

Sports History

Sports History is a social science elective that explores the powerful role of sports in shaping culture, identity, and history in the United States and around the world. Beginning with an examination of America's deep passion for sports, students will analyze themes such as heroism, scandal, superstition, and the impact of crime and gambling in athletics. The course then traces the origins and evolution of the Olympic Games, comparing ancient traditions to modern global spectacles while investigating major moments, controversies, and political implications. Students will dive into the history and contemporary issues surrounding America's "Big 5" sports—baseball, basketball, football, NASCAR, and hockey—while engaging in debates and simulations that highlight leadership and decision-making in professional sports. Expanding beyond mainstream athletics, the course also explores "gentleman's sports," lifestyle and extreme sports, and global phenomena like soccer, encouraging students to consider diverse athletic cultures and values. Finally, students will examine the expansion of sports through media, business, and social change, with a focus on equity, representation, and the influence of journalism. Through discussions, projects, simulations, and critical analysis, this course challenges students to understand sports not just as games, but as a reflection of society itself.