

CULTURE AND GLOBALIZATION

<http://www.cult320.onmason.com>

Cultural Studies: CULT 320
George Mason University
Fall 2012
Wednesday, 4:30 – 7:10pm
Classroom: Art and Design L008

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 2:00 – 3:00pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to say we live in a “global world” today? Can we be both local and global, at the same time (maybe even in the same place)? In this course we will tackle these and other questions by exploring globalization as a set of connected social, economic, and political processes. While these processes can be linked in many ways, here we will link them through “culture” – shared (or not) ways of being, feeling, knowing, and communicating. While culture might sound innocent, or even fun, this course will approach the links between culture and globalization in terms of the rise and spread of capitalist modes of production as well as colonial and post- (or neo-) colonial systems of race-making and racialized subordination.

The course will open with a brief introductory case study to get us started, looking at the role of media technologies in contemporary social uprising and revolution. We will then move through three core units: first, we will think about time and delve into the historical origins of today’s globalized worlds; second, we will think about globalization in terms of the creation and destruction of space and place; and third, we will highlight the different flows (of money, people, and things) that characterize and constitute contemporary globalization. In the final weeks we will return to case studies to concretize what we’ve done in our three units, this time linking social movements (as explored in our intro weeks) to the rise (and demise?) of a global prison system.

COURSE PROMISES (aka learning objectives)

In return for your active engagement with this course – which means keeping up with reading, reading to understand and not simply to get through the pages, and putting your best efforts into assignments and class discussions and activities – this course will:

- introduce you to critical approaches to globalization and its cultural manifestations;
- provide you the opportunity to apply critical, theoretical models to the world around you;
- develop your understanding of global power structures and inequalities;
- expand your comprehension of the links and exchanges between the global and the local;
- challenge you to think about the relationships between theory and practice, or how social change comes about;
- and help you improve and expand a variety of essential skills, including critical reading comprehension, written/visual/verbal communication, and time-management.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Participation and attendance	200 points (20%)	A+	980 – 1000
Blog participation	200 (20%)	A	920 – 979
Midterm	200 (20%)	A-	900 – 919
Research paper proposal	50 (5%)	B+	880 – 899
Peer review	100 (10%)	B	820 – 879
Research paper presentation	50 (5%)	B-	800 – 819
Final research paper	200 (20%)	C+	780 – 799
Total	1000 points	C	720 – 779

Participation and attendance – 200 points (20%)

This course covers a lot of material, and we will have new reading assignments for almost every class meeting. We will usually have around 80 pages of reading for each class, though sometimes we will have

less and sometimes more. You are required to keep up with the readings and to come to class prepared to discuss the material for that day, as well as material covered in previous class meetings. This means you must complete all reading assignments and bring to class that day's readings as well as notes with questions and comments for class discussion. I may give pop quizzes to assess your progress with readings.

Regular attendance is required to successfully complete this class. You are allowed no more than one absence for the entire semester. If you miss more than one class, you will have to meet with me to discuss if you are allowed to continue in the class. You are responsible for any material we cover in class, so please get contact information from a few of your classmates. You should check with your peers before you check with me about missed material. Also, we will start class on time, so do not be late. If you are frequently and/or excessively tardy, lateness will start to count as absence, putting your ability to complete the course in jeopardy. This policy is to prevent the disruption of people coming and going at all times, and to make sure you are not missing essential material covered in class meetings.

Blog participation – 200 points (20%)

Throughout the semester, I will post discussion questions and prompts on our course website, for a total of 10 posts; you are required to respond to 9 of these – you get one freebie. Responses must be no less than 300 words and must be posted by 1pm the day of class. They are evaluated credit/no credit. You must meet all requirements to get any credit. These are an opportunity for you to reflect on readings, connect readings to our previous discussions, apply concepts and theories to your own personal experiences and observations, and synthesize material toward your own original analyses. You are also required to comment on at least two your classmates' posts by 1pm on the Friday following class. Further instructions are posted on the course website.

Midterm – 200 points (20%)

We will have an in-class midterm to assess your progress with course material. You will be allowed to use notes during the exam.

Research paper proposal – 50 points (5%)

To help you prepare for the final research paper, you will be required to submit a one- to two-page proposal of the paper. Detailed instructions will be provided in class.

Peer review – 100 points (10%)

We will have an in-class peer review workshop of the first drafts of your research papers. You will be required to read, edit, and prepare comments for improvement on one of your classmates' papers. A guide to offering useful, constructive feedback and requirements will be provided.

Research paper presentation – 50 points (5%)

In order to share our independent work, we will do in-class presentations that highlight the most important findings of our final research papers. Guides and instructions will be provided.

Final research paper – 200 points (20%)

Rather than a final exam, you will submit a final research paper of 10-12 pages, 1 ½ spacing, 12-point font. Detailed instructions and requirements will be provided. The proposal and peer review workshops will provide you opportunities to develop and refine your work before you turn in the final version. The paper is an opportunity for you to explore in more detail a topic of special interest to you. You will be required to incorporate both course readings and supplemental texts that you research.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Jurgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Peterson, *Globalization: A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).
- Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).

