

Why devote two sessions of this course to the subject of black athletes?

The Black Freedom Liberation Movement intersected with American sport. The BFLM affected sport. Sport affected the BFLM.

Sport was an arena that evidenced concerted efforts to reinforce and preserve white supremacy for nearly fifty years.

Sport has been an arena where the question of what it means to be an American have been debated.

Sport was seen by many inside and outside of the black community as a pathway toward social equality.

Sport was seen by many inside and outside of the black community as an indirect path toward political progress.

Sport has often been depicted as a space to improve race relations/to transcend racial tensions/to overcome racism.

Sport offers a visible platform for social commentary and even protest.

Sport offers case studies in the benefits of and problems associated with the politics of respectability.

Sport is a space where “culture wars” play out in visible ways.

Media and others often emphasize the race of black athletes, who in the past were sometimes characterized as a “race” man or woman. There are examples where black athletes have been criticized for emphasizing race and other times for not avoiding race issues.

African American success as players has not always led to increased opportunities in management and ownership (i.e. – positions of authority).

Some believe that athletic success has been overemphasized among African Americans at the expense of other life choices.

Sport has often revealed deeply embedded ignorance (e.g. – the plight of the African American quarterback).

Examining the life stories of African American athletes often reveals the social implications of race.

There are those who want sport to be a political-free zone. Therefore, black athletes face severe criticism when they are perceived to be raising “race issues.”