

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

SOCIOLOGY 453:01
Special Topics in URBAN SOCIOLOGY
Cities and the Olympics
Block Week Winter 2012

COURSE OUTLINE

January 2-6, 2012

Class Meets M-F 8:30-4:30

Location: SS921

Instructor: Dr. H. Hiller

Office Hours: by appointment

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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 how it is related to globalization.
- 2.** To understand why cities want to host the Olympics and how the Olympics are used by cities to accomplish non-sporting objectives. Special attention will be given to the issue of legacy which has become a major theme in the Olympic movement.
- 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.
- 4.** Because Calgary is an Olympic city, having hosted the 1988 Winter Games, we are in a unique position to assess the urban meaning and urban impact of the Olympics on our own city. This will allow us to do some site visits and talk to some experts who were heavily involved with the Olympics here.

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. More recent Olympic cities, Beijing (2008), Vancouver (2010), and London (2012) provide particularly interesting cases to analyze.

Required Reading

A reading list will be provided in which virtually all readings will be available online through the library website.

A wonderful source for books and articles on the Olympics is found at Routledge Studies Online

<http://www.routledgeonlinestudies.com/>

Olympic-related WEBSITES:

Web searches will play a significant role in this course. In addition to web searches which you can carry out on your own using a variety of search terms, there are many websites with interesting information and commentary about the Olympics. However, a good place to begin is with the IOC website itself www.olympic.org/ and specifically to look at the organization and goals of the IOC: <http://www.olympic.org/ioc>

Official Reports: http://www.la84foundation.org/5va/reports_frmst.htm

London's website is also an example of a useful place to look

http://www.olympic.org/uk/index_uk.asp

marketing guide

www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/IOC-MEDIAGUIDE-2010-EN.pdf

or opposition to the Olympics such as

<http://olympicresistance.net/>

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.

COURSE STRUCTURE

The structure for this course will be quite different in that it is built around Block Week which is meant to be an intensive period of study. Class time during Block Week will be broken up into segments such as lecture time, seminar-type discussions, films and videos, group work, reading assignment time, and field trips. Rather than creating a wooden structure in advance, the exact timing of these activities will vary from day to day. Thursday, however, will be the primary field trip day with more details to follow. Following Block Week, two written assignments will be due later in the month. The course will officially end by the January and all assignments must be completed by that time.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Pre-Session Study

As announced (see earlier email), the reading of Toohey and Veal (Chapter 4), engaging in an internet search, and the writing of a Working Paper with the title Cities and the Olympics: A Summary of Issues Supported by an Internet Search is required preparation for the first day of class January 2.

2. The Bid City Project

The class will be divided into teams of two class members per team. Each team will be selected by random draw and class time will be scheduled to work on this project. Teams will compete against each other in a final presentation. Students are expected to use perspectives provided throughout the class in their analysis.

Select one of the cities which have recently bid for the Olympics (Winter Games 2014 or 2018, or Summer Games 2016 or currently bidding for 2020). Bid cities for 2014 (Winter) were Pyeongchang, Sochi, and Salzburg; 2016 (Summer) were Chicago, Rio de Janeiro, Tokyo, Madrid; 2018 (Winter) were Annecy, Munich, and Pyeongchang. Bid cities for the 2020 Summer Olympics are Istanbul, Tokyo, Rome, Baku, Doha, and Madrid.

Use whatever sources you can find (primarily through using online sources such as www.gamesbids.com and other online searches) to do an analysis of the city and why it might want to bid as well as what it hopes to accomplish through hosting the Olympics. It is recognized that the material available might not be the same for all cities but students are encouraged to make assessments based on what is available and to extrapolate from the material with which you are working.

Your research should cover the following items:

- a. **National Context.** Seek to understand the national context in which the city is located. This may include matters relating to the economy, geography, employment, demography, and ethnic character of the country among other factors. Understanding the country's position in the global economy and its position in international relations may also be useful. This may serve as a useful baseline for understanding why the bid is being made.
- b. **The Bid City.** The character and economy of the city including its place within the national and international economy as well as its people and the urban issues which it is facing. Are there distinctive features of the city or unique problems which the city has?
- c. **The Bid Rationale.** Attempt to understand why the city is bidding or has bid. What rationale does it give for taking on this task? Who is promoting it? To what extent is sport part of the rationale and to what extent are other underlying issues also present.
- d. **Bid Controversies and Issues.** What controversies and issues have emerged in the bid? Sometimes these controversies are explicit and sometimes they are implied.

- e. **Legacy.** What is claimed will be the legacy should the city be chosen to host the Games?

Prepare your presentation to the class which will be made on Friday afternoon, January 6. Prepare an executive summary of no more than 2-3 single-spaced pages summarizing your presentation which can be distributed to the rest of the class. Fancy powerpoint presentations are not necessary but powerpoint material to illustrate are allowable but not required. At the end of all the presentations, students will vote for the presentation which they think is the best. Since this is a team project, each student will be asked to rate what they believe is the percentage of the work that each team member contributed (eg. 50-50, 60-40, etc.). The paper that is handed in to the instructor should include a general note on what sources were used. Not all online sources need to be specifically acknowledged but anything that is published with a known author should be listed.

3. Book Review

Each student will read a book that analyzes the Olympics from the list of books provided. The book review should include discussions of the following points:

Background issue/s which the book addresses (why was this book written), thesis/theme of the book, how the book is divided and the arguments made in each section or chapter, what this book helps us to understand about cities and the Olympics, a discussion of things you found most interesting personally, and your evaluation of the book pointing out its contribution and limitations as appropriate. This paper should be no more than five double spaced pages, and should be submitted to the professor online and in hard copy by Friday, January 13. Make sure your name is on the first page. Copies of each review will then be sent to all students electronically as part of the course material.

4. Final Take-Home Examination.

A take-home final examination will be an important part of the course. A strategic problem which will be fairly broad-based will be presented and sent to all students by e-mail by midnight on Friday, January 13 and must be submitted in hard copy by Friday, January 27. A two week period is given for this examination because students will need to work through the issues the problem raises and decide which of the readings on the reading list might be helpful in their answer and to include whatever material they choose. The emphasis will be on the application of course materials to the strategic problem.

5. Class Participation

Since this is not the typical lecture course, participation in class discussions is important. The goal will be to do about three readings a day including one in the morning and one in the afternoon- both of these during allotted time during the day. The third reading will be done by students on their own time in the evening. It will be expected that students will contribute to class discussion based on these readings. In addition, regular attendance and interaction with other aspects of the course material is expected.

COURSE WEIGHTS

Bid City Project	20 points
Book Review	20 points
Final Take-Home Examination	40 points
Class Participation (includes pre-session paper)	20 points

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