

State University of New York College at Cortland
Department of English
English (ENG) 260 – Literature of Sports, Section 001

Course Information

Credit Hours: 3
Semester: Fall 2004
Location: Van Hoesen Hall, Room C-21
Time: MWF 8-8:50 a.m.
Web Site: <http://mccorduck.cortland.edu/260>
(includes a link to WebCT Component)

Professor Information

Ed McCorduck
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or by appointment
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Required Texts and Materials

- Green, Tim. *The Red Zone*. New York: Warner Books, 1998.
- Jenkins, Dan. *The Money-Whipped Steer-Job Three-Jack Give-Up Artist*. New York: Doubleday, 2001.
- Kinsella, W. P. *Shoeless Joe*. Boston: Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999.
- Miller, Jason. *That Championship Season*. New York: Dramatist's Play Service, Inc., 1972.
- Staudohar, Paul D., ed. *Sports Best Short Stories*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2001.
- Wilson, August. *Fences*. New York: Plume, 1986.
- XanEdu CoursePack for Literature of Sports – Fall 2004 (CoursePack ID: 209860)

Course Description

Below is how this course is described in the *SUNY Cortland 2003-2004 Undergraduate Catalog*:

ENG 260: Literature of Sports

Philosophical, psychological, sociological ideas and problems associated with the growing emphasis on sport in modern life.

Passing this course can also fulfill one of the categories of the Knowledge Base of SUNY Cortland's General Education Program, specifically the GE 6: Literature requirement. Courses in the GE 6 category are meant to "treat literature from a broad range of sources through a variety of critical approaches, covering, as appropriate, the following elements for each genre being taught: plot, character, theme, style, imagery, structure, point of view, symbolism, tone, setting and figures of speech" (*Catalog* 37). (2.7; 3.5.2; 3.5.3; 3.5.1.4)

Based on the above stated objectives and purposes, this section of the course will therefore be a survey of imaginative literature (i.e. fiction, drama and poetry) whose main topic is athletics (by which I mean team or individual competitive sports) in the primary milieu of the contemporary United States. (3.5.1; 3.5.2; 3.5.3; 3.5.1.4)

Credit earned from passing this course can also be applied to SUNY Cortland's liberal arts and sciences (LAS) degree requirements.

Objectives and Outcomes

The following objectives for GE 6 courses are stated in the college catalog and will thus be considered primary objectives of this course:

1. Students will be able to express responses to literature analytically. (3.3.1)
2. Students will confront major human concerns as they are treated in literature. (34)

One emendation of these objectives in this course is that the “major human concerns” mentioned in objective 2. will necessarily be for the most part the important role that sports plays in contemporary life in the U.S. In addition, this course has the following secondary objectives:

- to apply sound techniques for reading and analyzing literature (2.4; 3.3.2; 3.3.3)
- to use standard vocabulary and conventions for describing and responding to literature (3.2.5)
- to write about literature effectively in Standard English (3.1.2; 3.2.1; 3.2.2; 3.4.1)
- to gain an appreciation of how different aspects of sports are represented in various types of imaginative literature (2.2; 3.5.1)

Course Attendance Policy

This course will follow the specific policies on student attendance that are found in chapter 410.13 and sections A. and C. of chapter 410.12 of the *College Handbook*. (<http://www.cortland.edu/president/handbook.pdf>). That is, for each unexcused absence beyond your third, the class participation portion of your final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (see “Evaluation of Student Performance” below).

Attendance at each class meeting will be taken through the SynchronEyes class monitoring system. At the beginning of every class, you must log into SynchronEyes for your attendance to be counted for that day. The tabulation of attendance through SynchronEyes will be performed early during each meeting, so tardiness of more than a few minutes after the official start time of class without good reason will count as an unexcused absence. You must also remain logged into SynchronEyes until you are dismissed from class; if you become disconnected from SynchronEyes at any time during class, you must log back in.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Students in this course are expected to abide by the guidelines on academic dishonesty that are found in chapter 340 of the SUNY Cortland *College Handbook* (<http://www.cortland.edu/president/handbook.pdf>). As stated in these guidelines, any instance of plagiarism, cheating on examinations or other forms of academic dishonesty will be punished, most likely by the receipt of a failing grade for this course and possible dismissal from the College.

