

**History 450: Baseball Scouts and Oral History**  
**Instructor: Francisco E. Balderrama, Ph.D.**  
**Fall Quarter 2007**  
**Classroom: King Hall B 4017**

**Section 02**

**Monday: 6:10 to 10:00**

**The course syllabus is subject to change due to extenuating circumstances.**

**Office Hours for Student Advisement**

**KH C3059**

Monday and Wednesday: 1:30 to 2:30 and 3:15 to 4:15 as well as by appointment.

**Special Office Hours for HIST 450: Baseball Scout Students on Wednesday evening, 6:00 to 6:30 and later by appointment.**

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### **Course Description**

This course explores the history of Baseball and particularly the role of scouting from an oral history perspective with attention to theory as well as practice. The course is also linked to the unique and comprehensive humanities **Project: EYES FOR TALENT: THE ART & SCIENCE OF BASEBALL SCOUTING.**

### **Eyes for Talent: Project Description**

In the history of the national pastime, baseball scouts have been, and remain, the most anonymous and unappreciated subculture. Although major league baseball could not exist without scouts, and its clubs rely heavily on them for discovering and evaluating young players, the impact of scouts on both the game's evolution and the high quality of play on the diamond has been largely neglected. This project, one of the first major surveys on baseball scouting, will provide the public with a unique entrée into a previously inaccessible world and will allow for a greater understanding and appreciation of baseball – indeed, for some, it will result in an entirely new way of looking at the national pastime.

While the project will present an historical overview of baseball scouting, including its origins in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, special emphasis will be placed on the so-called “golden age of scouting” from World War II through the mid-1960s, a period which featured many colorful personalities and was marked by more intuitive and individualistic approaches to evaluating talent. This era will be compared to and contrasted with today’s more bureaucratized scouting strategies, with scouts relying more on technology and analytical methodologies.

### **Format**

The course is organized as a reading/discussion seminar with a sustained exercise in oral history practice. Discussion is therefore not only desired and encouraged but also expected. The subject is complex; the course, however, is structured in such a manner that the foundation for each class is established in the preceding class. Therefore, the student is strongly advised to attend all classes and to come prepared to discuss the topics, ask questions on issues not understood, and explain (if possible) issues that fellow classmates do not understand.

### **Guest Speakers and Scholars**

Several guest speakers as well as scholars are also invited to address the class regarding key components of the project-- the history of Post World War II, Baseball and Scouts as well as oral history.

### **Goals**

The seminar seeks to (1) to introduce students to Baseball History particularly the significance of Baseball Scouts (2) to develop an appreciation of oral history (3) to acquaint students with theory and research (4) to foster a critical approach in the evaluation of oral history and (5) to develop key tools of learning--communication, dialogue, and research.

### **Required Readings**

The course has a required text and reader as well as collateral readings listed below. However, the instructor also will be providing copies of newspaper articles and other documents.

### **Text**

Donald A. Ritchie. *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide. Second Edition.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

### **Course Reader**

Eric Avila. "Suburbanizing the City Center: *The Dodgers Move West*" in *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Kerrane, Kevin. "Baseball Men: An Introduction" in *Dollar Sign on the Muscle: The World of Baseball Scouting*. Omaha: University of Nebraska, 1999.

Schwarz, Alan "The Great Debate" from *Baseball America: Super Register*, 7 January 2005.

(Above available at the University Bookstore for purchase)

### **Collateral Readings for Review Essay**

#### **Oral History**

Dunaway, David K. and Willa K. Baum. *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 1996.

#### **Baseball**

Dreifort, John E. *Baseball History From Outside the Lines: A Reader*. Omaha: University of Nebraska, 2001.

Elias, Robert. *Baseball and the American Dream: Race, Class, Gender, and the National Pastime*. Armonk, New York: ME. Sharpe, 2001.

#### **Baseball Scouts**

Hanneman, David. *Diamonds in the Rough: The Legend and Legacy of Tony Lucadello, One of Baseball's Greatest Scouts*. New York: Diamond Books, 1989.

Kerrane, Kevin. *Dollar Sign on the Muscle: The World of Baseball Scouting*. Omaha: University of Nebraska, 1999.

Lewis, Michael, *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.

Winegardner, Mark. *Prophet of the Sandlots: Journeys with a Major League Scout*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1990.

