

# OLYMPICS AND SOCIETY

## SUMMER B 2021



**FIU**

Honors College

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# **COURSE SYLLABUS**

From its aristocratic origins in 1896 to over a century's worth of controversies, tragedies, and triumphs, the Olympic Games have always been a crucial lens for understanding political, economic, and social issues. The close inspection of these issues provides the opportunity to heighten a critical awareness of a commercial and mediated colossus that seeks to obscure or hide behind the guise of "political neutrality." This course will examine those issues through in-depth readings, discussions, writing prompts, and active learning classroom interactions, culminating with the planned opening week of the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan.

## **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**



Stephen P. Andon, Ph.D.

Email:

## **COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the complex social, political, environmental, and ethical dilemmas surrounding a global, mediated, mega event.
- Students will be able to observe and critique the practices and content of traditional and social media.
- Students will be able to assess and describe the influence of traditional and social media on audience perceptions of complex social, political, environmental, and ethical dilemmas surrounding the Olympics.

- Students will be able to identify how the Olympic Games create a lens for global understandings issues of gender, race, national identity, and sexual identity.
- Students will consider the solutions to the complex social, political, environmental, and ethical dilemmas presented by global, mediated, mega events.



## **GLOBAL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
- Students will be able to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
- Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.

## COURSE RATIONALE



In the past year, more so than ever, our world has seen that there is no "sticking to sports." Instead, our understanding and reaction to the world around us is so closely intertwined with sport, and the athletes who participate. In using the Olympic Games as a lens, this course introduces students with a capacity and desire for higher order thinking to the critical issues facing the world. From racism as well as gender, sexual, and religious discrimination, to the blurring ideologies of the spectacle, from media framing and agenda setting to global economics, from environmental justice to identity and nationalism, this course is a venue for students to synthesize and evaluate their reality as it plays out in front of them in real time.

## **MATERIALS**

### Required Materials/Textbook(s)

The required reading material has been posted to our course site on Canvas. They primarily consist of research and popular press articles on Olympics in addition to a few select chapter readings in PDF format.

Additional links and information have been posted in our course modules.

Students must stay current with sports issues since we will operate like a newsroom and shift our focus to respond to the news. Please read and watch various news sources every day to stay informed of current events. These include but are not limited to: *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, ESPN, Sports Illustrated, Bleacher Report. Download these apps onto your phone and sign up for push notifications so that important breaking news appears on your home screen. Follow these news sources on Twitter.

### Suggested Outside Reading(s)

Amy Bass, *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete* (2004)

Jules Boykoff, *Power Games: A Political History of the Olympics* (2016).

David Goldblatt, *The Games: A Global History of the Olympics* (2018).

Dave Zirin, *Brazil's Dance with the Devil: The World Cup, the Olympics, and the Fight for Democracy* (2014).



# **ASSIGNMENTS**

## **READING ANNOTATIONS**

Each week you will be asked to read articles listed on the course page. The articles are linked to a free annotation app called Perusall that is integrated through Canvas. You will be asked to create at least three annotations within the document, and the annotations will be visible to all of your classmates, so you will have an opportunity to exchange ideas and questions as you move through the text. Your contributions will be graded on a three-point scale, with 3 being the maximum points you can earn. Your grade on these annotations will be determined by the quality, quantity, timeliness, and distribution of your comments throughout the document. So, posting 3 annotations on the first page of the document will not earn the same amount of credit as 3 annotations thoughtfully spaced out through the document.

## **READING REFLECTIONS**

Each week you will be asked to write a reflection on Canvas on the articles assigned for you to read. These reflections are designed to enhance your understanding and give you a chance to incorporate your own perspective and experience to the issues being discussed in the articles. I will give you a prompt for each of the articles for you to follow. You are expected to write your reflection in a paragraph format, sufficiently answering each part of the prompt. Each reflection should be about 200-500 words.

## **OLYMPIC RESEARCH PROJECT (AN FIU PORTFOLIO PROJECT - RESEARCH SKILL)**

The course will conclude in its final weeks with an in-depth, multiple media research observation of the 2021 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Japan. During the games, students will write a personal research project that incorporates one or more of the following material: local, regional, and national news coverage of Olympic athletes, the Olympic Games, NBC coverage of the Games, Telemundo coverage of the Games, coverage of the games in countries throughout the world – with particular attention to Caribbean, Central, and South American nations, and the coverage of the Games via different platforms – broadcast TV, cable TV, on-demand TV, social media coverage, and the Internet. To effectively complete this assignment, students will use the principles of academic research and problem solving, conduct logical analysis and synthesis, and communicate results fluently orally and in writing. The project could be based on such hypothetical research questions such as:

Which athletes are positioned as the “stars” of the Olympics? How do you know or, how are you able to identify the “stars” as an audience member? How are different stars positioned by different countries, networks, or media platforms? Do these “stars” fulfill the prescribed roles? Are there any surprise athletes that become stars?

How is the activity of protest and social activism treated by both the Olympics generally, in addition to the traditional broadcast and social media coverage of the Olympics?

What sports fill the most airtime in the media coverage of the Olympics? Which sports are left out? Why? Are certain sports more prevalent on certain networks or at certain times? Certain countries?

How is gender testing and the case of Caster Semenya addressed by Olympic coverage?