My Expectations

I expect all students in this course to do the following throughout the semester:

- ✓ purchase all the necessary books and materials for this course (see “Required Texts and Materials” above)
- ✓ complete all of the assigned readings
- ✓ retrieve and read your e-mail from me, and respond to and/or follow its directions as required
- ✓ check the course Web site a few times each week (ideally before each MWF meeting of the class)
- ✓ read all of your peers’ postings to the WebCT Discussion Board (see “Evaluation of Student Performance” below)
- ✓ respond to questions about your postings to the WebCT Discussion Board put to you by me or by other students
- ✓ treat me, the course and all other students in it with respect. The following are behaviors that I would consider not to show the respect I require:
 - **talking excessively to other students during class**; each instance will result in your being asked to leave the class for that meeting and in a reduction of one-third of a letter grade in the Course Participation portion of your final grade (see “Evaluation of Student Performance” below)
 - **engaging in instant messaging or online chat on your computer**; each instance will result in your being locked out of your computer through SynchronEyes and in a reduction of one-third of a letter grade in the Course Participation portion of your final grade (see “Evaluation of Student Performance” below)
 - **engaging in text messaging on a mobile phone**; each instance will result in your being asked to leave the class for that meeting and in a reduction of one-third of a letter grade in the Course Participation portion of your final grade (see “Evaluation of Student Performance” below)
 - **visiting Web sites, using applications or doing any other work or activity not related to what we are covering in class at the moment**; each instance will result in either your being locked out of your computer through SynchronEyes or your being asked to leave the class for that meeting and in a reduction of one-third of a letter grade in the Course Participation portion of your final grade (see “Evaluation of Student Performance” below)

Stated simply, we both have a job to do: you to pass this course and I to help you do it. Let’s work together so we can accomplish this with as few problems as possible for all of us.

Evaluation of Student Performance

There are four main requirements for the course on which you will be evaluated:

1. Satisfactory participation in daily “grill sessions”: At each class meeting for which a reading has been assigned I will conduct a “grill session” in which I will ask students at random some basic comprehension questions about the reading. A student must answer the question posed to him or her satisfactorily, or I will record in my grade book his/her unsatisfactory answer. *Each student will lose one-third of a letter grade in the “course participation” portion of the final grade for each unsatisfactory grill session answer beyond three.* (3.7.2)

2. Satisfactory participation in online discussion board: On the WebCT Component to this course, there is an area that will serve as an online discussion board and I will require that all students log in to the site on a regular basis and post messages on it. Specifically, I require that each student make *a minimum of one significant posting to the board per weekly posting period* (these will be indicated on the board). For instructions on how to use this board, see the tutorial I have prepared for you which you can access by clicking on the “how to use the class discussion board” link on the course Web page. For each weekly posting period that you fail to post to the board, you will lose one-third of a letter grade in the “course participation” portion of the final grade.

I expect all postings during a particular posting period to be based on both the readings assigned and the class discussions held before and during that period. By “significant posting” in the previous paragraph, I mean the following:

- *length:* at least a couple of sentences
- *type:* postings can be general comments and responses about the readings or one reading in particular, and these comments/responses can draw on virtually any relevant aspect of the sports world in general or your experience in particular. You may also pose questions about the readings and answer the questions of other students, and you may also post replies to the postings of others. Whatever you post, make sure it is relevant to the course and the works of literature we will be reading in the course.

