 50 sports movies.)

Any Given Sunday (1999) Al Pacino as a coach; Cameron Diaz as an owner. Oliver Stone directed.

The Bad News Bears. (1976). Little League run amok.

Bang the Drum Slowly. (1973) Robert DeNiro as a dying major leaguer.

Bend it Like Beckham. (2003) A Sikh girl in England defies her family to play soccer.

The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings (1976) James Earl Jones, Billy Dee Williams, Richard Pryor. Negro League players mutiny and form own league.

Body and Soul (1947) The ruthless world of professional boxing.

Breaking Away. (1979) Indiana kids become bicycle racers.

Bull Durham. (1988) Susan Sarandon, Tim Robbins, Kevin Costner. Minor league baseball in all its glory. #1

Chariots of Fire. (1981) British track athletes at the 1920 Olympics.

Cool Runnings (1993) Caribbean bobsled team tries for the Olympics.

Eight Men Out (1988). The Black Sox scandal of 1919.

Fear Strikes Out (1957) Too much parental pressure leads to a nervous breakdown.

**Hoop Dreams*. (1994) Documentary following middle school kids with pro basketball aspirations. "A searing commentary on our social system..." says my book.

Hoosiers (1988) Gene Hackman takes a high school team to the tournament.

The Hustler. (1961) Jackie Gleason as Minnesota Fats. Is pool a sport?

The Jackie Robinson Story. (1950) My book says "straightforward bio of Robinson . . . fascinating as a social history ... pointed in its presentation of the racial issues." Ruby Dee, Jackie Robinson.

Joe Jackson. (1943) Documentary on world champion who scandalized the white world by his interracial relationships. Miles Davis jazz score.

Jerry Maguire. (1996) Sports agent has a crisis of conscience and loses all but one client. Cuba Gooding Jr., Tom Cruise.

A League of Their Own. (1992) The girls' all-American Baseball League, fictionalized. Featuring Tom Hanks, Gina Davis and Madonna, among others.

The Longest Yard. (1974) Burt Reynolds in a prison vs. the outside football game.

National Velvet (1944) . Little girl rides horse in big race, is disqualified because of her sex. Elizabeth Taylor as a teen.

The Natural (1984). Story of a baseball player's ups and downs.

North Dallas Forty. (1979) Aging football player is exploited by his team management, along with everyone else. My book says "best gridiron film ever made". Nick Nolte.

Personal Best. (1982) Mariel Hemingway as a track star who has a Lesbian relationship while training for the 1980 Olympics.

The Pride of the Yankees. (1942) The life of Lou Gehrig, a relatively contemporary view. My book says "superb biography." Gary Cooper.

The Program. (1993) The dirty world of college football.

Pumping Iron. (1977) Arnold's debut. The world of body-builders. Documentary.

Raging Bull. (1980) Robert DeNiro again. SI says, "It's so widely (and deservedly) praised that no one points out that the stylized boxing scenes are utterly unrealistic."

Requiem for a Heavyweight (1962) Anthony Quinn as a washed up fighter.

Remember the Titans (2000) Football and integration in the south in 1971. Loosely based on fact.

Rocky. (1976) The original one.

The Rooke. (2002) Dennis Quaid gets a second chance at the major leagues.

Slap Shot. (1977) Hockey in all its violent glory. Very funny. Lots of profanity. Paul Newman.

**When We Were Kings*. (1996) Excellent documentary about the Ali - Foreman boxing match in Zaire in 1974.

White Men Can't Jump. (1992) Black and white basketball hustlers and their relationship.

* * * * *

All of the books are available at the Madison Public Library or from me. The library also has the starred documentaries. The other films should be available at any video store. Go during the week.

If you have a favorite book or film that is not on this list or on the SI top 50, talk to me about it. It will probably be OK to use it. Note that SI also has some *negative* recommendations of really bad sports films.

SOCIOLOGY 647: Sociology of Sport.

Summer, 2004

Instructions for Book/film Report

This book/film report should focus on **sociological issues** that are raised by the book or film you are reporting on. If one uses a **sociological imagination**, any narrative art form raises many issues regarding social relationships and social structure. Almost all of them, for example, deal with interpersonal relationships, and most will have some message to convey about those relationships. The first book on the list, for example, focuses on romantic relationships - in that case, sudden, unbidden homosexual attraction in the workplace (on the baseball diamond). Again, almost all will deal with one or more social structural issues of social location (race, class, gender), occupational conditions, money, power, status hierarchy, inequality, religion, politics, or social norms. In *The Dreyfus Affair*, race is involved (one of the players is white, the other is black), as are power (the owners), occupational conditions (what are one's rights in the workplace?), and, obviously, money (if we let them continue to play, will people come? If we don't, will we lose the pennant?).

The form the paper should take is as follows:

- no more than one page laying out the content of the book/film. What is the major focus or plot? Who are the main characters? What is the arc of the action - beginning, middle, and end?
- one page in which you point out **sociological issues** raised by the book/film. What incidents in the book/film led you to think about this issue? If a point of view is being presented on this issue, what is it? If it is not clear, speculate. Whether the book/film overtly takes a point of view on the social issue, what thoughts were raised in your mind as a result of this incident? I can't imagine that there aren't at least three in any of these books/films.
- a final page in which you analyze the issues that are raised in relationship to sport. Why is this an important issue to think about in connection with sport? How does this issue demonstrate how sport is a microcosm of society? If there is a particular problem (e.g., as in my example, discrimination against gays in sports), how would you go about solving it?

Exactly what you come up with will, of course, depend on the work you choose. Your paper should be three pages, double spaced, in a 10 or 12 font. Please number your pages, and have a bibliography consisting of the full reference of your work.