**Class Attendance**

Class attendance is extremely important because much of the material for this course is not spelled out in the texts but has to be provided through lectures and discussions. Moreover, the development of student awareness and understanding comes through class participation and discussion.

**Cooperative Learning Discussion Groups**

Along with the traditional seminar format, all students will be assigned to a cooperative learning discussion group. The cooperative discussion group is a fairly successful approach for investigating course material, because all students are required to discuss issues and themes with their fellow students. The instructor establishes the discussion agenda by providing specific in-class exercises for almost every class meeting. These exercises will not only aid students in studying the course material, but also to develop skills of critical analysis.

**Participation: Advice and Suggestions**

Students are expected to attend meetings and participate in the discussions. Participation in the discussions will constitute one part of the final grade. The following remarks are made with the intention of making discussions an important and meaningful experience for each student. Classroom discussions often fail because students expect too much to come out of discussions too easily. Discussions also are unproductive when students have not read the assignments and thus have nothing to contribute. Students should be aware that discussion is more demanding and frustrating than copying down lecture notes. The purpose of a discussion is to organize, integrate, analyze, interpret, and question the lectures, readings, videos, and other course materials. In fact, the success of a discussion to a large degree depends on the student's willingness to contribute his or her views and discuss those of others.

**Discussion Leadership**

All students will be assigned the role of discussion leaders for five (5) readings. All students must submit a printed report on the scheduled date discussing the (1) thesis/argument (2) strengths and weaknesses and (3) discussion questions. The assignments should range in length from one (1) to two (2) printed pages. The instructor will provide guidance regarding the discussion leadership assignment including examples.

### **Collateral Reading Review Essay**

Students may select any reading from the supplementary list above for a critical review essay. The essay should range in length from three (3) to four (4) printed pages and is due at the beginning of the class meeting on **November 19, 2007**. The class will discuss the various readings at that class session.

### **Oral History Project**

All students will select an individual involved in Baseball Scouting to interview who will share their respective experience. The final completed interview will be housed at the JFK Memorial Library at Cal State LA and also will be utilized as a source for the upcoming library exhibit of **EYES FOR TALENT: THE ART & SCIENCE OF BASEBALL SCOUTING, Spring Quarter 2008**.

Moreover, students will contribute to the limited historical knowledge about Baseball Scouts by making their project available to fellow researchers. The interview session will place the individual within the context of major themes and issues of American history especially the period of World II to 1965. Obviously, references to supplementary materials from other appropriate fields will be encouraged. Of course, other sources especially secondary sources will be used to support the oral history investigation. The instructor will be providing guidance and assistance throughout the project.

**Step #1: Topic Statement (One Paragraph) -- Due: Monday, October 8, 2007**

**Step #2: Working Bibliography (Primary and Secondary Sources) -- Due: Monday, October 22, 2007.**

**Step #3: Interview Questions-- Due: Monday, November 5, 2007**

**Step #4: Progress Report—Due: Monday, November 12, 2007**

**Step #5: Oral Presentations of Research Project to Class--Due: Monday, November 19, 2007**

**Step #5: Preliminary Submission of Interview and Reflection Essay (3 to 5 pages-- Due: Monday, November 26, 2007**

**Step #6: Final Submission of Project**

*Copies of Videotape(s) of Interview*

*Interviewee Agreement (Signed and Dated, form provided by instructor)*

*Interview Summary Report (form provided by instructor)*  
*Copy of Interview Questions*  
*Reflection Essay (3 to 5 pages)*

**Due: Monday, December 3, 2007 at 5:00 PM**

### **Reflection Essay**

Critically discuss the experience of doing the project in terms of what did you learn. Give specific references to support your observations. Your essay may give attention to the field of oral history, baseball history particularly scouting, or the post World War II era. The essay should range in length from three (3) to five (5) pages in length.

### **Exhibit Visit and Critical Review Essay**

"Mexican-American Baseball in Los Angeles: From the Barrios to the Big Leagues," at the Pomona Public Library, 625 S. Garey Ave., Pomona, California, October 1 to November 30, 2007.

The review essay should range in length from three (3) to four (4) printed pages and is due at the beginning of the class meeting on **November 5, 2007**.