I will monitor all discussions on the board and will join in the discussions only as appropriate. I want this to be an important way you can share your own ideas about the works we are going to read and thus maybe gain some further insight into them, insight that I hope will be valuable to you when you do the essay examinations. But here is an important caveat: I will not accept disrespectful behavior, e.g. demeaning comments, on the board, i.e. I expect you to be respectful of other students and their opinions (any such posting that I deem inappropriate will *not* count as a valid response for the posting period). Certainly feel free to express disagreement on particular points with me or your fellow students, but do so in a decent and polite way. (On the other hand, I will not accept postings that are simply statements of agreement, e.g. “I think you’re right”; it’s O.K. to say this, but also say *why specifically* you agree, or disagree). (2.1; 3.4.1; 3.4.3; 3.6.3) Also, as noted above in “My Expectations,” I expect you to read *all* of your peers’ postings to the discussion board, and by doing so I hope you will know to avoid simply repeating the substance of another student’s posting in your own.

3. Essay examinations: Three in-class essay examinations, including the Final Exam, will be given in which I will ask you to write two short essays, and on each exam you will have a choice of questions to which to respond. These questions will be based on class and online discussions we will have had and will ask you essentially to respond intelligently and analytically to the readings we have done. *All the exams will also be open book*, so feel free to bring with you the readings that are the subject of the exams. (3.4.1)

I will use the following scale, which is based on the system described on p. 242 of the *College Catalog* (<http://www.cortland.edu/catalog/index.html>), to grade your exams (and I will do my best to apply this scale objectively):

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Point Value</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
A+	100	superior work; demonstrates understanding and effort that far exceed expectations
A	97	excellent work
A-	92	very good work; a few minor problems
B+	89	quite good work; some problems
B	87	good work
B-	82	mostly satisfactory work, though with significant problems
C+	79	satisfactory, though with some important problems
C	77	passing, though with major problems
C-	72	minimally passing; only most basic fulfillment of the objectives of the course
D+ - D-	69-65	barely passing; very significant problems
E	0	failing

Since you will write two essays per each exam, you will receive two grades on the exams. Here is the scale I will use to convert the grades I give you on each essay into a numerical score for the entire exam:

<u>higher</u>	<u>second</u>	<u>numerical</u>	<u>higher</u>	<u>second</u>	<u>numerical</u>
<u>grade</u>	<u>grade</u>	<u>value</u>	<u>grade</u>	<u>grade</u>	<u>value</u>
A+	A+	100	B+	D+	79
A+	A	98.5	B+	D	78
A+	A-	96	B+	D-	77
A+	B+	94.5	B	B	87
A+	B	93.5	B	B-	84.5
A+	B-	91	B	C+	83
A+	C+	89.5	B	C	82
A+	C	88.5	B	C-	79.5
A+	C-	86	B	D+	78
A+	D+	84.5	B	D	77
A+	D	83.5	B	D-	76
A+	D-	82.5	B-	B-	82
A	A	97	B-	C+	80.5
A	A-	94.5	B-	C	79.5
A	B+	93	B-	C-	77
A	B	92	B-	D+	75.5
A	B-	89.5	B-	D	74.5
A	C+	88	B-	D-	73.5
A	C	87	C+	C+	79
A	C-	84.5	C+	C	78
A	D+	83	C+	C-	77
A	D	82	C+	D+	74
A	D-	81	C+	D	73
A-	A-	92	C+	D-	72
A-	B+	90.5	C	C	77
A-	B	89.5	C	C-	74.5
A-	B-	87	C	D+	73
A-	C+	85.5	C	D	72
A-	C	84.5	C	D-	71
A-	C-	82	C-	C-	72
A-	D+	80.5	C-	D+	70.5
A-	D	79.5	C-	D	69.5
A-	D-	78.5	C-	D-	68.5
B+	B+	89	D+	D+	69
B+	B	88	D+	D	68
B+	B-	85.5	D+	D-	67
B+	C+	84	D	D	67
B+	C	83	D	D-	66
B+	C-	80.5	D-	D-	65

