

# The Olympic Torch: Symbolism and Politics

*A panel discussion*

with

**Tamara Herman**, active in No2010, Research Coordinator of VIPIRG  
**Christine O'Bonsawin**, Director of Indigenous Studies, UVic  
**Dennis Pilon**, Assistant Professor of Political Science, UVic

As 'Vancouver prepares for the world', excited media coverage of all things Olympic invites us to consume the spectacle with joy and national pride. Yet polls show that many people question the political, cultural and economic priorities embodied in the Olympics, and beginning in Victoria, the cross-Canada torch relay has been beset with protests.

This panel discussion will situate and deconstruct the Vancouver Olympics, with the aim of clarifying the social-justice issues that are at stake in this most celebrated of modern spectacles. The evening will begin with a screening of the first half-hour of Leni Reifenstahl's classic film, *Olympia* (1938), famous among other things for its symbolically drenched portrayal of the lighting of the torch and the torch relay from Mount Olympus to Berlin, the first host city to include a torch run. Our three panellists will then take up the contemporary politics of the Olympics, after which the floor will be open for discussion.

**4 February 2010**  
**7:00 – 9:00 pm**

At UVic: Harry Hickman Building Room 105  
(map: <http://www.uvic.ca/buildings/hhb.html>)

*Everyone welcome!*

Presented by Social Justice Studies, University of Victoria [web.uvic.ca/socialjustice](http://web.uvic.ca/socialjustice)