

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY 453:01
Special Topics in URBAN SOCIOLOGY
Cities and the Olympics

COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2010

Class Meets TR 2:00-3:15

Location: SS115

Instructor: Dr. H. Hiller

Office Hours: TR 12:30-1:30, or by appointment

Office: SS 1056

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Sociology department website: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

The course outline is available on the course Blackboard site.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the Olympics from the point of view of the host city (or potential host city in the case of bid cities) rather than thinking of the Olympics as an athletic competition. This also entails attention to the question of what the contemporary Olympic movement represents and whose interests it serves.
2. To understand why cities want to host the Olympics, how the Olympics is used by cities to accomplish non-sporting objectives, and to analyze the conflicts that the Olympic agenda creates within cities.
3. To understand the urban sociological dynamics created by the Olympics in the bid phase, planning phase, event phase, and post-event phase in order to respond to the question of why the Olympics becomes a source of controversy as well as celebration. The question of legacy will be addressed from an urban perspective.
4. This semester will have a further unique objective in that we will be able to experience first-hand how the Olympic Games impacts a city. This can be done either through travel to Vancouver or by monitoring the Olympics as it unfolds through the media and utilizing the analytical lens which we will develop.

In short, this is not a course that looks at the Olympics as a sporting event or that focuses on medal winners or even the athletes themselves. Instead, this course situates the Olympics within an international context in which cities view the Games as an attempt to accomplish their own objectives and which draws local residents into a supporting cast of participants often with considerable debate.

Required Reading

Christopher A. Shaw. 2008. *Five Ring Circus: Myths and Realities of the Olympic Games*. New Society.

Other readings will be assigned for each class particularly for the first part of the course. A reading list will be distributed at the first class and most material will be available on-line.

Olympic-related WEBSITES:

There are many websites with interesting information and commentary about the Olympics. However, a good place to begin is with the IOC website itself http://www.olympic.org/uk/index_uk.asp and specifically to look at the organization and goals of the IOC: [http://www.olympic.org/en/content/The-IOC/](http://www.olympic.org/en/content/The-IOC/The-Olympic-Charter)
The Olympic Charter:
http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/en_report_122.pdf
Official Reports: http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm

Another interesting website is called “Inside the Games” and you can subscribe by going to this website <http://www.insidethegames.com/> and entering your e-mail address. You will then receive daily Olympic news. This is a useful way of keeping up with the latest news on the Olympic front.

There are also very informative websites pertaining to the Vancouver Olympics. For example, see the media guide <http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/IOC-MEDIAGUIDE-2010-EN.pdf>
<http://www.vancouver2010.com/>
or opposition groups such as <http://www.2010watch.com/>
<http://no2010.com/>
<http://olympicresistance.net/>

Course Structure:

- Part I.** The first part of the course will serve as a preparation to experiencing and analyzing the Olympics in Vancouver. It will have three objectives:
- a. To understand the IOC and the nature of the Olympics as a movement
 - b. To become familiar with the core literature in the analysis of the Olympics and to develop interpretive frameworks
 - c. To develop a clearer understanding of the nature of the debate and controversy that the Olympics creates within cities and how this criticism has been applied to the Vancouver Winter Olympics?

These objectives will be discussed in the context of why cities want to host the Olympics and what cities expect to accomplish in hosting the Olympics. Bidding for and/or hosting the Olympics always spawns controversies within host cities or raises issues that have significant urban consequences which need to be understood.

This part of the course will conclude with an examination.

Please note that the front part of the course is intentionally loaded with much heavier reading in order to prepare for the field experience with the Vancouver Olympics. **Expect to put in much more work in this course in the first five weeks than you might normally do in other courses.**

The Professor will be distributing the reading list for this section of the course.

Part II. The second part of the course will focus on the Vancouver Olympics as an event. The goal will be to experience the Olympics as an urban phenomenon and to analyze what is observed by utilizing ethnographic methods. Instruction will be given about how this is to be done. In comparison to hearing about the Olympics in a media “packaged and tape-delayed format”, we will have an opportunity to observe the Olympics as locals experience it.

Students will be encouraged but not required to visit Vancouver during Reading Week which also happens to be the first week of the Olympics. Students who do not go to Vancouver can still monitor what is happening through various forms of media (radio, television, newspapers, internet). In order to facilitate the process of monitoring what is occurring during the Olympics (February 12-28), there will be no classes held during the week following Reading Week (the week of February 21st) since it is also during the Olympics. Since one of the reasons for scheduling this course this year is to learn to analyze via the Vancouver experience, all students will be required to write a 5 page interpretive essay analyzing some aspect of the Vancouver Olympics based on their own data collection. This essay can serve as a basis for the project in Part III if a student desires.

