

Course Title: In the Shadow of Obscurity; Toiling in a Reluctant Society
Instructor: Pete Elman: Dates: Mondays, 1-3 zoom: 6/6, 6/13, 6/24, 6/27.

In the Shadow of Obscurity; Toiling in a Reluctant Society is a class culled from a book of the same title that tells the story of the journey, struggles and achievements of a special group of unheralded athletes of color, a handful of brave trailblazers, men and women whose skills and exploits contributed to an array of individual and team as well as two journalists who championed their causes. There are 27 compelling stories in the book. The theme of the class will be social justice and racism in America as seen through the prism of professional sports. Each week will concentrate on two subjects from the book. The course will be taught as a combination lecture/slide show/interactive discussion focusing on the lives, careers, and stories of those who overcame racial prejudice to succeed. *With very special guests.* Class outline is as follows:

6/6: Week one: A Trailblazer Has No Regrets—The story of Pumpsie Green, East Bay legend. Also **His Best Was Sure Good Enough**: Burl Toler, a San Franciscan who broke barriers his whole life.

6/13: Week two: Running Down the Basepaths of Life—the story of Negro League players Toni Stone and Mamie "Peanut" Johnson, women who overcame incredible obstacles to play pro baseball in the 1950's.

6/24: Week three: (note date change—Friday, June 24) The Shot Heard 'Round the World: The Joe Gaetjens story, **with special guest Mike McGreehan**, sports journalist and author who wrote for the Alameda Journal for 20 years. Also **Renaissance Trailblazer of the East Bay**: Don Barksdale.

6/27: Week four: The Man Who Risked It All--Curt Flood, a native of Oakland, broke the bonds of slavery in sport, and **Time to Play by The Rule**: NBA Hall of Famer Spencer Haywood. **With special guest Arif Khatib**

Syllabus: (*suggested reading and viewing*)

This course is taken from the pages of the book; *In the Shadow of Obscurity; Toiling in a Reluctant Society*, by Pete Elman and Arif Khatib. It is not required to take the course, but I strongly suggest you read the book!

You can purchase a **discounted signed copy for \$15 which will be shipped immediately at no cost** and support the authors at: realdream@mindspring.com

additional suggested reading and viewing:

Week one:

Reading:

“Pumpsie Green and Boston's Struggle to Integrate the Red Sox”, by Robert Stone
“Justice for the Negro Leagues Will Mean More Than Just Stats” article, NY
Times, March 28, 2021, by Rowan Ricardo Phillips

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/23/magazine/negro-leagues-baseball-stats-mlb.html>

Undefeated, Untied, and Uninvited, By Kristine Clark, 2002

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Week two:

Reading:

*Curveball: The Remarkable Story of Toni Stone, the First Woman to Play
Professional Baseball in the Negro League 2017*, by Martha Ackmann

<https://www.npr.org/local/305/2020/02/13/805611719/remembering-d-c-negro-leagues-legend-mamie-peanut-johnson>

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Week three:

Reading:

The Shot Heard Around the World: The Joe Gaetjens Story, 2010 by Lesly
Gaetjens

They Cleared the Lane: The NBA's Black Pioneers 2004 by Ron Thomas

Viewing:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wk0Fvo7D_7s

Bounce: The Don Barksdale story, by Doug Harris

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Week four:

Reading:

*A Well-Paid Slave: Curt Flood's Fight for Free Agency in Professional Sports
2007* by Brad Snyder

The Way It Is, 1971, by Curt Flood

Viewing:

The Curious Case of Curt Flood (2011) HBO