International Experience: Behind the Scenes at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games

Summer 2016: August 5th – 14th (students can extend stay through Games August 21st)  
Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL

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Assigned Readings and handouts from selection below listed on Blackboard. Students must read TWO books related to the business of the Olympic Games. (example of titles below)

www.olympics.org (The IOC web site is very comprehensive and serves as the most relevant resource for this course. There are a number of PDFs and links to great resources.)

Rio 2016 Games website

Around The Rings (ID: delpy@gwu.edu – PW: Olympic)


Huntsman, J. “Winners Never Cheat: Everyday Values We Learned as Children (But May Have Forgotten),” 2004.

Kassen-Noor, E. “Planning Olympic Legacies: Transport Dreams and Urban Realities” (2012)


Simson, V. and Jennings, A., "Dishonored Games" SPI Books, Toronto, Canada, 1995

Voy, R., "Drugs, Sport and Politics: The Inside Story about Drug Use in Sport and Its Political cover-Up, with A Prescription for Reform,” Leisure Press, Champaign, IL, 1991


Expenses: (approximated): Tuition (3 credit hours) $4,500; Airfare $1700 (students can use frequent fliers or identify other ways to get to Rio by August 5th); Local transportation approximately $50 per day for metro, taxis; Lodging $150 per night; Food approx. $75 per day based on personal preferences; and event tickets and merchandise (individual preference)

Objectives of the Course:

1. To provide the student with a theoretical and practical overview of the organizational requirements necessary for marketing and hosting the Olympic Games.

2. To alert the student to social, political, and economic issues influencing decisions related to the design, organization, and management of the Olympic Games.

3. To go behind the scenes and visit athletic venues, media centers, and hospitality areas to witness first hand the logistical planning, implementation, and creativity involved in the Games.

4. To study the marketing objectives and strategies of Olympic sponsors and means to measuring return on investment.

5. To gain experience in data collection and understand the importance of market research in mega-events.

Course Method: The class will include daily lectures, group discussions and debates, guest speakers, public interviews, periodical reviews, data collection and analysis and individualized advising.
**DAILY ITINERARY:** (Subject to change based on speaker’s schedule)

8:00 – 8:30am  Breakfast lecture/group discussion

8:30 – 9:00am  Travel to and prepare for speaker presentations/appointments

9:00 – 1:00pm  Meetings with Olympic and government officials, administrators, employees, volunteers, local scholars, sponsors, architects, planners.

1:00 – 2:00pm  Lunch (may miss lunch if lectures run over)

2:00 – 5:00pm  Tour facilities and additional lectures

5:00 – 7:00pm  Social functions per invitation of event organizers, sponsors, or local community. Time for personal observations, spectator interviews, and attend events (on own).

**Assignments:**

1. Each morning students are required to attend a group meeting at which a short lecture interspersed with discussion related to on-site observations and assigned readings will take place. Lecture topics are multidisciplinary in nature and include information concerning management information systems, security, and sanitation requirements to marketing, economics, and political issues.

2. The students will keep a research journal/notebook throughout the course that will include the following categories. Students will also blog for Sportsfanlive.com or another social media site. Blog entries will be included in the journal/notebook:
   a. Career opportunities rendered by a multinational mega event.
   b. The sociological effect of the Olympic Games on the people at the local, regional, and national level. Students will observe and interview event officials, employees, volunteers, sponsors and non-associated citizens in terms of perceived benefits gained through the event. These include environmental impacts. Individual results will be compiled, compared, and generalized.
   c. The economic effect on the city, region, county, individuals and associations involved. Students will study and compare previously determined or predicted expenses and revenues (as identified in the literature) against current figures provided to the students on-site through interviews with officials, administrators, sponsors, and local scholars, daily periodical reviews, and personal observations.
   d. A written critique of the various marketing and special event efforts observed
along with a list of suggested improvements will be completed by each student.
e. General observations of the organizational structure and flow, plan
implementation, facility design, traffic and emergency provisions, atmosphere
both at the events and in the community.
f. Notes from guest speakers.
g. Blog entries focus more on the fun, unique, human interest stories students
may encounter (running into an Olympic athlete or their families; witnessing a
historic event, eating or drinking “native” cuisine). Minimum of 8 blogs. Keep a
copy of all blog entries and add to journal.

3. Survey visiting Olympic spectators related to their consumer behavior and
motivation to attend the Games. All surveys must be entered into a surveymonkey
URL (to be provided).

4. Before departure, students will be required to attend a minimum of 3 lectures on
campus or via distance learning regarding the history, organization, and marketing
of the Olympic Games. A comprehensive exam will be given based on the
information discussed as well as the readings assigned.

5. Students will select a topic related to the Olympic Games (transportation, licensing,
broadcasting, marketing, culture, volunteers, ceremonies) and write a term paper
which requires a literature review of a minimum of 10 articles (at least one from a
refereed publication), primary data collection on-site in Rio (minimum of one
personal interview), and examples of material presented if applicable (e.g., copies of
advertisements, publications, pictures). Paper length to be 15-20 pages. Survey
results should be incorporated into paper and specific recommendations or
solutions for future Games should be provided.
Evaluation:

Pre-Departure Exam ........................................................................................................... 20%

Journal, blog posts, lecture notes and participation ......................................................... 30%
* 1/2 letter grade will automatically be deducted for each lecture missed beyond one unless prior approval
* Minimum 8 appropriate and insightful blog posts

 Term Paper specific to one Olympic-related topic .......................................................... 30%
Paper due dates: Term paper topic w/ 8 reference due: May 27th
First Draft (50% complete) due: June 10th
Second Draft (75% complete) due: July 8th
Final Draft due: September 9th

On-Site Spectator Data Collection & Entry
(minimum 50 collected) .................................................................................................... 20%
* Two overall letter grades automatically lowered for falsifying survey information.