* all other required readings are available to download from the course website

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

It is important that this classroom be a respectful learning environment in which everyone can participate. In order to facilitate this, please learn your classmates' names, pronounce them correctly, and refer to them by the pronouns they prefer. It is okay for us to disagree with one another in class discussion, but let's do so with kindness and compassion to keep the conversation as open and informative for everyone as possible. If you feel our classroom is not meeting your needs in these regards, please let me know.

EMAIL

You are required to regularly check your GMU email address, as important updates will be sent that way. I will not announce any major changes to the syllabus with less than 24 hours notice. I will respond to emails within 24 hours. I do not respond to emails on the weekends; an email sent on Friday will receive a response by Monday.

LAPTOPS AND CELL PHONES

Laptops are not allowed in class, unless as part of an accommodation provided by the Disability Resource Center, or through special arrangement with me.

Cell phone use is also not allowed. This includes texting, browsing, tweeting, Instagramming, playing Fruit Ninja, and anything else you might do with a cell phone outside of class. If you use a cell phone during class, you will be required to turn your phone in to me at the start of every class meeting for the remainder of the semester. This will be embarrassing and annoying for both of us. If you are anticipating some sort of special circumstances in which you might need access to your phone during class, just check in with me.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU

Writing Resources: You may wish to use the Writing Center to assist you with an assignment. Tutors at the Writing Center can help you brainstorm, structure, and revise your written work. The Writing Center is located in Robinson A 114; 703-993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>.

Disability Resource Center: The staff members of the DRC assist students with learning differences or any other conditions that may impact academic performance. DRC is located in SUB I, Rm.222; 703-993-2474; <http://www.gmu.edu/student/drc>.

Counseling Services: Professional counselors provide individual and group sessions for personal development and assistance with a range of emotional and relational issues. Counseling Services are located in SUB I, Rm.364; 703-993-2380; <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/csdc>. In addition, the Learning Services Program (703-993-2999) offers academic skill-building workshops as well as a tutor referral service.

Student Technology Assistance and Resource Center (STAR): The STAR Center is available to help students with technology needs, such as video, multimedia, desktop publishing, and web skills. The STAR Center is located in Johnson Center, Rm.229; 703993-8990; <http://media.gmu.edu>.

Division of Instructional and Technology Support Services (DoIT): If you have any difficulties with accessing the campus network or on-campus computers, please contact the help desk. DoIT is located in Innovations Hall, Rm.416; 703-993-3178; <http://www.doit.gmu.edu>

Last but not least, **me**. I am available during office hours and by appointment to discuss and support any and all aspects of your learning and development in this course. We can go over assignments before and after you've turned them in, we can review concepts from class, we can extend discussions just because you're interested and curious. If you are struggling with readings, assignments, and/or meeting deadlines, please come to me for assistance before things are due and before you fall behind. I will be glad to match your efforts.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

George Mason University students are expected to adhere to the Honor Code; please familiarize yourself with the Honor Code if you have not already done so. Cheating and/or plagiarism – passing off work as your own that is not your own – will result in an F for your final grade in this class. This will be an unpleasant experience all around, so please don't cheat or plagiarize. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism. If you are unclear, talk to me. The official GMU policies as well as helpful information are available from the Office of Academic Integrity: <http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/>.

Like everything in life, this syllabus is subject to change.

Updated information on readings, assignments, etc. will be on our course website.

I will communicate any changes with enough advance warning.

You are responsible for keeping up with these changes.

If you miss class, be certain to ask your peers if any changes to the syllabus were announced.

COURSE SCHEDULE

All readings and assignments are found on that week's page on our course website.

Week 1: Intro I

Wednesday, August 29

Course plan, intro to globalization

Week 2: Intro II

Wednesday, September 5

Facebook, YouTube, revolution, and uprising

Week 3: History I

Wednesday, September 12

Colonialism and capitalism

Week 4: History II

Wednesday, September 19

Neocolonialism, neoliberalism, structural adjustment

Screening: *Life & Debt*

Week 5: Space & Place I

Wednesday, September 26

Gentrification, displacement, consumption, race

* Paper proposals due

Week 6: Space & Place II

Wednesday, October 3

Indigenous land rights, environmental racism

Week 7: Flows I

Wednesday, October 10

Immigration, gender, race, sexuality, nationality

Week 8

Wednesday, October 17

* In-Class Midterm

Week 9: Flows II

Wednesday, October 24

Labor, commodities, service, Apple

Week 10: Prisons I

Wednesday, October 31

Mass incarceration in the modern world

Week 11: Prisons II

Wednesday, November 7

Life without parole? Or life without prisons?

Week 12: Paper Workshops

Wednesday, November 14

* Peer review workshops

Week 13: GMU Holiday

Wednesday, November 21

No class

Week 14: The End of Capitalism?

Wednesday, November 28

Resistance from below, alternatives to capital

Screening: *The Take*

Week 15: Course Wrap-Up

Wednesday, December 5

* Final presentations

Final research papers are due by 5pm, Wednesday, December 12.

Late papers will not be accepted.