UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA – SCHOOL OF KINESIOLOGY

KIN 364 – The Modern Olympics: Power, Politics and Performance

Instructor

Dr. Patricia Vertinsky
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TA’s

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Dates

Term 2, Winter 2022-2023
January 10-April 17, 2023
Tues / Thurs 2:00 – 3:30 pm

Location

Lecture: Tues/Thurs - Woodward Instructional Resources Centre, 5
Tutorials: Thurs - 1. Neville Scarfe, 207
           2. Neville Scarfe, 208
           3. Ponderosa Commons 1001

Office Hours

Wednesdays: 10 — 11 am
Students can also contact the Instructor or the TAs by email to make a separate appointment.

Course Description

This course examines the Modern Olympic Games as they have developed over the past twelve decades to become one of the most pervasive sporting festivals and mega events in the world. Olympic sport is a global, transnational and transcultural phenomenon well worth exploring from multiple perspectives and the Olympic Games are a unique target for careful analysis. Especially for kinesiology students interested in sporting performance and global politics, they offer a glimpse into a world of political intrigue, racial and gender politics, the struggles of top-level athletes around sport management, and the medical, environmental and technological issues surrounding high-level sporting participation.
During the semester, we will examine international competition and conflicts, organizational power struggles, and gender, race, and disability debates around who gets to have access and eligibility to the Games. We will pay special attention to the struggles of Indigenous athletes and their quest for resources and Olympic participation. We will discuss sites of corruption, Olympic symbols, and athletes’ successes as well as struggles around sex-testing and gender issues, drugs and performance enhancement associated with various summer and winter Olympic Games. We will reflect upon the fortunes of the Olympics affected by COVID-19 and estimate how pandemics have altered the lives of Olympic athletes, Olympic destination cities and audiences, and the shifting contours of international sporting competition. We will thus examine and assess the legacies of past Olympics while exploring new avenues for international sports and the promotion of new sports to enter the Olympic arena in the future. Our interest will center upon what we can learn from past Olympics and what we expect the Olympics of the future to look like.

The course will take place in person and will include a range of lectures, films, videos, visiting experts, student discussions, projects, and group and individual assignments. The goal is to maximize student involvement through class debates, tutorials and small group projects and discussions which help students reflect critically upon past, current and future issues affecting the global role of the Olympics and its wide-ranging effects on sports, culture, ethics, organizational politics, health and medicine, and the environment.

We hope that students will take away a deep understanding of the politics and management of the Olympic movement, the entanglement of issues around nationalism and global sport, a view into the complex issues pertaining to performance enhancement and sex testing, sensitivity toward shifting race relations in elite sport, a better understanding of Indigenous access and opportunities related to Olympic sport, and emerging issues as the Olympics move through the third decade of the 21st century. What sports will be on future agendas? Who will be eligible to participate? Who will protest and who will pay the costs of mounting an Olympics? What will be the future of the Olympic Games?

Land Acknowledgement

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people who for millennia have passed on their culture, history and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

University Policies

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and
students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.
Details of the policies and how to access support are available on the UBC Senate website.

Format and Procedures

This class consists of two 80-minute classes per week, one of which will be a formal lecture and discussion in the main lecture room. The second class each week (Thursday) will typically be a small group tutorial held in three locations and dedicated to discussions focused upon the formal lectures, class readings and media presentations related to that week’s topics. Since this course places particular emphasis on participation and discussion, attendance is important for addressing and learning the material, involvement in group discussions, sharing information, answering quizzes, and generally engaging with the subject matter in a variety of ways.

EVALUATION

The course evaluation will consist of 3 specific categories:

Assessment #1  Attendance 30%

Given the course focus on student involvement and participation in small and large group discussions, attendance will be taken randomly across both large classes and tutorials.

Assessment #2  Mid-term individual project – Inclusivity and the Olympic Athlete: An in-depth portrait and analysis – 30%

Each student will be asked to select a lesser-known and potentially interesting Olympic athlete (since the beginning of the modern Olympics in 1896 until now). This window of time allows you to investigate a situation from long ago, or more recently, and use the class and group discussions you have had so far to give you a variety of ideas on what to include in your project.

First, provide a picture (if possible) and seek out interesting information about that athlete who either competed at an Olympics or was prevented from competing for various reasons), his/her/their personal experiences or misfortunes, performance issues, sporting interests, background, and training.

You can use a wide range of materials, including class readings, related readings, online sources, web sites – (be creative but be careful to use reliable sources!)

You are expected to provide a brief summary about the athlete you have selected, why you found this athlete to be particularly interesting and worthy of investigation, what this tells us – for example - about inclusivity ( or lack of ) in the Olympic organization; shifting national priorities; possible discrimination around race, gender, and ability; financial and/or training opportunities or problems; personal troubles or triumphs; and physical/athletic potential achieved or denied.
The student should confirm the topic of their research with the TAs ahead of time (on or before Feb 20). The report should be no more than 3 pages long (approx. 750 words, double-spaced, not including pictures and references). It should include a title and appropriate citations in APA format.

Alternatively, you can present your findings in a more creative way as a poster, power-point, or podcast but make sure that all the required information is incorporated into your project.