How are identities – national, racial, class, gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality – demonstrated, described, and performed?

How are Olympic athletes “amateurs”?

How is the legacy of the Olympics and its venues reflected upon by media coverage?

How is Japanese culture represented during the Olympics? What kinds of associations or themes are prevalent in the way American media covers the Olympics?

How is the impact on the environment calculated and discussed during the coverage of the Olympic Games?

What are the ethical and scientific implications of conducting the Olympic Games during the pandemic era?

## **ASSIGNMENT/GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Annotations	250 points
Reflection Assignments	250 points
Olympic Research Project	500 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	1000 points



# WEEKLY SCHEDULE

## Week 1 June 21<sup>st</sup> – June 25<sup>th</sup> Media Agenda Setting and Framing

- Articles for reading:
  - *Clocking Men and Women in Pyongyang 2018*
  - *Media Framing of the Unified Korean Olympic Women's Ice Hockey Team*
  - *The International Journalistic Coverage of the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games: Analysis by Media Framing*

## Week 2 June 28<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup> Gender and the Olympics

- Articles for reading:
  - *A Comparative Analysis of the United States and the South African Media Coverage of Caster Semenya*
  - *Media Portrayals of Female Athletes in Rio 2016*
  - *Commentary During Women's Ice Hockey at the 2010 Olympic Games*
  - *NBC's Televised Media Portrayal of Female Athletes in the 2016 Rio Summer Olympic Games*

## Week 3 July 5<sup>th</sup> – July 9<sup>th</sup> Nationalized and Internationalized Attitudes

- Articles for reading:
  - *Staging the Nation: Gendered and Ethnicized Discourses of National Identity in Olympic Opening Ceremonies*
  - *The Nationalistic Revolution will be Televised: The 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games on NBC*
  - *Olympic Media Consumption Effects on Nationalism Across the Globe*

- *Sports Draped in the American Flag: Impact of the 2014 Winter Olympic Telecast on Nationalized Attitudes*
- *Power within the Olympic Rings? Nationalism, Olympic media consumption, and comparative cases in Germany and the USA*
- *Delineating Differences Between Six Countries' National Identity, Fan Identity, and Media Consumption during the 2018 Olympic Games*

#### **Week 4 July 12<sup>th</sup> – July 16<sup>th</sup> Race in the Olympics**

- Articles for reading:
  - *Running Race: Reconciliation, Nationalism and the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games*
  - *Racial Depictions of Athletes in NBC's Primetime Broadcast of the 2012 London Olympic Games*
  - *Contesting Olympic Narratives and Asserting Indigenous Rights within the Discourse of the 2010 Vancouver Games*

#### **Week 5 July 19<sup>th</sup> – July 23<sup>rd</sup> Social Media**

- Articles for reading:
  - *Examining the Presence of Agenda Setting on Twitter during the 2012 London Olympics*
  - *A Case Study into the Use of #NBCFail during the Sochi Winter Games*
  - *Predictors of Social Media Uses During the 2016 Rio Olympics*
  - *An Examination of Multi-Screen Viewing During the 2016 Rio Olympics*

#### **Week 6 July 26<sup>th</sup> – July 30<sup>th</sup>**

- Olympic Research Project Due



# HONORS COLLEGE POLICIES

## Academic Misconduct Procedures and Policies

In The Honors College, the term “honor” refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU.

Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Academic Misconduct Procedures available at <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/academic-integrity/index.php> . Please refer to the following documents for additional information: FIU Student Handbook: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/about/student-handbook/index.php>

## Student Portfolios

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students’ learning outcomes. The portfolio allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what “artifacts” or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of five key student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment. Each Honors College course includes at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements. <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/portfolio/>

## **Honors Engagement**

Requirements Honors College students are required to accumulate at least 20 engagement points each academic year (Fall and Spring) by attending Honors College activities. Students attending only one semester (Fall or Spring) are required to accumulate 10 engagement points. Each activity has a point value. Students may select which events and activities they want to attend. The new system is designed to be more flexible for students, offering events at various days and times (including some weekend events) and allowing for a variety of ways to meet the requirements. Please plan accordingly. <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/citizenship/>

## **Community Service**

Honors College students must also complete 20 volunteer service hours. These hours DO NOT count toward the 20 engagement points discussed above. <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/community-service/>

## **Honors Education in the Arts (HEARTS)**

The HEARTS program is designed to give Honors College students opportunities to “explore and appreciate different artistic and cultural traditions and modes of artistic expression. HEARTS will also serve as a clearinghouse (and curatorial framework) for our students to experience the arts on campus and in the community by providing them with information about cultural activities and access to performances with free or discounted tickets. <http://honors.fiu.edu/current-students/hearts/>



# RESOURCES

## **Panthers Care & Counseling & Psychological Services**

If you are looking for help for yourself or a fellow classmate, Panthers Care encourages you to express any concerns you may come across as it relates to any personal behavior concerns or worries you have, for the classmate's well-being or yours; you are encouraged to share your concerns with FIU's Panthers Care website.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers free and confidential help for anxiety, depression, stress, and other concerns that life brings. Learn more about CAPS at [caps.fiu.edu](http://caps.fiu.edu). Professional counselors are available for same-day appointments. Don't wait to call 305-348-2277 to set up a time to talk or visit the online self-help portal.