8D Jules Boykoff, Pacific University in Oregon
“Green Games: Sustainability and the Rio 2016 Olympics”

The International Olympic Committee has increasingly folded environmental ideas and rhetoric into its official documents and the Olympic Charter. Environmental sustainability has become a significant element in Olympic bidding, planning, and legacy. This paper offers a brief history of the Olympic Games’ relationship to sustainability, describes the environmental promises embedded in Rio 2016 Olympic bid, and provides critical examination of Rio 2016’s follow-through on its environmental pledges. As mainstream media have clearly indicated, many of the sustainability promises touted in the Rio 2016 Olympic bid are not on track to be met. This raises questions about accountability as well as the specter of greenwashing. This paper concludes with an assessment of how the IOC and local organizing committees could improve their environmental efforts, syncing up their words and their deeds.

8D Linda K. Fuller, Worcester State University
“Gals on Greens: Female Golfers in the Olympic Games”

Fore! After more than a century, golf is returning to the Olympics—scheduled to be played at the 2016 Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro, allowing one week for men and another for women. In addition to discussing schedules, settings, and wider implications of its inclusion, this presentation focuses on an historical review of female golfers dating to Margaret Ives Abbott’s Gold in 1900 Paris with a score of 47 for nine holes up to interest in current pros and up-and-comers of women’s golf. In addition to discussing the rhetoric of golf, as well as its coverage in the media, considerations are given to the future of the sport. [Note: At the time of this submission, there are serious issues as to whether golf can, in fact, be played at the Olympics; after a 116-year gap, there have been environmental and organizational problems that typify all the concerns scholars have about mega-events.

8D Kyoung-yim Kim, Boston College; Heejoon Chung, Dong-A University; Yongchul Chung, Sogang University
“Eco-modernist Olympic Staging and Public-action of Counterpublic: Civic Engagements in 2018 PyeongChang Games”

Studies demonstrate that the facilitation of ecological modernization (EM) as discourse and policy is evident in the International Olympic Committee’s environmental requirements and in Olympic hosting nations’ environmental principles. However, the modernist and technocratic approach to environment in the Olympic Games encounters a wide range of criticisms in local contexts. This study illustrates Korean nation-state’s discursive interpretations of EM and their public dialogue for hosting the Winter Olympic Games. This study also discusses the parallel discursive arenas formulated by civil societies. Specifically, this study first shows the three levels “cultural, institutional, and technocratic” of EM interpretations by the state, and discusses how the eco-modernist discursive conventions function as powerful public communication in Olympic bids and staging. Second, this study documents various forms of counter Olympic demonstrations regarding environmental issues and illustrates its alternative discourse conventions. Lastly, this study discusses the dynamics between public and subaltern counterpublic discourses within the conflict structures of Olympic public sphere, and examines the limitations of public resistance within the current systemic processes of Olympic hosting/staging.
On its surface, golf’s return to the Olympic Games at Rio 2016 is a product of the growing international popularity of the sport. Yet, its inclusion after a 112-year hiatus also speaks to the broader conjuncture between sport, environmentalism, and development, whereby golf, and the Olympics more broadly, are meant to catalyze Brazil’s sustainable development on a global stage. In drawing upon the notion of ecological modernization, we explore how three key stakeholders – the state, the International Olympic Committee, and the golf industry – articulate a complementary vision of sustainable development in which capitalist-driven scientific and technological advancements can ostensibly not only attend to the world’s pending environmental crises, but even lead to ecological improvement, thus allowing sustainability and consumption to continue in concert. Ultimately, we argue that the notion of ecological modernization, as constructed and promoted within the overlapping spheres of environmental concerns, development politics, and the global sport industry, offers important context for understanding the return of golf and the development promises attached to the Rio 2016 Olympics.