GEOGRAPHIES OF GLOBALIZATION

Fall 2016

Instructor: Rea Zaimi
Office Hours: FRI 12:30-2:30 PM at Davenport Hall, Room 137A
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Class Time & Location: Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30 – 10:50 AM
Location: 150 Animal Sciences Lab

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the social, economic, political, and cultural processes that are actively reconfiguring the relations among people and places around the planet. We will study these processes with the aim of understanding how it is that we live in a world of increasing integration and deepening inequalities at once. We will explore the geographies emerging out of the networks of global interdependency in the contemporary moment through various lenses including labor, sovereignty, health, debt, space, and waste.

REQUIREMENTS

Textbook, Readings & I-Clickers
All assigned readings and documentaries other than the textbook chapters will be available on Compass. The following textbook, available for purchase at the Illini Union Bookstore and on reserve at the UIUC Undergraduate Library, will be used in this course:

I-clickers will be used for attendance and for questions in lectures starting **September 1**. You may purchase an I-clicker at the Illini Union Bookstore or online. If you cannot obtain an I-clicker, please speak with me at the beginning of the semester.

For your own interest, you might want to check out the UIUC International and Area Studies Library blog “Glocal Notes” at [http://publish.illinois.edu/iaslibrary/](http://publish.illinois.edu/iaslibrary/). I will share other relevant resources with you throughout the semester.

**Attendance & Participation**

Regular attendance is important for your ability to grasp the course material and for your overall success in this course. Three unexcused absences are allowed. Beyond that, participation points will be deducted for unexcused absences. Your active participation in the course is expected. I very much welcome and look forward to hearing your thoughts, questions, and other input during lecture. In order to create a good learning environment, I ask that you refrain from using your cell phone in class.

Entering the classroom late can be very distracting to your classmates, especially in a big auditorium. To minimize the noise and distraction, please be respectful to your classmates and come to class no more than 10 minutes late. You will be marked absent if you are more than 10 minutes late.

**Assignments & Evaluation**

There will be one short analytical paper (3-4 pages) that asks you to apply the concepts covered in this course to a particular topic, and one longer final research paper (8-10 pages) to be submitted at the end of the semester. There will also be a group presentation delivered typically on Thursdays starting on September 15. Presentations will be no more than 10 minutes long, and group size will be 4-5 students. You will have a chance to select the topic on which you want to present by Thursday, September 1. More details on these assignments will be given in class in the beginning of the semester and will be made available on Compass.

In addition, there will be a midterm exam and a non-comprehensive final exam. These will consist of multiple-choice questions and a few short-answer prompts.

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<tr>
<th>Attendance &amp; Participation</th>
<th>10%</th>
<th>Grading Scale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>A  94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Short Analytical Paper</td>
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<td>Final Research Paper</td>
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<td>B  84-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
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**Late Submissions**

10% of the grade will be deducted from assignments submitted up to 2 days after the deadline. Assignments submitted more than 2 days late will receive a grade of 0. If unexpected circumstances keep you from submitting your assignments on time, please
contact the Emergency Dean at (217) 333 0050. Late assignments accompanied by an excuse from the Emergency Dean will not be penalized. If due to exceptional circumstances you expect that you will not be able to meet a deadline, please contact me well in advance to explain the circumstances so that we can arrange an extension if appropriate.

**Important Dates and Deadlines:**

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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
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<td>Short Analytical Paper</td>
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<td>Final Research Paper</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Presentation</td>
<td>depends on topic you select</td>
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**Students with Disabilities**

If you need accommodations for any sort of disability, please speak to me after class, email me, make an appointment to see me, or visit me at my office hours as early as possible in the semester. You might also find it helpful to contact Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) at (217) 333 4603 or disability@uiuc.edu.

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated; all students are expected to submit original work. Please consult the university’s definition of plagiarism and contact your TA or me with any questions regarding academic integrity.

http://www.library.illinois.edu/learn/research/academicintegrity.html

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Week 1 (Aug. 23 & 25): Introduction & Perspectives on Globalization**

Readings (by Aug. 23):

- Chapter 1: Globalization, pp. 1-25. (On Compass)
- Thomas Friedman (1999). *Tourist with an Attitude*. Excerpt from Ch. 1 of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. (Link on Compass)

**Week 2 (Aug. 30 & Sept. 1): Globalization Discourses**

This week, we will critically examine how dominant ways of talking and writing about globalization serve to advance particular interests and legitimize certain political projects. We will see how “globalization” operates as discourse – as a set of narratives, “facts,” and arguments that purport to describe reality and in the process shape or create that reality.

