

# HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES

HIST 342/387-004

Spring 2018

3 Credit Hours

**Instructor:** Professor Chris Elzey

**Location:** Robinson B, rm. 208

**Day:** T/TH

**Time:** 1:30-2:45 p.m.

**Office:** Robinson B, rm. 369B

**Email:** celzey@gmu.edu (please use your MasonLive account when emailing)

**Office Hours:** T/TH 10:30-11:30 a.m. (also by appointment)

## Prerequisites for the course

None

## Class Contacts

1. Name and phone number/email:
2. Name and phone number/email:

## The Course

The modern Olympic Games are perhaps the most watched and widely recognized sports event in world history. For more than 120 years, the Games have brought people together from around the world. One of the more popular misconceptions about the Olympics is that they were (and are) purely an athletic event. This course argues that the Games were anything but that. From the first modern Games in Athens in 1896 to the recently completed Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, the Olympics have been a venue in which international politics; assumptions about race, gender, ethnicity, and class; global economics; and ideas of imperialism and national power have played. To be sure, the Games' athletic events were important. But so too were the political, cultural, and social aspects of those events. Much of our time will be spent examining these aspects. The Olympics have always been more than just sport. In myriad ways, they reflect world history and culture, and help shape both.

## Outcomes

After taking the course, students will be able to explain:

1. The meaning of the ancient Olympic Games
2. The origins of the modern Olympic Games and their early development
3. The biographies of the Games' early leaders, including Pierre de Coubertin
4. Who the most famous Olympians were and why
5. The impact of the Cold War on the Games and vice-versa

6. Geopolitical conflicts in the context of the Games
7. Ideas of amateurism and professionalism in the Games
8. Terrorism and the modern Games
9. Issues of race, culture, gender, and ethnicity in the Olympics
10. The Olympics in a post-Cold War world

Demonstrating clear and effective writing and public speaking is also an important goal of the course.

In addition, this course fulfills the Mason Core requirement for Global Understanding. Specific attention will be given to the following outcomes, as stated on the university's Mason Core Global Understanding webpage:

- “Demonstrate understanding of how the patterns and processes of globalization make visible the interconnections and differences among and within contemporary global societies”
- “Demonstrate the development of intercultural competencies”
- “Explore individual and collective responsibilities within a global society through analytical, practical, or creative responses to problems or issues, using resources appropriate to the field”

For more information on Global Understanding outcomes, access:  
<http://masoncore.gmu.edu/global-understanding-2/>

### **Required Books**

Five books are required for the course. Readings should be completed **THE DAY** that it is assigned in the course schedule. The books are:

- Goldblatt, David. *The Games: A Global History of the Olympics*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.
- Large, David Clay. *Nazi Games: The Olympics of 1936*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.
- Maraniss, David. *Rome 1960: The Olympics That Changed the World*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008.
- Hoffer, Richard. *Something in the Air: American Passion and Defiance in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics*. New York: Free Press, 2009.
- Sarantakes, Nicolas Evan, *Dropping the Torch: Jimmy Carter, the Olympic Boycott, and the Cold War*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

In addition, **YOU ARE TO READ THESE TWO ARTICLES**. You should come to class having read the articles for the day that they are listed in the course schedule. All articles are located on Blackboard's e-Reserves.

- Jinxia, Dong. “The Beijing Games, National Identity and Modernization in China.” *International Journal of the History of Sport* 27 (Nov./Dec. 2010): 2798-2820.
- Wenn, Stephen. “Peter Ueberroth's Legacy: How the 1984 Los Angeles Games Changed the Trajectory of the Olympic Movement.” *International Journal of the History of Sport* 32, 1 (2015): 157-171.

## Required Films

You are also required to watch **TWO** films. Both are on reserve at Gateway Library in the Johnson Center. You can also access the films via the Internet or media streaming companies such as Netflix. You are to watch the films before the day they are listed in the course schedule and write a one-page response (approximately 300 words) to the following question: How is global history shown in the film? Each paper will count as a quiz grade. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT PAPERS BY EMAIL.** The two films are:

*Chariots of Fire* (watch by February 15)

*Munich* (watch by April 12)

## Recommended Books

The following books are recommended, but not required. They will help you better understand the Games.

Castaneda, Luis. *Spectacular Mexico: Design, Propaganda, and the 1968 Olympics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014.

Espy, Richard. *The Politics of the Olympic Games, with an Epilogue, 1976-1980*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.

Guttman, Allen. *The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992.

Llewellyn, Matthew P. and John Gleaves. *The Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016.

Mandell, Richard. *The Nazi Olympics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987, 1971.

