

FAMOUS ATHLETES AND THE LAW

Course Information

Spring Semester
 Tuesdays 12:45PM - 2:15PM
 Bernard Schwartz, Retired California Superior Court Judge
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Course Description

This course explores how the civil and criminal justice systems have treated famous athletes involved in legal controversies. Through video clips, case studies, and class discussions, students will examine each athlete's life, career, and legal proceedings, analyzing the complex relationship between fame, crime, justice, and society. The course will consider questions such as: Do athletes receive special treatment under the law? How does public opinion influence judicial outcomes? Were these individuals truly guilty or innocent? Should athletes be held to higher ethical standards? And finally, what does redemption look like after public scandal or legal conviction?

Course Overview

(Course content subject to change)

Week 1	Tonya Harding, Ice Princess: The Nancy Kerrigan attack, gender and class. Heroes and villains by the media. (1994)
Week 2	O.J. Simpson and The Dream Team: Part One. Murder, race, celebrity privilege, jury selection and courtroom theatrics.(1995)
Week 3	O.J. Simpson: Revenge and Redemption: Part Two. Different legal standard, double jeopardy, time to pay \$\$\$(1997)
Week 4	Mike Tyson, The Knockout Punch: Desiree Washington and the se xual attack.(1991)
Week 5	Michael Vick, This Dog Bites: Animal rights, sponsorship and financial issues, the comeback.(2007)
Week 6	Aaron Hernandez, Serial Killer: Mental health, CTE, violence in sports and league responsibility.(2013)
Week 7	Oscar Pistorius, Blade Runner: Murder of Reeva Steenkamp, international legal issues, disability issues. (2013)
Week 8	Kobe Bryant, The Black Mamba: Kaitlan Faber sexual assault. Can money buy off a conviction? What happens with an unwilling witness. (2004)
Week 9	Henry Rugg Speed And Alcohol Kills: Tina Tintor and Max killed. Dui laws and special treatment.(2023)
Week 10	Chauncey Billups, Damon Jones And Terry Rozier Point Shaving And Poker: Can we trust our athletes to play honestly?(2025)

