

## Baseball Essentials. Welcome.

Dear Class: Here is a preliminary, light hearted description of our course. I will provide a detailed syllabus at the first meeting. I plan on seven innings, maybe eight. (Seven innings like high school ball, but no aluminum bats, and if an eighth inning, no free runners on second base.)

First, if you have a chance to read **for the first meeting**, please read the following selections in Baseball: A Literary Anthology:

The introduction by Nicholas Dawidoff

Essay selections for

Roger Angell

Bart Giamatti

Moe Berg

Jacques Barzun

Second, **for the second meeting**, please read the essay provided here on the website by Bart Giamatti, "Baseball as Narrative" and the statement by Giamatti on the Pete Rose matter. In re. the second statement, I want to discuss the influence of gambling on the game, yesterday and today.

Third, I will be very happy if by the end of the course you see that there are four kinds of baseball writing: the **Literary**, in which there are no obvious grammatical errors; the **Reportorial**, in which the grammar is what you and your editor agree will be accepted by the general public, and the **Vernacular**, in which grammar is only observed by accident. Under vernacular there is a sub-heading: **oral baseballese** which is spoken by almost all professional players of the game and of course by many fans. Mordant levity is one of the key features of this dialect. Oral baseballese is seldom recorded accurately in writing. Mark Harris did it pretty good.

Fourth, at each meeting I want to feature a pitcher and a position player. The pitchers and position players I have in mind are:

Pitchers:

Babe Ruth

Christy Mathewson  
Dizzy Dean  
Whitey Ford  
Warren Spahn  
Sandy Koufax  
Bob Gibson  
Satchel Paige  
Greg Maddux

Position players:

Babe Ruth  
Honus Wagner  
Ty Cobb  
Lou Gehrig  
Josh Gibson  
Joe DiMaggio  
Ted Williams  
Stan Musial  
Red Schoendienst  
Jackie Robinson  
Larry Doby  
Mickey Mantle  
Roberto Clemente  
Tony Gwynn  
Yadier Molina

You are very welcome to add some names to this list and tell us a bit about that pitcher or position player.

Now, above all let's enjoy this course. It's about the greatest of all games. And **Spring Training** is almost here. Pitchers and catchers are due to report to training camp in mid- to late February. We all need to get ready. Our MLB lords and masters are always about to spring (ha ha) something on us, like they did with the designated hitter in the National League. What do you think of the ball and strike challenge system being introduced this year? At our last inning we will discuss getting ready for the 162 game regular season and playoffs of 2026.