Matthews, George. "The Ghost of Plato." In *America's First Olympics: The St. Louis Games of 1904*. Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2005. (on e-Reserve)

## Assignments and Grading

There are **TWO EXAMS**. Exam #1 is on March 1. Exam #2 is on May 15. The exams will cover everything discussed in class, the assigned readings and films, and any material posted on Blackboard. The exams will include identifications, and short answer and essay questions. Exams are to be taken in blue books, which you are to provide. Each exam counts for 25 percent of your grade.

The second part of your grade will consist of **THREE** short papers. Each paper should be about 750 words (roughly three pages, double-spaced, 12-point font). Please do not submit papers that are substantially longer. The papers are due the day that is listed in the course schedule (February 8, February 22, March 22, April 5, and April 19). You are to answer the question that I will announce in class and post on Blackboard a week before the paper is due. It is important that you construct a sound argument in your paper and that you pay attention to writing and grammar. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT PAPERS SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL.** The average score of the three papers is worth 20 percent of your grade.

Quizzes (announced and unannounced) count for another 20 percent of your grade. They may cover readings, films, and any material I post on Blackboard. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING HOW TO ACCESS BLACKBOARD. I EXPECT YOU TO CHECK IT FREQUENTLY (AS WELL AS YOUR GMU EMAIL ACCOUNT).** For each class, please bring a pen or pencil, and paper. Also, I will keep attendance. Your attendance record will count as a quiz score. Your lowest quiz score will not count toward your overall quiz average.

The last 10 percent of your grade consists of **IN-CLASS DISCUSSIONS**, which you are to lead with several of your classmates. The discussion will cover one of the five books we will read this semester. Come to class with several questions – each of you is to come up with five or six questions – to ask your classmates. You will turn the questions in at the end of class. Your group will lead the discussion, after you give a 15-minute overview of the reading. After about 30 minutes, I'll take over. I will assign each of you to a group. You will be graded on the questions and your ability to lead the discussion. The discussion days are: February 8 (on Goldblatt), February 22 (on Large), March 22 (on Maraniss), April 5 (on Hoffer), and April 19 (on Sarantakes). I would strongly suggest that you meet with your group ahead of time to discuss how you plan to present the overview, as well as going over the questions and discussion responsibilities.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Exams (2)	50%
Papers (3)	20%
Quizzes and Assignments	20%
Discussion and Questions	10%

### **Grading Scale**

A	93-100	B+	88-89	C+	78-79	D	60-69
A-	90-92	B	83-87	C	73-77	F	0-59
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

### **Missed Exams, Quizzes and Assignments**

To make up an exam, you must have a doctor's note or some other official documentation accounting for your absence. No make-up quizzes will be given, since I drop your lowest quiz score. For late papers and assignments, I will take off 5 points each day they are past due (including Saturdays and Sundays).

### **Electronic Devices**

The use of cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices are not permitted during class. You may use PCs and tablets, but only for note taking. If you are seen using your PC or tablet for unrelated class activity, I will ask you to turn it off and not to bring it to class for the rest of the semester.

## **Academic Integrity**

Doing your work means just that: do your own work. You are expected to follow the university Honor Code. Information about the Honor Code can be located at the website for the Office of Academic Integrity (<http://oai.gmu.edu>).

## **Students with Disabilities**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are available. Information can be found at the Office of Disability Services' webpage (<https://ds.gmu.edu>). For additional information, call the Office of Disability Services at 703-993-2474. All arrangements for classroom assistance should be made through the office. The ODS office is located in SUB I, rm. 4205.

## **Enrollment**

You are responsible for ensuring that you are officially enrolled in the class. January 29 is the last day to add or drop the course without incurring a fee. The final day to drop the class is February 23, but you will pay a fee. Last day for Selective Withdrawal is March 30. You can find more information at: <http://registrar.gmu.edu/calendars/spring-2018/>

## **Diversity**

The course adheres to George Mason's Diversity Statement, which begins, "George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth." The full statement is located at: <http://ctfe.gmu.edu/professional-development/mason-diversity-statement/>

## **Schedule**

### Week 1: The Meaning of the Modern Olympic Games and Their Origins

January 23:

Introduction

Lecture: What Were the Ancient Olympic Games?

