

Towson University
Department of Geography and Environmental Planning
GEOG 672.101 (476.101):
Special Topics in Geography and Environmental Planning
Seminar: Globalization and Conflict
Fall 2008

Instructor: James M. Smith, Ph.D.
Seminar time: 6-845, Thursday
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OVERVIEW AND COURSE OBJECTIVES

Why study and analyze the set of processes collectively called “globalization”? Globalization is one of the most central-and controversial-concepts of our time, yet its definition is sharply debated by scholars. As a dominant concept in the social sciences from the 1990s, globalization was touted by some as a paradigm-changing force that would transform politics, economy and society. This was typified by Manuel Castells (2004 [1997]) trilogy on the Information Age and the “Network Society.” Castells stated that the power of states and localities to regulate social behavior was being undermined by new technologies and flexible social organizations that moved faster and operated smarter than the state institutions that emerged with industrial society.

In contrast, more traditionalist thinkers were skeptical of these claims, arguing for the continued primacy of the state. Hirst and Thompson (1999) draw parallels to previous eras of international trade expansion and interstate cooperation, especially the period 1870-1914, emphasizing that globalization as currently understood is not a new set of phenomena. The authors have even argued that the period before the First World War was, in some respects, more open and fluid than the current era.

In short, globalization is a contested concept, although few doubt that the processes associated with intensified economic, cultural and social change do exist and are having a profound impact on society at all scales. Our task in this seminar is to grapple with these changes and their meanings, paying special attention to some key geographical concepts and insights such as territoriality, scale and time-space compression.

The theme of conflict is the key undercurrent of this seminar, as we consider the various dimensions and impacts of globalization processes.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- acquire a deeper conceptual understanding of globalization
- intelligently discuss globalization in its different dimensions: economic, political, cultural and socio-spatial
- compare and contrast different perspectives on globalization and conflict, and how this affects geopolitics and transnational public policy debates

- write a well-structured research paper with academic sources on a particular conflict impacted or shaped by globalization, within a country, region or transnational setting

Cited:

Castells, Manuel. 2004. *The Power of Identity*. Volume 2 of The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Malden MA: Blackwell.

Hirst, Paul and Grahame Thompson. 1999. *Globalization in Question*. Second Edition. Polity Press.

TEXTS

The Globalization Reader. 2008. Third Edition. Frank J. Lechner and John Boli, eds. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Chua, Amy. 2003. *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Conflict and Global Instability*. New York: Doubleday.

EVALUATION

Research Paper-500 points

The paper should be about 25 pages of text, not inclusive of graphs, tables, maps and photos. The topic choice should entail aspects of globalization in the analysis of an issue, region or place. As such, the range of topics is governed mainly by your interests and imagination, but papers will be graded in part on the basis of your ability to integrate seminar themes into the research questions and analytical content.

I am aware that style requirements vary by discipline and program, and therefore I will not enforce a particular style for the papers. I like the “Harvard-Social Science” style (see below) due to its clarity and the fact that I was trained to use it during my years in graduate school. But this does not mean you cannot employ another style (Chicago, MLA, etc.). The important principle is to be consistent and professional, avoiding sloppy presentation. At this level of education, spelling and grammatical errors are to be eliminated from the final product!

Analytical Essay on an issue arising from Globalization-200 points

Select a particular aspect of globalization: economic, cultural or political, and analyze at least TWO readings from our semester schedule. Preferably, you will select two individuals with contrasting viewpoints on a particular aspect of globalization, and then analyze the quality of their arguments on a particular issue, e.g. does globalization reduce poverty? Is the sale of Coca Cola in developing countries cultural imperialism? You can decide to “take sides” in the debate, but take care to maintain an analytical approach and support your position with facts and data. (While data is discursive and contested, it is the material on which social science is based).

You should also draw on outside sources or concepts as needed, and include references at the end of the document. The goal is to produce an essay loaded with insights but written with such clarity that you can observe the eight-page limit. Always

remember that an effective essay is free of grammatical errors and that your final product will be rigorously judged on this criteria as well as the quality of analytical content.

Presentations-200 points

All students will prepare a PowerPoint summary of their research paper and present this to the seminar. You will have 15 minutes for your presentation, so clarity and brevity are necessary. The presentation schedule will be determined on a sign-up basis in the last few weeks of the seminar.

Participation-100 points

This grade is based upon the quality of your contributions in seminar discussions.

ATTENDANCE

“Students are expected to attend all classes. Consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity for students to understand concepts, materials and expectations of those courses in which they are enrolled.” This statement of university policy reflects my own approach to attendance. In that spirit, I take attendance at the beginning of every class.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you need accommodation due to a disability, please make an appointment to see me, and bring a statement from Disability Support Services (4-2638) authorizing your accommodation.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

4 September

INTRODUCTION: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lechner, Frank J. and John Boli, *The Globalization Reader*. General Introduction.