As we focus on representations of globalization, we will also discuss how the very representational codes we might use to talk about the processes of dispossession and human suffering that globalization sometimes entails could be imbricated with tendencies to depoliticize dispossession. In this class, we might confront images and videos of suffering, poverty, dispossession, and injustice. Sometimes, images of human suffering decontextualize
the dispossession that they represent from the various multi-scalar processes that underpin it. At times, these images aestheticize the social and spatial manifestations of dispossession or serve them up for popular consumption in ways that make the audience feel comfortable and allow them to not confront their own direct or indirect implication in the scenes they are witnessing. Feeling pity or helplessness at the material we encounter can be both immobilizing and depoliticizing. This course will instead challenge us to think critically about the representation of human suffering and poverty in the material we cover, and it will push us to delve deeply into the processes that these images sometimes conceal or the ideas they help to reify. We will talk about these issues throughout the semester, and we will continue to critique the materials we encounter based on what is useful and what is problematic about the ways they represent the processes that they cover.

Readings (by Aug. 30):
• Chapter 2: Discourse, pp. 27-56. (On Compass)

Suggested readings:

Week 3 (Sept. 6 & 8): Global Commodities
This week, we will explore global economic interconnections through the lens of commodity chains. Global commodity chains signify the fragmentation of production processes across various sites around the world in late capitalism. For example, your cotton t-shirt might have made its way from a Mississippi cotton field to an Indonesian spinning factory to a textile mill in Bangladesh to an apparel manufacturer in Colombia and to a port in Miami before ending up in your closet. The production of commodities in global capitalism, we will see, weaves together faraway places, objects, regulations, people, aspirations, technologies, policies…We will consider various theorizations of the fragmentation of production processes in global capitalism: from perspectives that understand this development as a consequence of reduced transportation costs and improved communication technologies to perspectives that theorize this development in terms of capital’s insatiable drive to resolve its inherent crises through a “spatial fix.”

Readings (by Sept. 6):
• Chapter 3: Commodities, pp. 57-98.
• Mathilde Auvillain and Stefano Liberti, “The Dark Side of the Italian Tomato.” (Link on Compass)

Film (watch before Sept. 6 class):
• Red Gold and Black Blood by Alessandro Righi and Emanuele Piano (2016) – 26 minutes (Link on Compass)

Week 4 (Sept. 13 & 15): Global Commodities (continued) & Labor
Last week, we learned that the fragmentation of production processes across numerous sites around the world is one of the defining characteristics of global capitalism. This week we will
discuss how the outsourcing of manufacturing processes or services to other countries is linking the fates of workers around the world in new ways and also reconfiguring relations between workers and consumers in different places. We also will see how global capitalism is neither a seamless process nor a thoroughly homogenizing force. Rather, it draws on local processes and local social hierarchies just as it reshapes these in its spread. In other words, global capitalism is contingent upon and shaped by the specificities of particular places just as it transforms those specificities.

This week’s assigned chapter from geographer Melissa Wright’s book captures this complex relationship of the “local” to the “global” in interesting ways (we will delve deeper into this relationship on Week 15). You will read how in the interest of greater profits and better quality control but also under pressure from their American supervisors at Headquarters, managers in a Chinese subsidiary of an American firm scrutinize nearly every aspect of their women workers’ lives: from restricting these women’s mobility outside the factory’s housing complex to subjecting them to regular pregnancy tests and other invasive physical exams. But all of this is done through the rhetoric of factory kinship whereby managers forge a parochial father-daughter type of relationship with their female workers, disguising intrusive management strategies with the language of benevolent fatherhood. Global capitalist relations of production get reproduced through the localized identities of “factory fathers” and “disposable daughters” while significantly influencing local gender relations.

In class on Sept. 13:
• Film & Discussion of Naomi Klein’s No Logo.

Readings (by Sept. 15):
• Chapter 4: Labor, pp. 99-138.