January 25:

Lecture: Ancient Games (cont.); William Penny Brookes, Pierre de Coubertin, and the Beginning of the Modern Games

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 1-43

### Week 2: The Early Games and Western Imperialism

January 30:

Lecture: Beginning of Modern Games (cont.); Setting the Pattern: the 1896 Games in Athens

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 44-52

February 1:

Lecture: 1896 Athens Games (cont.); From Paris to St. Louis to London: World's Fairs and the Olympics

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 55-83

### Week 3: The Olympics and Western Imperialism

February 6:

Lecture: The Spat between the US and the UK: the 1908 London Games

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 84-102

February 8:

**Discussion: Early Modern Games (Goldblatt, 1-145)**

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 103-145

\*\*\***Paper Due**

\*\*\***Discussion Questions Due**

### Week 4: The Roaring Twenties and the Modern Games

February 13:

Lecture: The Jazz Age Olympics and the Making of American Megastars

Read: Large, *Nazi Games*, 1-68

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 149-171

February 15:

Lecture: Jazz Age Olympics (cont.)

Watch: *Chariots of Fire*

\*\*\***Paper on Film Due**

### Week 5: The 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics in Germany

February 20:

Lecture: The Great Debate Over United States Participation in the 1936 Berlin Games

Read: Large, *Nazi Games*, 69-190

February 22:

**Discussion: The 1936 Berlin Games**

Read: Large, *Nazi Games*, 191-344

\*\*\***Paper Due**

\*\*\***Discussion Questions Due**

### Week 6: WWII, the Olympics, and the Aftermath

February 27:

Lecture/Discussion: The Aftermath of the 1936 Berlin Games

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 195-210

March 1:

\*\*\***Exam**

### Week 7: East against West: The Cold War Olympics

March 6:

Lecture: The Soviets Are Coming, the Soviets Are Coming: The 1952 Helsinki Games and the Beginning of an Olympic Rivalry

Read: Maraniss, *Rome 1960*, 1-124

March 8:

Lecture/Screening: Blood in the Pool: the Hungarian Uprising and the 1956 Games in Melbourne

Read: Maraniss, *Rome 1960*, 125-175

Week 8 (SPRING BREAK)

March 13: (NO CLASS)

March 15: (NO CLASS)

Week 9: Decolonization, Civil Rights, and America's Quest for Gold

March 20:

Lecture/Discussion: South Africa, Marching to Freedom, and the 1964 Tokyo Olympics

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 274-280

March 22:

**Discussion: The 1960 Rome Games**

Read: Maraniss, *Rome 1960*, 176-423

\*\*\***Paper Due**

\*\*\***Discussion Questions Due**

Week 10: The Challenges of the Winter and Summer Olympics of 1968

March 27:

Lecture: Professionalism and the Stodgy IOC

Read: Hoffer, *Something in the Air*, 1-49

March 29:

Lecture: Mexico City Welcomes the World: Preparation for the 1968 Summer Games

Read: Hoffer, *Something in the Air*, 51-68

Week 11: Black Consciousness at the Games

April 3:

Lecture/Screening: Two Raised Fists: The Black Revolt in Sports and the 1968 Mexico City Games

Read: Hoffer, *Something in the Air*, 69-137

April 5:

**Discussion: The 1968 Mexico City Games**

Read: Hoffer, *Something in the Air*, 139-245

\*\*\***Paper Due**

\*\*\***Discussion Questions Due**

Week 12: When Tragedy Mixed with Sport: The 1972 Munich Games

April 10:

Lecture: The Meaning of the 1972 Munich Olympics

Read: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 1-45

April 12:

Lecture: 1972 Olympics (cont.); "They're All Gone": Tragedy Visits the Games

Read: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 46-165

Watch: *Munich*

\*\*\***Paper on Film Due**

Week 13: The Munich Tragedy and an Olympic Boycott

April 17:

Lecture: "They're All Gone" (cont.)

Read: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 166-213

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 289-302

April 19:

**Discussion: The 1980 Olympic Boycott**

Read: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 214-243

\*\*\***Paper Due**

\*\*\***Discussion Questions Due**

Week 14: Doping, the Fall of the Wall, and a Remade Olympic Games

April 24:

Lecture/Screening: A Red Mountain of Pills: The East German Olympic Powerhouse

Read: Sarantakes, *Dropping the Torch*, 244-276

Read: Goldblatt, *The Games*, 310-318

April 26:

Discussion/Screening: Sympathy for Ben Johnson?

Read: Wenn, Peter Ueberrroth's Legacy"

Week 15: Commercialism and the Games of the New Millennium

May 1:

Lecture: In the Wake of Ben Johnson: The 1992 Barcelona Games

May 3:

Lecture: America's Troubled Games: Atlanta 1996 and Salt Lake City 2002; concluding remarks

Read: Jinxia, "The Beijing Games, National Identity and Modernization in China"

May 15: **Exam #2** (starts at 1:30 p.m.)