The Professor has been monitoring the preparations for the Olympics in Vancouver very carefully and will give instructions and make suggestions about what students can observe and experience in the city during the Olympics. More details will be made available later but in addition to observation and participation in urban activities (as opposed to ticketed Olympic events) in Vancouver, students who visit Vancouver will be meeting with a class from Simon Fraser University who are doing something similar to what we are doing. This inter-campus dialogue will provide an opportunity to learn from each other in a unique way. An opportunity will also be given to attend an Olympic conference at UBC.

Students who do not travel to Vancouver or who elect not to monitor the Games in such a way as to facilitate the writing of this essay can elect to write a paper on a topic approved by the Professor (see below).

Part III. The third part of the course will allow students to pursue their own independent research projects. Team projects will be encouraged and students will provide a final report to the entire class using power point, handouts, or other pedagogical aids.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. There will be a **Mid-Term Examination** on February 9. This exam will consist of one comprehensive question which will allow you to bring together all that you have learned about how to interpret and analyze the Olympics and how they impact cities. Both reading and class material will be relevant to this exam.

2. All students will write an **Interpretive Essay** based on their analysis of some aspect of the Vancouver Games and the data that they have gathered through observation and secondary sources. This can be done either by being in Vancouver or using some other method (such as newspapers, internet etc.). Instructions will be given about how to complete this assignment. It will be heavily dependent on data gathered from the actual Vancouver experience and learning how to interpret what you see or hear. In comparison to the first part of the course, it is based on fieldwork more than on readings. This paper will be 5 pages double spaced in length and will be due on March 12.

3. All Students will write a **Research Paper** on a topic of their choosing that relates the Olympics to urban processes. A list of possible themes will be discussed in class and all topics must be approved by the professor in advance. Papers should aim to be analytical and not just descriptive. This paper should be approximately 5 pages long **plus** bibliography and illustrative material, and should be handed in no later than on the last day of class. If students work in teams, there should be an appropriate adjustment in quality of the paper. All students will be required to present their findings to the class using appropriate communication technologies (power point, overheads, distributed outlines etc.). Students who want their papers returned should provide a stamped self-addressed envelope unless other arrangements are made.

4. **Class Participation.** This class will utilize a seminar format in which class readings serve as the basis for discussion. Students are expected to come prepared for each class and to contribute orally to class discussion. Class seminars will also provide an opportunity for students to present their own work and to interact with the work of others.

Assignment Alternative

Instead of the Interpretive Essay, a student may choose to do a single major research project on a topic that requires much more research. Students who want to explore this alternative should speak with the professor. This paper should be a minimum of 12 pages long (**plus** bibliography and illustrative material) and is expected to demonstrate much more depth and will be worth 60 points.

COURSE WEIGHTS

Mid-Term Examination	30 points
Interpretive Essay	30 points
Research Paper	30 points
Class Participation	10 points

The Professor will inform you of the letter grade equivalents of points obtained in each assignment.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 12	The Structure and Organization of the Olympics
January 14	The Olympics and Globalization
January 19	The Olympics, Nationalism and Social Control
January 21	The Olympics and Urban Entrepreneurship
January 26	The Olympics and Urban Regeneration
January 28	The Olympics and Leisure Consumption
February 2	The Olympics and Legacy/Outcomes
February 4	Discussion of Shaw, <i>Five Ring Circus</i>
February 9	Examination
February 11	Developing an Interactionist Perspective of the Olympics Preparation for the Vancouver field experience
Week of February 14	No Classes – Reading Week

Week of February 22	No Classes – Olympic fieldwork
March 2 and 4	Interpreting the Vancouver Games
March 9 and 11	Preparation of Vancouver Interpretive Essay
March 12	Interpretive Essay Due
March 16 and 18	Selection of Project Topics and Development of Teams
March 23 and 25	Team Meetings and Research, Consultation with Professor
March 30, April 1	Visits to Calgary Olympic Sites
April 6, 8, 13	Class Presentations of Projects
April 15	Final Class

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: Cheating is regarded as a serious academic offense. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar, which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct. Using material from any source should be clearly indicated through the use of quotation marks if the material is used verbatim plus the reference should be exact and clear (eg. Smith 1998:266) including appropriate page number(s). If the ideas come from a source, even if it is not verbatim, the same citation method should be used. Learn to summarize material in your own words and then reference the source.

Exam Policies: You must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take an exam. All requests for deferral of an examination due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferred exams may be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. If you have missed an exam for a legitimate reason, you will be able to write a “make up” exam as close to the original exam as possible. The date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferred exam. Deferred exams will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Term assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in Papers Outside of Class, Return of Final Papers, and Release of Final Grades

1. When students are unable to submit papers at class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant rather than at the Sociology Department main office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the Sociology Department main office. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, (i.e., outside an instructor's office, the department office, etc.). Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will only be available for pick-up during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology department. They are only available online.