Recommended readings:
• Cynthia Gorney (2014), “Far from Home” on National Geographic Online.
• 101 East: Denim Blues (video)

Week 5 (Sept. 20 & 22): Labor (continued) & Debt as Discipline
These two weeks, we will examine the development of global credit markets and the entrenchment of global indebtedness as two sides of the same coin. We will read about the role that debt has played as a mechanism for societal management since the 1970s, focusing on structural adjustment, debt relief, and microfinance. In class, we will watch a documentary that shows how the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) loans to Jamaica as the country tried to recover from the effects of the 1973 global financial crisis were made conditional upon the Jamaican government’s implementation of austerity policies, which drastically reconfigured the country’s economy with lasting impacts for Jamaican society.
As we learn about actors such as the IMF and the World Bank in our discussions of structural adjustment, we will be careful to steer clear of simplified narratives of evil global entities vs. helpless local actors. Such dichotomies are never very useful. Nor do they capture the complexities of the structural adjustment period, as we will see. Similarly, we will note that there was active resistance against structural adjustment policies in many countries. The arguments made by Burkina Faso’s President in 1983-1987, Thomas Sankara, about structural adjustment and debt as a form of neocolonialism are one instance of such resistance.

Structural adjustment policies also did not go uncontested in the countries that implemented them. We will learn about the late 1980s emergence of hip hop in various African cities as a form of critique of the difficult social conditions that structural adjustment created. Hip hop as an art form and as social commentary has an interesting relationship with globalization. Its emergence in African cities is intrinsically tied to trans-Atlantic flows of musical styles, audio technologies, people, experiences, and ideologies. But its spread as a politics of contestation is also associated with popular discontent with the impacts of globalization, namely the consequences of structural adjustment’s rapid integration of struggling economies into the global market.

Readings (by Sept. 22):
- Chapter 5: Money, pp. 139-179.
- Thomas Sankara speech against foreign debt at the 1987 OAU Summit in Addis Ababa (16 minutes)

**Week 6 (Sept. 27 & 29): Debt as Discipline (continued)**

Readings and lecture continued from Week 5 on Sept. 27

Documentary (in class) on Sept. 29:
- *Life and Debt* (2001) by Stephanie Black

**Week 7 (Oct. 4 & 6): Midterm Review & Midterm**

Class Discussion of *Life and Debt* and Midterm Review on Oct. 4

***Midterm in class on Oct. 6***

**Week 8 (Oct. 11 & 13): Governance and Sovereignty in Global Times**

This week we will critically examine organizational theorist Kenichi Ohmae’s bold assertion that the nation-state is dead as we explore how the role of the nation-state and the meaning of nation-state sovereignty are changing in light of other governing bodies with increasing authority and power. The Internet offers an interesting case for exploring questions of sovereignty in a globalizing world. Some have argued that the Internet, as a space that exceeds the boundaries and jurisdiction of any single nation, undermines nation-state
sovereignty. Others celebrate the Internet as a democratizing force and a tool for the formation of transnational solidarities. You may have heard this latter perspective from people who laud the role of social media in organizing the “Arab Spring” protests in 2011. In class, we will watch a short video on Bolivia’s technological sovereignty campaign. The video shows attempts to establish a homemade Internet system in Bolivia by politicians and local groups that want to overcome issues related to the reliance on foreign internet service providers and Miami-based servers: unsecure data flows, prohibitively expensive rates, and slow connection speeds. The Bolivian case raises interesting points about what the privatization of digital space means for the control of information and what transnational Internet infrastructures imply for nation-state sovereignty.

Readings (by Oct. 11):
- Chapter 7: Governance, pp. 227-277.

Suggested readings:
- Saskia Sassen, “The Impact of the Internet on Sovereignty: Unfounded and Real Worries” (On Compass)

Film (in class):
- Rebel Geeks: The Citizens’ Network (25 minutes)

Week 9 (Oct. 18 & 20): Globalization and Space
The advances in transport and communication technologies that characterize globalization are sometimes said to be “flattening” the world by eradicating old spatial barriers. Geographical distance is becoming less significant in the face of cheaper and improved global transportation and communication. But along with these “detrimentalizing” forces, we are seeing that contemporary globalization is erecting new social, technological, political, economic, and spatial barriers. Along with its “detrimentalizing” forces, then, globalization is characterized by “reterritorializing” processes that are engendering new spatial patterns and creating uneven geographical development. These two weeks, we will study uneven geographical development by focusing on the interconnections between emerging zones of affluence and zones of loss, spaces of wealth and accumulation and spaces of exclusion and marginalization.

Readings (by Oct. 18):
- Chapter 8: Space, pp. 279-336.