Here then is a breakdown of the relative importance of each of the above requirements toward the determination your final grade for the course:

3 exams.....75% (i.e. each is 25%)
 class participation (includes attendance, respect for the class, grill session participation and participation in online discussion board; see the relevant sections above*) ..25%

*Reference has been made in the preceding sections to reductions of this portion of the final grade by “one-third of a letter grade.” This refers to the plus, neutral and minus division of each letter grade in the College grading system; a reduction of one-third of a grade of A+ is an A, a reduction of one-third of grade of A is an A-, a reduction of one-third of a grade of A- is a B+, and so on.

Course Schedule and Activities

Here is an outline of the major topics and events of this course:

- ❑ *Short stories about sports*
- ❑ *Exam One*
- ❑ *Novels about sports*
- ❑ *Exam Two*
- ❑ *Plays about sports*
- ❑ *Poems about sports*
- ❑ *Final Exam*

The specific dates for the exams and information on the specific readings that you must complete before each class meeting are given on the Calendar section of the WebCT Component of the course.

Related Readings

Aethlon: The Journal of Sports Literature. 1988-

Alguire, Judith. *Iced!* Norwich, VT: New Victoria Publishers, 1995.

Aymar, Brandt, ed. *Men in Sports: Great Sports Stories of All Time from the Greek Olympic Games to the American World Series*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 1995.

Bechard, Gorman. *Balls*. New York: Plume, 1995.

Berman, Neil David. *Playful Fictions and Fictional Players: Game, Sport, and Survival in Contemporary American Fiction*. Port Washington, NY: Kennikat Press, 1981.

Blaustein, Noah, ed. *Motion: American Sports Poems*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2001

Bjarkman, Peter C., ed. *Baseball and the Game of Life: Stories for the Thinking Fan*. New York: Birch Books, 1980.

Buchwald, Emilie and Ruth Roston, eds. *This Sporting Life: Poems about Sports and Games*. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 1998.

Burns, Grant. *The Sports Pages: A Critical Bibliography of Twentieth-Century American Novels and Stories Featuring Baseball, Basketball, Football, and other Athletic Pursuits*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1947.

