Sports through History

“To understand the present, one must first understand what brought us to the present.”--Karl Marx
Ancient Greeks

- Among earliest documented societies with sport/games
- Dominant cultural features that influenced sports
  - Emphasis on beauty (arête), grace, form and style
  - Religion
  - Warfare
    - “gymnos”--site for training, physical development, and educational enrichment
The Olympics

- Three major characteristics of (games)
  - Philotimia--desire for honor
  - Philonikia--desire for victory
  - Phthonos--poor sportsmanship

- Eligibility requirements
  - Gender exclusion
The Romans

- Comparisons with Greeks:
  - Stressed sensate materialism and militarism
    - central cultural feature is thermae--bath
  - Training for warfare
  - Gladiator games
    - Introduction of sport(?) as a spectacle
    - The amphitheatre and Coliseum
Medieval Europe

- Influence of Roman Empire
- Class distinctions
  - Aristocracy participation in tournaments
    - War games
      - Combat led to death, maiming, loss of possessions, etc.
  - Peasants
    - Localized games
    - Sunday afternoon games encouraged by Catholic Church
      - Foundations for many modern games
    - Gender limitations
North American Sport History

Native Americans

- diverse cultures, but all exhibit some level of sport/games
- broad range of sporting activities

Best known Native American sport: Lacrosse
The Renaissance and Reformation

- **Renaissance**
  - Scholar athlete—well-rounded individuals
  - Male dominated

- **Reformation**
  - Formally organized sport very limited
  - Puritan religions
    - Ascetic life versus carnal life (leisure)
    - Laws established to prohibit sports
Early 19th Century

- Important Societal Revolutions:
  - Industrial Revolution
    - urbanization
    - improved standard of living and increased leisure time
    - new need for recreation/diversion
    - Critical mass of population
  - Technological Revolution
    - Transportation
    - Communication
The Emergence of Modern Sport

- Important Social Changes of Late 19\textsuperscript{th} Century
  - Urbanization (again)
    - Class diffusion of sports
  - Immigration
  - Muscular Christianity and Intellectualism
  - Cult of “Manliness”
  - Emergence of intercollegiate athletics
The 20th Century Developments

- Sport becomes big business
- Transportation
- Communication
- Education
  - intercollegiate sports in America are unique--sport is viewed as right arm of public relations for schools
- Other technological advancements