**Short Analytical Paper due by Sunday, 10/23, before midnight**

Week 10 (Oct. 25 & 27): Fear and Enclaves in the Global City
Readings (by Oct. 25):


**Week 11 (Nov. 1 & 3): Globalization and Health**
Readings (by Nov. 1):
• Chapter 9: Health, pp. 337-388.

**Week 12 (Nov. 8 & 10): Globalized Warming: Externalities, Interventions, and Injustice**
This week we will discuss climate change as a manifestation of the condition of interdependency in the era of globalization, and we will focus on how global solutions to climate change effects re-entrench power relations between and within nations. In the wake of the 2015 Paris Agreement, global consensus has been reached to “decarbonize” the world economy and limit warming to 1.5°C (if even possible), in order to mitigate the catastrophic impacts of climate change. However, many of the solutions (i.e. carbon markets, renewable energy) implemented by international institutions such as the United Nations, European Union and fossil fuel corporations may indeed exacerbate the vulnerability of historically marginalized populations. Moreover, many of these interventions may also reproduce political and economic power at both the local and global scales. This week’s lectures and readings will build on the concepts of uneven development, accumulation by dispossession, spatial fix, commodity fetishism, and double exposure.

Readings (by Nov. 8):


**Suggested Readings:**


Week 13 (Nov. 15 & 17): Responses to Globalization
Readings (by Nov. 15):
• Chapter 10: Responses, pp. 389-416.

Suggested readings:

Week 14 (Nov. 22 & 24): No Class

Week 15 (Nov. 29 & Dec. 1): The “Local” and the “Global”
What is the relationship between the “local” and the “global”? What is the relationship between the “vernacular” and the “cosmopolitan”? Cultural theorist Stuart Hall critiques ways of understanding and describing globalization that posit everything local as being thoroughly transformed by global forces so that “there isn’t any local that isn’t written through and through by the global.” Similarly, geographer Gillian Hart rejects models of globalization that rest on a clear separation and hierarchy of “the global” and the “local.” Local places and people, she argues, are not merely passive recipients of global forces. Instead, places, objects, and identities are formed “in relation to one another and to a larger whole,” not through the top-down influence of an overarching “global.” This week, we will explore what this means. We will do this through two readings that offer fertile ground for a nuanced discussion of the relationship between the “local” and the “global.”

The short article on the Bollywood film industry rejects the assumption that non-Western cultural productions are necessarily a form of resistance against Western cultural dominance. The article highlights the cultural resistance implicit in Bollywood and symbolized by it, but also the ways in which Bollywood adopts elements of Hollywood commercialism. As you read this article, think about the following questions: Can we analyze Bollywood on its own terms rather than as always resisting, borrowing from, or running against Hollywood? Are the flows and transformations that globalization entails one directional, from the Global North to the Global South (from the West to the East)?

The second article discusses how the Senegalese Murid Brotherhood and their diaspora negotiate globalizing forces and emerge as active agents – not passive recipients – of globalization. Historically, the Murids have become cosmopolitan by maintaining an
attachment to local, vernacular roots. They travel widely and forge ties with people in various places but they are able to succeed in establishing world-wide networks precisely because they maintain a degree of social exclusiveness and strong ties to a particular locality: the Senegalese city of Touba.

Readings (by Nov. 29):


Week 16 (Dec. 6): Breaking Big Ships: Concluding Thoughts

You may have wondered why the syllabus of a course on globalization begins with an image depicting discarded ships in a Bangladeshi shipbreaking yard. After all, other types of images are typically used to represent globalization: perhaps the globe viewed from outer space or maybe a photo of McDonalds in Bangkok. As we have discussed in this course, representations of globalization influence how we understand the processes and implications of an increasingly globalized planet. This week our discussion of globalization revolves around the breaking of big ships in a double sense.

First, as transporters of the majority of the world’s food, energy and products across the oceans, ships play a critical role in the making of the global economy. Just as we might follow the lives of big ships to understand globalization, we might also focus on their afterlives – the shores where old ships make their final stops, the people who break them apart, and the subsequent flows of material recuperated from these objects – as a lens through which to view globalization. This week is an exercise in approaching the study of globalization both creatively and critically by centering not people and processes, as we have done for the majority of this course, but objects – discarded objects.

