Rethinking the Olympics:
Graduate Seminar in Olympic Studies

In On-line Virtual Context

PREAMBLE: This year’s edition of Kinesiology 9062(b), takes place less than a year before the Tokyo Games take place for the first time in history in an odd-numbered year (2021). That is, if they do indeed take place at that time. Tokyo’s Games will present superlative competition, high drama, sobering ritual, and grand spectacle, along with, most assuredly, high drama, crises, controversy, question. Commensurate with the phenomenon of the Modern Olympic Games this course seeks to offer a graduate experience in the socio-cultural study of sport dedicated to an area of scholarly research to which Western University, its D. B. Weldon Library, Faculty of Health Sciences, School of Kinesiology, and International Centre for Olympic Studies (ICOS) have given extraordinary developmental priority over the past three decades in the form of bestowing considerable resources in developing a body of uniquely appropriate research materials, and more particularly, a gigantic expansion of attendant scholarly activity. This teaching/research area is sometimes referred to as OLYMPIC STUDIES. The Olympic research materials at Western are located mostly, but not exclusively, in the now over 30 year old ICOS, situated presently in its newly renovated and occupied 3M Centre location. The worldwide activities of the Centre, together with its rich research holdings, offers the graduate student significant opportunities for independent research and learning. The course focuses on a chronology of the Modern Olympic Movement through an investigative framework featuring several major agents of challenge and change (gender, commercialization, amateurism, racism, security, costs, politics, boycotts, giganticism, image, exposure, the environment, protocol, ritual, and the impact of individuals, to name more than a dozen or so prominent issues.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course, RETHINKING THE OLYMPICS: GRADUATE SEMINAR IN OLYMPIC STUDIES, focuses on three dimensions of the now 125 year history of the Modern Olympic Movement: (1) the antiquity heritage of the Games and their modern revival, (2) the problematic nature of the Games and the issues that such problematics raise, and (3) the present age of globalization and an Olympics future faced by imposing challenges.

COURSE PREREQUISITES: Graduate student status. At least three prior courses at the undergraduate and or graduate level dealing with the socio-cultural study of sport (history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, organization/management), or by permission of the instructor.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: The final course evaluation of class members will depend on three factors: (1) virtual attendance at weekly three-hour seminars, at which each student will be expected to take part in discussions, commentary, and debate based on weekly assigned readings (30%); (2) to construct a scholarly review of one book relevant to the course material (20%--due
March 4th); and (3) to construct a term research work on a specifically-designed project examining the various ramifications of a vexing problem facing the Modern Olympic Movement today (50%).

**COURSE TEXT:** None. Course readings listed below will be supplied to you in PDF form.

**WEEKLY CLASS TIMES** – Normally, Thursdays, 1:30 to 4:30

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**GENERAL COURSE OUTLINE / SCHEDULE / READINGS**

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Week 1: Thursday, January 7th (2021)

*Introduction and “Getting to Know You!”*

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Week 2: Thursday, January 14th

*The Great Olympic Festival: Its Antiquity Heritage and Revival in the Modern Era*

Readings


Week 3: Thursday, January 21st

*Reincarnation: Brits, Greeks, and Pierre de Coubertin in the Grand Restoration Project*

Readings


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Week 4: Thursday, January 28th

*A North American Awakening: The Olympics Arrive in the Psyche of the United States and Canada*

Readings


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Week 5: Thursday, February 4th

*The Most Controversial Olympic Games – Berlin 1936*

Readings

Week 6: Thursday, February 11th

Winning Hearts and Minds: The Cold War and Soviet-American Confrontation

Readings


Week 7: Thursday, February 18th

Reading Week ---- No Class Meeting

Week 8: Thursday, February 25th

The Rise of Commercialism: The International Olympic Committee as a Corporate Giant

Readings


Week 9: Thursday, March 4th

Dark Moments: The Great Olympic Bribery Scandal

Readings


Week 10: Thursday, March 11th

Problematics in the Olympic World: Gender, Race, Hosting, Religion

Readings


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**Week 11: Thursday, March 18th**

*The Stigma of Performance Enhancement*

Readings


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**Week 12: Thursday, March 25th**

*Globalization and Facing the Future*

Readings


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**Week 13: April 1st**
Catch Up – Q & A Discussion