- Coover, Robert. *The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.* New York: New American Library, 1968.
- Dawidoff, Nicholas. *Baseball: A Literary Anthology.* New York: Library of America, 2002.
- DeLillo, Don. *End Zone.* New York: Penguin, 1972.
- Deford, Frank. *Everybody's All-American.* Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2004.
- Dodge, Tom, ed. *A Literature of Sports.* Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1980.
- Gardner, Leonard. *Fat City.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969.
- Gent, Peter. *North Dallas Forty.* New York: Morrow, 1973.
- Green, Tim. *The Red Zone.* New York: Warner Books, 1998.
- Green, Tim. *Ruffians.* New York: St. Martin's Paperbacks, 1994.
- Green, Tim. *Titans.* New York: St Martin's Press, 1994.
- Greenberg, Eric Rolfe. *The Celebrant.* New York: Everest House, 1983.
- Greenberg, Richard. *Take Me Out.* New York: Faber & Faber, 2003.
- Hallberg, William, ed. *Perfect Lies: A Century of Great Golf Stories.* New York: Touchstone Books, 1998.
- Harris, Mark. *The Southpaw.* Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1953.
- Hays, Donald. *The Dixie Association.* Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1997.
- Higgs, Robert J. *Laurel and Thorn: the Athlete in American Literature.* Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1981.
- Holtzman, Jerome, ed. *Fielder's Choice.* New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1979.
- Hyman, Laurence J., ed. *Tales of the Diamond: Selected Gems of Baseball Fiction.* New York: Woodford Publishing, 1995.
- Isaacs, Neil D. *The Great Molinas.* Bethesda, MD: Wid Publishing Group, 1993.
- Jenkins, Dan. *Dead Solid Perfect.* New York: Doubleday, 1974.
- Jenkins, Dan. *Semi-Tough.* New York: Atheneum, 1972.
- Johnson, Don, ed. *Hummers, Knucklers, and Slow Curves: Contemporary Baseball Poems.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991
- Kinsella, W. P., ed. *Baseball Fantastic.* Kingston, ON: Quarry Out of This World, 2001.
- Kinsella, W. P. *The Iowa Baseball Confederacy.* New York: Ballantine Books, 1996.
- Knudson, R. R. and May Swenson, eds. *American Sports Poems.* New York: Orchard Books, 1988.
- LaSalle, Peter. *Hockey sur Glace: Stories.* New York: Breakaway Books, 1996.
- Lauricella, John A. *Home Games: Essays on Baseball Fiction.* Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 1999.
- London, Jack. *The Abysmal Brute.* New York: Century, 1913.
- London, Jack. *The Game.* New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1905.
- Malamud, Bernard. *The Natural.* New York: Avon, 1952.
- Markus, Michael. *East of Mourning.* New Bern, NC: Trafford Publishing, 2001.
- McCorduck, Ed. *Understanding American Football.* Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Publishing Group, 1998. (<http://McCorduck.net/football/>)
- McSherry, Frank D., Jr., ed. *Baseball 3000.* New York: Elsevier/Nelson Books, 1981.
- Messenger, Christian K. *Sport and the Spirit of Play in American Fiction: Hawthorne to Faulkner.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
- Messenger, Christian K. *Sport and the Spirit of Play in Contemporary American Fiction.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1990.
- Odets, Clifford. *Golden Boy.* New York: Random House, 1937.
- Oriard, M. *Dreaming of Heroes: American Sports Fiction, 1868-1980.* Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982.
- O'Rourke, Frank. *The Heavenly World Series: Timeless Baseball Fiction.* New York: Carroll and Graf, 2002.

- Reilly, Rick. *Slo-Mo!* New York: Doubleday, 1999.
- Rosen, Charley. *Barney Polan's Game: A Novel of the 1951 College Basketball Scandals*. New York: Harvest Books, 1999.
- Roth, Philip. *The Great American Novel*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Sackler, Howard. *The Great White Hope*. New York: Bantam, 1968.
- Sandoz, Joli., ed. *A Whole Other Ball Game: Women's Literature on Women's Sport*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1997.
- Sandoz, Joli and Joby Winans, eds. *Whatever It Takes: Women on Women's Sport*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999.
- Schneider, Jeff. *The Fix*. Poughkeepsie, NY: Vivisphere Publishing, 2001.
- Schulman, Lester, ed. *The Random House Book of Sports Stories*. New York: Random House, 2000.
- Schwed, Peter, and Herbert Warren Wind, eds. *Great Stories from the World of Sport*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958.
- Schinto, Jeanne. *Show Me a Hero: Great Contemporary Stories about Sports*. New York: Persea Books, 1995.
- Shaara, Michael. *For the Love of the Game*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1999.
- Sillitoe, Alan. *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*. New York: Signet, 1959.
- Staudohar, Paul D., ed. *Baseball's Best Short Stories*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1997.
- Staudohar, Paul D., ed. *Boxing's Best Short Stories*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1999.
- Staudohar, Paul D., ed. *Football's Best Short Stories*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1999.
- Staudohar, Paul D., ed. *Golf's Best Short Stories*. Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1999.
- Vanderwerken, David L. and Spencer K. Wertz, eds. *Sport Inside Out: Readings in Literature and Philosophy*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1985.
- Wise, Suzanne. *Sports Fiction for Adults: An Annotated Bibliography of Novels, Plays, Short Stories, and Poetry with Sporting Settings*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986.

If you are a student with a disability and wish to request accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services located in B-40 Van Hoesen Hall or call (607) 753-2066 for an appointment. Information regarding your disability will be treated in a confidential manner. Because many accommodations require early planning, requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible.