

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

**SOCIOLOGY 453:10**  
**Special Topics in URBAN SOCIOLOGY**  
**Cities and the Olympics**  
Spring Intensive Week Course 2013

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**May 13-17, 2013**      **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 fact that the Olympics are an urban phenomenon in the context of 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.

### **Course 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/>

or

<http://www.routledgeonlinestudies.com/explore.html?menu=explore&registration=>

### **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/](http://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](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](http://www.olympic.org/uk/index_uk.asp)

<http://www.london2012.com/>

marketing guide

[www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/IOC-MEDIAGUIDE-2010-EN.pdf](http://www.olympic.org/Documents/Reports/EN/IOC-MEDIAGUIDE-2010-EN.pdf)

or opposition to the Olympics such as

<http://www.redpepper.org.uk/olympic-struggle/>

<http://www.gamesmonitor.org.uk/node/333>

<http://boingboing.net/2012/05/18/space-hijackers-create-officia.html>

\*\*\*\*\*Another interesting website is called "Inside the Games" and this is their website

<http://www.insidethegames.com/>. A good source of regular information about the Olympics is their daily news reports which will be automatically sent to your Inbox for free if you register.

Go to this website to register to receive daily reports <http://www.insidethegames.biz/register>.

Where it says *Title*, put in Mr. or Ms. Where it asks for *job title*, put in "student in an Olympics course". Where it asks for *organization*, put in "University of Calgary". And when it asks you how you heard about them, click on that you "heard about it from another subscriber". Enter all the other information as requested.

### **COURSE STRUCTURE**

The structure for this course will be quite different in that it takes place in one week which makes it an intensive period of study. Class time during this 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. It is expected that two local field trips will take place and details will be announced. Two written assignments will be due after the Intensive Week. All course work must be completed by June 14.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

### **1. Pre-Session Study**

As announced (see earlier email), a reading (Toohey and Veal, Chapter 4) and a Working Paper is required preparation for the first day of class May 13.

### **2. Olympic City Evaluation Project**

The class will be divided into teams of two or three class members per team. Each team will be selected by random draw and will work together to evaluate one forthcoming Olympic city (Sochi- winter 2014, Rio de Janeiro-summer 2016, Pyeongchang-winter 2018) or summer 2020 bid cities (Madrid, Tokyo, Istanbul). At least some 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.

Each team will select one of the cities above and prepare a five page paper as well as make a presentation to the class. Your analysis should utilize the following guidelines:

- 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 helpful. This may serve as a useful baseline for understanding why the city wanted to host the Games and what hosting the Games might actually accomplish.
- b. **The Olympic 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 faces. Are there distinctive features of the city or unique problems which the city has, and is there any relationship between these features or problems and the Olympics?
- c. **The Olympic Games.** What actions with urban impact does the city propose to take to prepare for the Games? How might the Games transform the city? What issues or controversies does the Games create for the city?
- d. **Legacy.** What is expected to be the long-term impact of the Olympics for this city? How are these legacies evaluated both internally and externally?

Use whatever sources you can find through online searches and through bibliographic searches (eg. journal articles) to do an analysis of the city and 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.

Each team will then be asked to do two things:

1. Prepare a presentation to be made on Friday, May 17 that addresses the matters identified above. Since this is an oral presentation, the use of powerpoint to illustrate the material presented would be helpful.
2. Prepare a 5 page paper to be submitted on the same day.

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. 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. Course Reading Journal

Each student will hand in a journal related to course readings involving 12 journal articles. Select *ten articles* from the reading list and write a one paragraph journal response to the article. *You cannot select more than two journal articles explicitly read by the class and, if used, they must be marked with an asterisk.*

Your journal response can point out what you learned, you can challenge what you read, you can pick a particular point in the reading and explain why you thought it significant- just interact with the article in some way that shows that you have read it.

Then select *two additional articles* (making a total of 12 articles) which you have found *on your own* that deal with cities and the Olympics and respond to them in the same way.

The format required is as follows: list the article with full bibliographic reference. Then write your paragraph single spaced. Number each article 1-10. Numbers 11-12 should be the journal articles which you selected.

Please understand that much can be said in a limited space. However, vague sentences do not work. Each sentence should be thought through and above all, **the paper should give very concrete evidence that the student has read the paper and grappled with its significance.** What you choose to discuss in your paragraph serves as a good barometer of the extent to which you have engaged the article.

Your journal must be submitted in hard copy by Wednesday, May 29.

### 4. Final Take-Home Examination.

A take-home final examination will be an important part of the course. Each student will select a book from the list provided which will serve as the basis for an answer to a fairly broad-based strategic problem which will be sent to all students by e-mail by midnight on Friday, May 31 and must be submitted in hard copy by Friday June 14. A two week period is given for this examination because students will need to work through the issues the problem raises and decide which course material 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**

Pre-session Working Paper	20 points
Olympic City Evaluation Project	20 points
Course Reading Journal	20 points
Final Take-Home Examination	30 points
Class Participation	10 points

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