Second, globalization often seems monolithic, inevitable, and unbreakable. At times, it might appear as having its own life – as another kind of big ship, if you will. Yet this course has been about deconstructing globalization into the processes, people, places, products, and policies through which it unfolds and through which it must be continuously reproduced. In a sense, this class has been about breaking big ships into their constituent parts. If we have discovered that globalization is characterized by not just integration and growth but also inequalities and injustices, and if we have seen that it is a process wrought with contradictions, then perhaps we can imagine and enact better ways of piecing together the constituent parts.

Readings:

- Do a little bit of research on the global shipbreaking industry prior to class. Remember that this is not meant to be a difficult or very time-consuming task for you.

View gallery:
• Edward Burtynsky’s photography project, *Shipbreaking*. As you go through this project, think about what is useful and what is problematic about how the artist aestheticizes the residues of destruction in industrial and postindustrial landscapes. Think about these questions of representation as you view the photos in the Alan Taylor article as well, and as you go through the material you come across in your research of the shipbreaking industry this week.

**The Final Research Paper is due by Sunday, 12/11, before midnight**

December 13: Final Exam  
Time: 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM  
Location: TBA

Good luck and thank you for your work!

## COURSE SCHEDULE

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<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 08/23  | Introduction & Perspectives on Globalization | • Chapter 1: Globalization, pp. 1-25  
• Thomas Friedman: “Tourist with an Attitude”  
• Noah Smith: “The Dark Side of Globalization” |                                                 |
| 08/25  | Globalization Discourses                    | • Chapter 2: Discourse, pp. 27-56                                         |                                                 |
| 08/30  | Globalization Discourses                    | • Chapter 3: Commodities, pp. 57-98  
• *The Dark Side of the Italian Tomato*  
• Watch Red Gold and Black Blood on Compass (26 minutes) |                                                 |
| 09/01  | Global Commodities                          | • Chapter 4: Labor, pp. 99-138.  
• Melissa Wright, “Disposable Daughters and Factory Fathers”, pp. 23-44. |                                                 |
| 09/15  | Labor                                       | • Chapter 5: Money, pp. 139-179.  
• Thomas Sankara *speech* against foreign debt at the 1987 OAU Summit in Addis Ababa (16 minutes) |                                                 |
<p>| 09/13  | Debt as Discipline                          | • Chapter 7: Governance, pp. 227-277                                     |                                                 |
| 09/20  | Governance and Sovereignty in Global Times  | • Chapter 7: Space, pp. 279-336 <strong>Short Analytical Paper due on Sunday,</strong> |
| 10/23  | Midterm Review                              | <strong>Midterm Exam in class</strong>                                                 |                                                 |</p>
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| 10/25  | Fear and Enclaves in the Global City                    | • Paragons of Lifestyle: Gated Communities and the Politics of Space in Bombay.  
|        |                                                         | • Fear and Money in Dubai.                                             |
|        |                                                         | • Two dreams in a Global City: class and space in urban Egypt         |
| 10/27  |                                                        |                                                                      |
| 11/01  | Globalization and Health                                | • Chapter 9: Health, pp. 337-388.                                    |
| 11/03  |                                                        |                                                                      |
| 11/08  | Globalized Warming                                     | • Hot Money: How Free Market Fundamentalism Helped Overheat the Planet |
|        |                                                        | • Climate Change and the Global Financial Crisis: A Case of Double Exposure |
|        |                                                        | • Carbon Markets, Debt, and Uneven Development                        |
|        |                                                        | • The “new” carbon economy: What’s new?                                |
| 11/10  |                                                        |                                                                      |
| 11/15  | Responses to Globalization                             | • Chapter 10: Responses, pp. 389-416.                                |
|        |                                                        | • Noam Chomsky: “The Zapatista Uprising”                               |
| 11/17  |                                                        |                                                                      |
| 11/22  | Holiday                                                 |                                                                      |
| 11/24  |                                                        |                                                                      |
| 11/29  | The “Local” and the “Global”                           | • Bollywood vs. Hollywood: Battle of the Dream Factories              |
|        |                                                        | • The Senegalese Murid Diaspora and the Making of a Vernacular Cosmopolitanism |
| 12/01  |                                                        |                                                                      |
| 12/06  | Breaking Big Ships: Concluding Thoughts                | • “The Shipbreakers” on The Atlantic Magazine.                        |
|        |                                                        | • Edward Burtynsky’s photography project, Shipbreaking.               |
|        |                                                        | **Final Research Paper due on Sunday, 12/11 before midnight**         |
| 12/13  | Final Exam at 7:00 PM – 10:00 PM; Location TBA         |                                                                      |