11 September

EXPLAINING GLOBALIZATION: SYSTEMIC THEORY

Introduction, Part 2

Wallerstein, Immanuel. “The Modern World System as a Capitalist World Economy.” (Chapter 6, Reader)

Sklair, Leslie. “Sociology of the Global System.” (Chapter 7 Reader)

Appadurai, Arjun. “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy.” (Chapter 11, Reader)

Hannerz, Ulf. “The Global Ecumene.” (Chapter 12, Reader)

18 September

ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS & SPATIAL ECONOMIES

Dicken, Peter. “Global Shift.” Chapters 1 and 2. (Faculty Reserve or PDF)
Introduction, Part 4

Gereffi, Gary. "The Global Economy: Organization, Governance, and Development." (Chapter 19, Reader)

Korzeniewicz, Miguel. "Commodity and Marketing Strategies:..." (Chapter 18, Reader)

Hirst, Paul and John Thompson. "Globalization: A Necessary Myth?" (Faculty Reserve)

25 September

TRANSFORMATIONS/ NORMATIVE POSITIONS

Introductions, Part 1, 4

Mickelthwaite, John and Adrian Woolridge. "The Hidden Promise: Liberty Renewed." (Chapter 1, Reader)

Sen, Amartya. "How to Judge Globalism." (Chapter 2, Reader)

Gray, John. "From the Great Transformation to the Global Free Market." (Chapter 3, Reader)

Specific Issue: The Poverty Debate

Wolf, Martin. "Incensed About Inequality." (Chapter 20, Reader)

Wade, Robert Hunter. "Is Globalization Reducing Poverty and Inequality." (Chapter 21, Reader)

Contrasting Ethical Perspectives

Henderson, David. "The Case Against 'Corporate Social Responsibility'." (Chapter 23, Reader)

Stiglitz, Joseph. "Globalism's Discontents." (Chapter 24, Reader)

2 October

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS: EXPERIENCING GLOBALIZATION

Introduction, Part 3

Bestor, Theodore. "How Sushi Went Global." (Chapter 13, Reader)

Watson, James L. "McDonalds in Hong Kong." (Chapter 14, Reader)

Taylor, Timothy D. "Strategic Inauthenticity" (Chapter 17, Reader)

Li, Wei. 1998. "Anatomy of a New Ethnic Settlement: The Chinese Ethnoburb in Los Angeles" *Urban Affairs* 35 (3): 475-501. (PDF sent by email attachment).

9 October

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE 1 (RELIGION)

Introduction, Part 8

Lechner, Frank J. "Global Fundamentalism" (Chapter 41, Reader)

Kurzman, Charles. "Bin Laden and Other Thoroughly Modern Muslims" (Chapter 42)

Tibi, Bassam. "The Challenge of Fundamentalism" (Chapter 43)

Roy, Olivier. "Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah" (Chapter 44)

Jenkins, Philip. "The Christian Revolution" (Chapter 46)
Lechner, Frank and John Boli. "...Pentecostalism..."

16 October

GLOBALIZATION AND CULTURE 2 (MEDIA AND GENDER)

Introduction, Part 7

Price, Monroe. "Media and Sovereignty:..." (Chapter 36, Reader)

Tomlinson, John. "Cultural Imperialism" (Chapter 38)

Tyrrell, Heather. "Bollywood versus Hollywood: Battle of the Dream Factories" (Chapter 39)

Miss World

Haeri, Shahla. "Obedience Versus Autonomy: Women and Fundamentalism in Iran and Pakistan" (Chapter 45)

23 October

GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBALIZATION 1: TERRITORIALITY, IDENTITIES AND CONFLICT

Huntington, Samuel. "The Clash of Civilizations?" (Chapter 5, Reader)

Barber, Benjamin. "Jihad versus McWorld." (Chapter 4, Reader)

Castells, Manuel. 2004 [1996]. Communal Heavens: Identity and Meaning in the Network Society. Chapter 1 of *The Power of Identity*. (Faculty Reserve or PDF).

Introduction, Part 5

Ohmae, Kenichi. "The End of the Nation-State." (Chapter 25, Reader)

Strange, Susan. "The Declining Authority of States." (Chapter 26, Reader)

30 October

GEOPOLITICS AND GLOBALIZATION 2: ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

TBA

6 November

**TRANSNATIONAL ISSUES AND POLICY:
NEOCONSERVATIVES VS. INTERNATIONALISTS**

Kagan, Robert. TBA

Keohane, Robert and Joseph Nye. Realism and Complex Interdependence. (Chapter 8, Reader)

13 November
CHUA 1

27 November
CHUA 2

4 December
PRESENTATIONS

11 December
PRESENTATIONS