

Globalization: Promises and Discontents
K10.0064 (Interdisciplinary First Year Seminar)
Gallatin School of Individualized Study
New York University
Fall 2009

COURSE INFORMATION

Professor Ritty Lukose, Office 715 Broadway, room 610; email: ritty.lukose@nyu.edu.

Course Schedule: Tuesday/Thursday, 3:30-4:45pm, 194 Mercer Street, room 206.

Office Hours:

(sign up sheet on door one week in advance for Tuesday, Thursday hours)
Tuesdays, 9-12, 2-3:15, 5-6pm; Thursdays, 9-12pm

(available on wed. by appt, please email me)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In popular and scholarly discourse, the term "globalization" is widely used to put a name to the shape of the contemporary world. In the realms of advertising, policymaking, politics, academia, and everyday talk, "globalization" references the sense that we are now living in a deeply and ever-increasingly interconnected, mobile, and speeded-up world that is unprecedented, fueled by technological innovations and geopolitical and economic transformations. Drawing on perspectives from history, anthropology, cultural and literary studies, geography, political economy, and sociology, this course will explore theories, discourses, and experiences of globalization. Running through the course are three central concerns: 1) exploring claims about the "new-ness" of globalization from historical perspectives, 2) examining how a variety of social and cultural worlds mediate globalization and 3) analyzing a contested politics of globalization in which the opportunities for social mobility and transformation are pitted against renewed intensifications of exploitation and vulnerability along long-standing vectors of difference and inequality. While "globalization" is often touted as a "flattening" of the world, this course moves beyond such clichés to understand the intersection between large-scale transformations in political economy and culture in and through multiple cultural worlds situated unevenly on the world's map.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Sweetness and Power by Sidney Mintz

A Short History of Neoliberalism by David Harvey

Thai Women in the Global Labor Force: Consuming Desires, Contested Selves

Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection by Anna Tsing

Brick Lane by Monica Ali

All books are available through Shakespeare and Company Booksellers, 716 Broadway at Washington Place (212-529-1330). All other reading materials will be available through the course blackboard website which everyone MUST be able to use.

Also, this syllabus is a work in progress. There might be occasions during the course of the semester when readings might change and/or additional materials added and assignments shifted as well. While I don't anticipate this happening very frequently (and of course, I will give you notice), I would like the course to be open to our evolving conversation.

COURSE PROCEDURES AND ASSIGNMENTS

This is a seminar course. Therefore, punctuality, regular attendance and participation are important for this class to work well. Arrival in a timely way and regular attendance is a requirement. If, due to illness or other emergency, you must miss class, please let me know via email. **Missing more than one class will jeopardize your grade in the course.**

One brief paper (1-2 pages) will be due the second day of class. This paper must 1) offer your own definition or understanding of globalization and/or provide some example(s) of globalization you have experienced in your own life; and 2) describe your general interests, the disciplines and areas of study you intend to draw on as you craft your concentration. While this is a required assignment, it will not be graded.

Five 3-5 page discussion papers will be due (see course schedule). You will have six opportunities to turn in these papers and you can decide which one you will skip. These short papers (typed, double-spaced, 12 point) correspond with the last session of a thematically organized section of the syllabus. The goal of these papers is to help you develop the skills to choose a specific concept, an issue, or a question that enables an entry point into a meaningful and vigorous set of reflections that compare, contrast, and synthesize the readings of that section of the syllabus. The goal here is a well conceived, substantive discussion paper. Initially (first two papers), I will provide the question that should guide the writing of your paper. After that, you must choose an angle (concept, issue, question) that will enable you to fulsomely and creatively discuss the readings.

It will be important to balance breadth and depth in choosing authors to compare. Each of these papers must include discussion of at least 2 but no more than 4 of the authors that were assigned for that section.

If I feel in-class discussion is flagging, I will also create additional assignments to jump start discussion.

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 8 – Introduction

Debating Globalization: Good or Bad? Old or New?

September 10

Read: Thomas Friedman, "It's a Flat World, After All"

World Social Forum, "Porto Alegre Call For Mobilization"

International Forum on Globalization, "A Better World Is Possible!"

Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*

September 15

Read: Amartya Sen, "How to Judge Globalism"

Vandana Shiva, "Ecological Balance in an Era of Globalization"

September 17

Read: J. Micklethwait and A. Wooldridge, "The Hidden Promise: Liberty Renewed"

Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?"

Benjamin Barber, "Jihad vs. McWorld"

Due: 3-5 page discussion paper

Historicizing Globalization

September 22

Read: Janet Abu-Lughod, "Discontinuities and Persistence: One World System or a Succession of Systems?"

Amitav Ghosh, "Mangalore" from *In an Antique Land*

September 24

Read: Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*

September 29

Read: Continue and finish *Sweetness and Power*

Due: 3-5 page discussion paper

The Political Economy of Globalization

October 1

Read: Saskia Sassen, "Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization"

October 6

Read: David Harvey, *A Short History of Neoliberalism*

October 8

Read: David Harvey, *A Short History of Neoliberalism*

View: Stephanie Black, "Life and Debt" (details will be forthcoming)

October 13

Read: Karen Ho, "Situating Global Capitalisms: The View from Wall Street Investment Banks"

Pun Ngai, "Subsumption or Consumption? The Phantom of Consumer Revolution in Globalizing China"

Due: 3-5 page discussion paper

Globalization and Culture

October 15

Read: Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy" and "The Production of Locality"

October 20

Read: Stuart Hall, "The Question of Cultural Identity"

October 22

Read: Thomas Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global"

James Ferguson, "Of Mimicry and Membership: Africans and the New World Society"

View: Wang Kar-Wai, Chungking Express (details to follow)

October 27

Read: Jessica Winegar, "Cultural Sovereignty in a Global Art Economy: Egyptian Cultural Policy and the New Western Interest in Art from the Middle East"

William Mazarella, "Very Bombay: Contending with the Global in an Indian Advertising Agency"

October 29

Read: Daromir Rudnyckyj, "SPIRITUAL ECONOMIES: Islam and Neoliberalism in Contemporary Indonesia"

TBA

November 3

Read: Kathryn Mitchell, "Multiculturalism, or the United Colors of Capitalism?"

Roger Rouse, "Thinking Through Transnationalism: Notes on the Cultural Politics of Class Relations in the Contemporary United States"

Due: 3-5 page discussion paper

Citizenship and Globalization: Human Rights and Wrongs

November 5

Read: Martha Nussbaum, "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" and respondents

November 10

Read: Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Righting Wrongs"

November 12

Read: Peter Redfield, "Doctors, Borders and Life in Crisis"

November 17

Read: Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics"

Due: 3-5 page discussion paper

Difference and Inequality in a New World Order

November 19

Read: Anna Tsing, *Friction*

November 24

Read: Anna Tsing, *Friction*

November 26 --Holiday

December 1

Read: Mary Beth Mills, *Thai Women in the Global Labor Force*

December 3

Read: continue with Mills book.

December 8

Read: Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*

View: Mira Nair, *So Far From Home* (details forthcoming)

December 10

Read: Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*

December 15 – Wrap Up, Final Essay Due