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Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Pts. earned\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_/200 pts.

Sports Literature

Final Exam

* **Submit your completed responses—all of them—to Turnitin.com.** Thank you.
* *Please upload all sections together in one file to Turnitin.com when you are finished.*
* Please turn in this sheet when you are done.

**Part I (\_\_\_\_\_\_/20 pts.)**

* Consider the following quote by Ahmad Rashad, and apply it to at least one piece of literature or film from the course. Be specific in explaining how the athletes involved definitely learned something about “life itself” through their collective athletic achievement.

“Sports can unite a group of people from different backgrounds, all working together to achieve a common goal. And even if they fall short, sharing that journey is an experience they'll never forget. It can teach some of the most fundamental and important human values: dedication, perseverance, hard work, and teamwork. It also teaches us how to handle our success and cope with our failure. So, perhaps the greatest glory of sport is that is teaches us so much about life itself.” --Ahmad Rashad

**Part II (\_\_\_\_\_\_/20 pts.)--You choose the curriculum**

* Choose one or two readings or films we have explored throughout the semester, and explain why you have chosen this reading or film as a “must keep” in the Sports Literature course. Obviously, there is no right or wrong answer here. Simply be specific and support your selection.

**Part III--*The Natura l\_\_\_\_\_\_/60 pts.)***

* Choose **ONE** of these eight topics for your longer response. Shoot for three paragraphs no matter which topic you choose. You may use your novel.

1. Consider these remarks from Kevin Baker’s Introduction to *The Natural*: “Hobbs

is one of the most thoroughly unsympathetic heroes in the history of American

literature . . . One can feel little real pity for any character who has so assiduously

shaped his own doom.” (p. xii) Would you agree? Can, or should, we pity Roy

Hobbs? Also, earlier in his Introduction, Baker writes: “It is hard to find a truly

likable character in the book.” (p. ix) Do you agree with this assertion? Explain why

or why not.

1. Hobbs is drawn to three women over the course of the novel: Harriet Bird,

Memo Paris, and Iris Lemon. Describe them. What does Hobbs find appealing

about each of them? What, if anything, do these women have in common? Why

is each attracted to him? What, in turn, does Hobbs see in them—that is,

individually and collectively?

1. Dreams play an important role in *The Natural*; we find many different

dream descriptions throughout the book. What was Roy Hobbs’ dream(s)? Do they come true? Why or why not?

1. Daydreams about trains appear at many points in the novel, usually as the

recurring reveries Hobbs keeps having. Even on the last page, the following

locomotive imagery strikes Hobbs at the low conclusion of the narrative: “He felt

the insides of him beginning to take off (chug chug choo choo . . .). Pretty soon

they were in fast flight.” (p.231) Identify other train-based visions had by Hobbs.

What do they signify or suggest to him? Explain this train metaphor—and what it

means to Hobbs personally.

1. *The Natural* not only offers a detailed rendering of the world of baseball; it also

illustrates the business aspect of professional sports. How is the relationship

between pro sports and business characterized in these pages? What about the relationship

between pro sports and gambling? Do you think that either of these relationships

would be characterized differently if Malamud were composing his novel

today? Explain your views.

1. Discuss Malamud’s novel as an allegory. Use the definition provided at the beginning of the unit to develop your ideas. What are the key scenes, events, or actions in *The Natural* that make *The Natural* an allegory?
2. Compare and contrast the life of Ted Williams as it compares to Roy Hobbs. You may use your notes. 2-3 key similarities/differences should do the trick for this one.
3. Compare the novel of The Natural with the film of The Natural. If you have any notes, you may use them. Choose 2-3 key differences, and explain, both what the differences are, and how the differences change the overall effect of the story.

**Final Exam Essay Prompt (\_\_\_\_\_\_/100 pts.)**

* Using a minimum of three of the selections (on back), explore the question posed by Steve Rushin in his article, “Beautiful Games”: “What is the primary purpose in sports?” Consider the varying perspectives of coaches, players, team owners, and other key “players” as you develop your answer to the question: “What is the primary purpose in sports?”