Due date: March 2: a week following reading week.

3. Small group (4-5) final project 40% (30% project, 10% presentation)

Each group should select option 1 or option 2

Option 1.
The final project will divide students into small groups (4-5) to focus on one particular Olympic Games in the modern era (from 1896-2022). An Olympic event involves an enormous amount of planning, political acumen, and strategy for success; once selected, physical and financial resources are brought into play and the country involved enters into a contract with the IOC to produce ‘the best Games ever!’ Events are predetermined by the IOC, but numerous issues can intervene to cause reconsideration and new forms of planning. During the Olympic event itself national and international politics, weather, event management and technology, as well as issues of race, gender, equality, and inclusion all need to be attended to. These complex issues have followed us throughout our discussions of the modern Olympics this semester.

This project will require a political analysis at the national and international level; an in-depth focus on the desire and capabilities of the nation to bid for and carry off an Olympic Games; particular problems encountered, or successes achieved at the level of athlete success and national pride; new innovations and old problems.

Option 2.

Alternatively, your group may select to focus on three (3) examples at (3) different Olympic Games where issues relating to race, gender, equality, and inclusion became particularly salient or problematic. What were these issues? Why were they problematic? How did they manifest? With what results? In what ways have recent Olympics improved on or dealt with these issues? Have the issues been entirely resolved? If not, what might future Olympics do to rectify these issues in a global world?

Course requirements

Third year standing or with the permission of the instructor (please send an email to patricia.vertinsky@ubc.ca to request special permission when space permits).
**Policies and Expectations**

Regular attendance is important for full participation in our course activities. Students who are unavoidably absent because of disability or illness should report to their instructor or TA’s and where necessary submit supportive documentation to the Undergraduate advising office. Students also have the right to request academic concessions from the Undergraduate advising office.

We care about our students’ health and well-being and are open to listening to particular difficulties concerning health, access, and life in general. Students whose attendance or performance in this course may be severely affected by medical, emotional or other disabilities should consult with the instructor early in the term to discuss any special accommodations that might be needed in order to complete course requirements. Supportive documentation from either the disability resource center or a physician must be submitted to the Undergraduate advising office.

**Learning objectives**

At the end of this course:

1. Students should have a broad and informed understanding of the modern Olympic Games from their inception in 1896 through to the present.
2. Students should be able to discuss the materials covered in this course as background to a deeper understanding of the shifting contours of international sporting competition at the modern Olympics
3. Students should have obtained a deeper view of the nature of international competition and conflict around sporting performance; better understand athletes’ struggles related to sex, gender, racial and Indigenous politics in international sports; consider reasons for sites of corruption in Olympic management and leadership; recognize environmental issues related to Olympic sites; estimate the legacies of past Olympics and make an informed evaluation concerning IOC promises for the future regarding fairness, new kinds of sport, new arenas, and new organizational and funding arrangements.

**Learning analytics**

Learning analytics include the collection and analysis of data about learners to improve teaching and learning. This course will be using Canvas learning technology which will enable the instructor to capture data about your activity and provide information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

**Copyright**

All materials in this course (handouts, lecture slides, power-points, assessments, and course readings are the intellectual property of the Course Instructor or licensed to be used in the course by the copyright owner. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline. The instructor does not permit students to record her classes.
Readings and Resources
All required readings are available on Library Course Reserve (available through Canvas) or from the TA’s when necessary. On Canvas there is also a variety of selected additional and optional readings and resources that are suggested for students to engage with according to their own research interests and background. Direct link to course reserve:
https://courses.library.ubc.ca/c.qs2nQk

COURSE SCHEDULE (Topics and readings)

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Module 1. Tues Jan 10

Introduction of instructor and TA’s and outline of rules of engagement in large classes and tutorials including the use of Canvas. Review scope of the course, learning objectives, requirements, and evaluation procedures.

Module 2. Thurs Jan 12

PIERRE DE COUBERTIN AND THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN OLYMPICS IN 1896


Organization of tutorials, locations, student involvement.

WEEK 2: THE ANTHROPOLOGY GAMES AND SCIENTIFIC RACISM

Module 3. Tues, Jan 17

THE LEGACIES OF THE ST LOUIS OLYMPICS


Module 4. Thurs Jan 19 (Tutorial)

INDIGENEITY AND THE OLYMPICS
Required Readings:


*Background reading - They Came for the Children.* The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

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**WEEK 3: SOCIAL CLASS, MASCULINITY AND THE THORNY QUESTION OF AMATEURISM AT THE OLYMPICS**

**Module 5. Tues Jan 24**

**SETTING THE TONE FOR THE 20TH CENTURY OLYMPICS: CHARIOTS OF FIRE AND THE AMATEUR/PROFESSIONAL DEBATE**

Instead of class, students will watch the movie Chariots of Fire on their own time, read the related articles and come to the tutorial on Jan 26 ready to discuss the various issues raised in the movie.