## **Course Calendar Mondays**

**September 24**

**Week I: Course Introduction and the Eyes for the Talent Project**

**Guests: John F. Kennedy University Librarian: Alice Kawakami**

**Baseball Reliquary Executive Director: Terry Cannon**

**Baseball Scout and Cal State LA Grad: Phil Pote**

**Towards Defining Oral History and Understanding the Baseball Scouts**

Readings: Chapters 1 and 2 in *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*.

**October 1**

**Week II Surveying Post World War II America and Baseball Scouting:**

**Guest Speaker: Baseball Scout Film Maker and Interviewer: Jeff Kaley**

**\*\*\*Discussion Leader Reports #1 Due**

Kerrane, Kevin. "Baseball Men: An Introduction" in *Dollar Sign on the Muscle: The World of Baseball Scouting*. Omaha: University of Nebraska, 1999.

**October 8**

**Week III: Week II Surveying Post World War II America and Baseball Scouting:**

**\*\*\*Discussion Leader Reports #2 Due\*\*\***

**Readings:**

Schwarz, Alan “The Great Debate” from *Baseball America: Super Register*, 7 January 2005.

**\*\*\*Project Step #1: Topic Statement Due\*\*\***

**October 15**

**Week IV: Post World War II Baseball in Los Angeles ---The Chávez Ravine Controversy**

Readings: Avila, Eric. “Suburbanizing the City Center: *The Dodgers Move West*”

**\*\*\*Discussion Leader Reports #3 Due\*\*\***

**October 22**

**Week V: Designing and Conducting Your Oral History Project**

**Panel Discussion Guests: “Baseball Scouts Talk About Their Work and Life**

Readings: Chapters 3 and 4 of *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*.

**\*\*\*Discussion Leader Reports #4 Due\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Project Step #2: Working Bibliography Due\*\*\***

**October 29**

**Week VI: Designing and Conducting Your Oral History Project**

**Panel Discussion Guests: Family, Friends, Players, and Baseball Management Offer Their Views of Baseball Scouts**

**\*\*\*Project Step #3: Interview Questions Due\*\*\***

**November 5**

**Week VII: Oral History Key Themes and Issues**

Readings: Chapters 5 and 6 of *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*

**\*\*\*Discussion Leader Reports #5 Due\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Project Step #4: Progress Report Due\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Review Essay of Mexican American Baseball Exhibit Due and Class Discussion**

**November 12—Veterans Day Observed/University Holiday  
Campus Closed**

**November 14, Wednesday 1:30 to 2:30 or 3:15 to 4:15 or 6:00 to 8:30  
Week VIII: Individual Student Appointments for Project Consultation**

**November 19**

**Week IX: Project Progress Reports Due and Oral Presentation**

Readings: Chapters 7 and 8 of *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*

**\*\*\*Project Step #4: Report on Interview Research Due\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Collateral Readings: Critical Review Essays Due and Class Discussion\*\*\***

**November 26**

**Week X: Finishing the Project**

**\*\*\*Project Step #5: Preliminary Submission of Oral History Project and Reflection Essay Due\*\*\***

**December 3**

**Finals Week**

**\*\*\*Project Step #6: Final Submission of Oral History Project**

**Videotape(s) of the interview**

**Interviewee Agreement (signed and dated)**

**Interview Summary Report**

**Interview Questions**

**Reflection Essay**

**Due in KH C3059 at 5:00 PM\*\*\***

**Grading**

The course grade will be based upon 500 points:

**Discussion Leader Reports**

5 Reports at 20 Points Each      100

**Review Essay of Collateral Reading**

50

**Review Essay of Mexican American Baseball Exhibit**

25

**Eyes on the Talent Oral History Project**

Topic Statement	10
Working Bibliography	10
Interview Questions	10
Progress Report	10
Oral Presentation	20
Preliminary Submission	10
Final Submission	150
Reflection Essay	75
Participation in Cooperative Learning Discussion Group	
Class Attendance/Participation	<u>30</u>
	500

The course will use plus and minus as part of the grading system.  
 500-475/95%=A; 474-450/90%=A-; 449-440/88%=B+; 439-420/84%=B;  
 419-400/80%=B-; 399-390/78%=C+; 389-370/74%=C  
 369-350/70%=C-; 349-325/65%=D+; 324-300/60%=D  
 299- =F

All students are encouraged to consult with the instructor throughout the quarter especially if experiencing any difficulties!!!