

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism

SPMT 323
America and the Modern Olympics (3 credit hours)
Spring 2013

DAY/TIME:	M/W 9:00-10:15 a.m.	LOCATION:	Robinson A246
PROFESSOR:	Chris Elzey	EMAIL ADDRESS:	celzey@gmu.edu
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PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

SPMT 323 “is designed to provide students [with] an understanding of the role played by the United States in the modern Olympic movement. The primary focus is on the United States [and its] relationship with the modern Olympics from the earliest days of the games up through the Cold War period and beyond.” (University catalogue) Attention will also be paid to the ways in which the United States’ involvement in the Games reflected American culture, and how American culture impacted the United States involvement in the Games.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate competency in the subjects of:

- The ancient Olympic Games
- The origins of the modern Olympic Games
- The United States’ contributions to the early Olympic Games
- American popular culture and the Olympic Games
- International politics and the Olympic Games
- Issues of race, gender and ethnicity within the Olympic movement
- American self-perception and the Olympic Games
- Commercialization of the Olympic Games
- Professionalism and the Olympic Games
- The Olympic Games in a post-Cold War world
- American athletic leadership within the Olympic movement

COURSE OVERVIEW

The goal of SPMT 323 is to understand the ways in which the United State’s participation (and non-participation) in the Olympic Games illuminated important aspects of American culture, society and history, and impacted the development of the Games. To that end, the course will explore matters relating to: the beginning of the modern Olympics; American imperialism and the Olympics, mass culture and the Olympics; international relations and the Olympics; race, ethnicity and gender and the Olympics; commercialism and the Olympics; terrorism and the Olympics and American notions of sporting exceptionalism. Much of the class time will be devoted to lecture. You must attend class. If you do not attend class and miss an exam, a doctor’s note or some other form of sufficient documentation is required to take the make-up test.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Matthews, George R. *America’s First Olympics: The St. Louis Games of 1904*. Columbia, MO. University of Missouri Press, 2005.
- 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.

Griffin, John Howard. *Black Like Me*. New York: Signet. 1996; 1960.
 Hoffer, Richard. *Something in the Air: America Passion and Defiance in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics*. New York: Free Press, 2009.
 Other readings assigned as warranted.

ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS AND EVALUATION

There will be three exams. Each will count equally toward your grade. There also will be a quiz on each book (Maraniss and Griffith will be combined). Quizzes will be given on the day the book is discussed. Quizzes can take a number of formats: multiple choice questions, short answer questions, identifications, and/or essay question. I will drop your lowest quiz score and use the other scores to calculate the average. In addition, you will be responsible for completing four short assignments. No more than two pages, the assignments will cover each of the assigned books. In these assignments, you are to provide a brief synopsis of the book, the author’s major points, your views (if you liked it or not, and why), and two or three well-thought-out questions about the book. The questions may touch upon matters directly discussed in the book and/or contextual issues of American culture, society and/or history. Each student (as part of a group) will be responsible for presenting one assignment to the class, during which time you will help me lead class discussion. Class participation will also count toward your grade.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Exam #1	20 percent
Exam #2	20 percent
Exam #3	20 percent
Assignments	20 percent
Quizzes	10 percent
Class participation	10 percent

Grading Scale

A = 94 – 100	B+ = 88 – 89	C+ = 78 – 79	D = 60 – 69
A- = 90 – 93	B = 84 – 87	C = 74 – 77	F = 0 – 59
	B- = 80 – 83	C- = 70 – 73	

COURSE SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week 1: Introduction

- January 23 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 2: The Ancient Olympic Games; Origins of the Modern Games and American Imperialism

- January 28 (Monday): Lecture
- January 30 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 3: Origins of the Modern Games and American Imperialism

- February 4 (Monday): Lecture
- February 6 (Wednesday): Discussion Matthews, *America’s First Olympics*

Week 4: From Ballyhoo to the Great Depression: the Games during the 1920s and early 1930s; A Great Rancor: the American Debate over Participation in the 1936 Berlin Olympics

- February 11 (Monday): Lecture
- February 13: (Wednesday) Lecture

Week 5: A Great Rancor (cont.)

- February 18 (Monday): Lecture
- February 20 (Wednesday): Discussion Large, *Nazi Games*

Week 6: The 1936 Olympics

- February 25 (Monday): Screening of *Olympia* and *The Fight*
- February 27 (Wednesday): *Olympia* and *The Fight* (cont.), discussion to follow

Week 7: Exam; U.S. vs. U.S.S.R.: The Olympics and the Cold War

- March 4 (Monday): **Exam**
- March 6 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 8: Spring Break

- March 11 (Monday): No class
- March 13 (Wednesday): No class

Week 9: The Olympics and the Cold War (cont); International Politics and the Olympics during the 1950s

- March 18 (Monday): Lecture
- March 20 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 10: The Civil Rights Movement and America's Quest for Gold

- March 25 (Monday): Lecture
- March 27 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 11: Civil Rights Movement and America's Quest for Gold (cont.)

- April 1 (Monday): Discussion Maraniss, *Rome 1960* and Griffin, *Black Like Me*
- April 3 (Wednesday): Discussion of above (cont.)

Week 12: Exam; Black Consciousness Comes to the Games

- April 8 (Monday): **Exam**
- April 10 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 13: Black Consciousness Comes to the Games (cont.)

- April 15 (Monday): Screening of *Fists of Freedom*
- April 17 (Wednesday): Discussion Hoffer, *Something in the Air*

Week 14: The 1972 Munich Games: Unlike Any Other; The 1980s: America Resurgent and the Boycott

- April 22 (Monday): Lecture
- April 24 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 15: Doping Shocks the World: the 1988 Seoul Games and Ben Johnson; The Dream Team and the Post-Cold War Olympics

- April 29 (Monday): Lecture and Screening of *9.79*
- May 1 (Wednesday): Lecture

Week 16: Atlanta Commercializes the Games; The Games of the New Millennium

- May 6 (Monday): Lecture

Week 17: Final Exam

- May 13 (Monday): **Final exam (7:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m.)**



- ❖ All students are held to the standards of the George Mason University Honor Code [See <http://www.gmu.edu/catalog/apolicies/#Anchor12>]
- ❖ University policy states that all sound emitting devices shall be turned off during class unless otherwise authorized by the professor
- ❖ Students with disabilities who seek accommodations in a course must be registered with the Office of Disability Services (ODS) and inform the instructor, in writing, at the beginning of the semester [See www.gmu.edu/student/drc]
- ❖ For additional School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism information, please visit the website at <http://rht.gmu.edu>