POSSIBLE BOOKS AND VIDEOS FOR BOOK/FILM REPORT

NOVELS.


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.


Coe, Sebastian.  Running Free.  His autobiography


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


Louis, Joe.  Joe Louis, my Life.


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.


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.)


*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.


*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


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


*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.


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


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.


Rocky. (1976) The original one.

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


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.