**Chariots of Fire** is considered among the best movies concerning the early beginnings of the modern Olympics. Two men—Harold Abrahams and Eric Liddell race for gold in the 1924 Olympics. One runs for his faith, the other participates to fight anti – Semitic prejudice. Students will watch the movie on their own time, with the aim of understanding and then discussing the roles of social class, masculinity (muscular Christianity), amateurism and anti-Semitism in the early years of the modern Olympic games.

**Required Readings:**


Module 6. Thursday Jan 26 (Tutorial)

ANALYSIS OF CHARIOTS OF FIRE

Small group discussions around the problems of amateurism/professionalism, masculinity (muscular Christianity) and anti-Semitism as manifested in Olympic issues across the 20th and into the 21st century.


WEEK 4: POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY AT THE OLYMPICS

Module 7. Tues Jan 31

THE NAZI OLYMPICS: BERLIN 1936 AND THE INVENTION OF TRADITIONS

Required Readings:


Module 8. Thurs Feb 2 (Tutorial)


Required Reading:

We will also watch brief clips from the Movie – Munich. This is a 2005 spy drama film produced and directed by Steven Spielberg. It is based on the 1984 book Vengeance which details the Black September massacre of Jewish athletes at the Munich Olympics and the retaliation of Israel on the Palestinian killers.

WEEK 5: RACE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE MEXICO OLYMPICS

Module 9. Tues, Feb 7

MEXICO OLYMPICS 1968 AND THE BLACK FIST PROTEST: Efforts to highlight racism in the Olympics

Required Readings:


Module 10. Thurs, Feb 9 (Tutorial)

BENDING A KNEE: RACE AND ATHLETE ACTIVISM AT THE OLYMPICS

Small group discussion around former and current athlete activism and its ongoing effects upon the Olympics and sport more generally. What were the compelling messages of the 1968 protest by black American athletes?

Required Readings:


Jules Boykoff, Protest, Activism and the Olympic Games: An Overview of Key Issues and Iconic Moments, The International Journal of the History of Sport 34, Nos 3-4, (2027),162-183
WEEK 6 NO ROOM FOR WOMEN: GENDER STRUGGLES AT THE OLYMPICS

Module 11. Tues Feb 14

THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN’S SKI JUMPING AT THE OLYMPICS


Module 12. Thurs Feb 16 (Tutorial)

WOMEN DON’T HAVE THE SPEED OR STAMINA: FEMALE OLYMPIANS LONG FIGHT FOR THE MARATHON

Required Reading:


WEEK 7      Reading Week Feb 20-24

WEEK 8: THE WINTER OLYMPICS AND THE EFFECTS OF THE COLD WAR

Module 13. Tues Feb 28

EAST PLAYS WEST AT THE WINTER OLYMPICS: THE COLD WAR ON ICE AND THE GAMES OF THE FEW.
Class Readings:


Module 14. Thurs Mar 2 (Tutorial)

THE SOCHI OLYMPICS, HOMOPHOBIA AND THE GAY GAMES

Required Readings:


WEEK 9: THE WEST vs. THE REST: THE GLOBALIZATION OF THE OLYMPICS

Module 15. Tues Mar 7


Required Readings:


Optional Reading:


Module 16 Thurs Mar 9 (Tutorial)

JAPAN AT THE OLYMPICS- TOKYO 1964 AND AGAIN IN 2020/21

Class readings;


Optional Reading:


WEEK 10: SEX TESTING AND DOPING SCANDALS AT THE OLYMPICS

Module 17. Tues Mar 14

SHE RUNS LIKE A MAN: SEX TESTING AT THE OLYMPICS

Required Readings:


Lindsay Parks Pieper, “‘Preserving la différence’: The Elusiveness of Sex-Segregated Sport,” *Sport in Society* 19, no.8-9 (2016): 1138-1155

Watch *Sports on Fire*: Discuss the ongoing controversy over sex testing- is there a resolution?

**Module 18  Thurs Mar 16 (Tutorial)**

**DOPING SCANDALS AND PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT AT THE OLYMPICS**

**Required Readings:**


Watch clips from *ICARUS*, youtube.com/watch?v=qXoRdSTrR-4,

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**WEEK 11: NOBODY WANTS THE GAMES**

**Module 19. Tues Mar 21**

**LEGACIES, WHITE ELEPHANTS, DEBTS, AND THE FUTURE OF THE OLYMPICS**

**Class Readings:**


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**Module 20. Thurs Mar 23 (Tutorial)**

**NEW SPORTS, YOUTH SPORTS AT THE OLYMPICS: HIP-HOP, SKATEBOARDING and BREAK DANCING:**

Jonathan Irvine, “Why Paris is the perfect city to introduce breakdancing to the Olympics,” The Conversation, Jan 22, 2019.

WEEK 12:

Module 21. Tues Mar 28

COACH ABUSE AND OLYMPIC TROUBLES

Class Readings:


Module 22  Thurs Mar 30 (Tutorial)
Group work time to discuss and develop presentations

WEEKS 13 AND 14  GROUP PRESENTATIONS IN WOODWARD


Tues April 4  STUDENT GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Thurs April 6  STUDENT GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Tues April 11  STUDENT GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Thurs April 13  STUDENT GROUP PRESENTATIONS + CONCLUDING REMARKS

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