Theory and Method in the Study of Global Affairs Eric Davis

790:518 Fall 2014

Course Description

This seminar examines how the global - embodied in the processes of globalization - is affecting the quality of life of the world’s citizenry, both in advanced industrialized countries and in less developed countries (LDCs) of the non-Western world. The emphasis on globalization’s impact on democratic politics, namely political participation, civic consciousness, human rights and issues of social justice, represents a central concern. However, we are also interested in issues that affect democratic politics such as sustainable development, income distribution, gender equality, and preservation of local heritage and traditions.

One of the main problems facing the world today is its increasing economic integration, on the one hand, and the lack of integration in the area of global political institutions, social practices and cultural understandings, on the other. As even a relatively small economic downturn in one part of the world can have global implications, e.g., the collapse of the Thai currency, the baht, in the late 1990, or more recently, the seizure of large parts of Iraq by the Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS). To fully understand how the global arena is affected by the processes of globalization, we approach the issues in the course through four levels of analysis: political, social, economic and cultural (SPEC).

What is the structure of the global arena? How has it been shaped in the modern era? When did the concept of globalization become prominent? What benefits has it brought to the global arena and what problems has it created? We will be looking at what role can the United Nations and UN institutions and agencies play in fostering a more equitable and integrated global society.

What does it mean to speak of the “global arena”? How is the “global” different from the “local”? To use this binary is to suggest the existence of *boundaries*. If we juxtapose the global to the local, then at some point we must cross a boundary that separates the two.

There is no question that we all live in a globalized world. Massive changes in *information technology* have facilitated contact between all regions of the world. What Thomas Friedman has called the “democratization of information” has undermined the ability of authoritarian rulers to control the information available to those they rule.

To speak of the global implies *interdependence*. What happens in one part of the world increasingly has a significant impact on other parts of the world, often far away. Think for example of terrorism and pandemics such as the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. How should we understand this increasing interdependence and the causal factors that influence it? What are the best indicators to measure this interdependence?

To speak about the global implies is to simultaneously speak about a *power relationship*. The use of the terms “global” and “local” suggests many things but one of the most important is the juxtaposition of the *nation-state* to the *global political and economic system*. Many developing countries, in particular, feel that their national interests are subordinated to the international political-economic system. One question that we will address is the extent to which economic and social development in developing or non-Western countries is impeded by policies that originate in advanced industrialized countries.

From a different perspective, many economists and political scientists argue that the most important institution for economic and social development is the *market*. Without free markets, nation-states cannot develop efficient economies and thus cannot raise their citizens’’ standard of living. Others argue that markets are highly correlated with *democracy* *and* good *governance*. Still others argue that unregulated markets can cause great *income inequality* that, if unaddressed by the state, can produce economic and political instability, e.g., the global recession of 2008.

A key concept that we will confront in this seminar is that of *globalization*. This term is used with great frequency, in the media and academic circles, but few who use it define it in any precise manner. The question of whether globalization is beneficial or detrimental to human progress has been widely debated. The perspective adopted in this course is that globalization’s impact cannot be reduced to either a wholly positive or entirely negative effect. From a *policy perspective*, it is critical that the economic, social, political and culture processes influenced by globalization be channeled in directions that benefit all sectors of society.

The questions raised in this seminar also ask whether globalization is really a new phenomenon or the name of a process or processes that have been underway for a long period of time. It raises the question of whether globalization is a unitary process or whether the concept subsumes many different processes. How do we know that globalization is not some fad created by the media or a catch-all phrase by isolationists and protectionists? Is the “era of globalization” any different from previous periods of economic expansion? Do we measure globalization solely on the amount of economic change or do we also need to look into political, social and cultural realms as well? The importance of answering these questions is to gain a better grasp on both defining the concept and understanding its impact both on advanced industrial and the less developed countries (LDCs) of the non-Western world.

One of the most important questions about globalization is its impact on the practice of democracy. Does globalization enhance or hinder democratic practices? If globalization is directly linked to advancing the economic and political power of advanced industrialized countries at the expense of LDCs, what impact do Western trans-national corporations have on political processes in the non-Western world? To what extent is authoritarian rule in the non-Western world the West’s responsibility? To what extent do non-Western societies unfairly blame the West for their own failings, including local dictators and despots?

It is well known that the populaces of advanced industrialized countries use a disproportionate amount of the world’s energy and material resources. What are the implications of these consumption patterns for democracy and the global environment? How can citizens of advanced industrialized countries continue to enjoy prosperity and technological advancements without having serious negative effects on other countries and the global environment? Is there a relationship between one’s everyday behavior, including food and energy consumption, and the well-being of people elsewhere in the world? Can change in individual behavior, however small it seems, potentially have a global impact.

One of the most important levels at which globalization’s impact needs to be understood is what we might refer to as the cultural-psychological level. How do citizens of Western and non-Western societies interact under the impact of globalization? To examine this question, we will read two powerful novels that explore the relationship between the West and non-West through the characters created by the authors. We will also examine an area of leisure time activity where peoples in non-Western societies refuse to be suppressed by authoritarian regimes, namely that of sports.

Finally, if we are able to define globalization, how do we measure its impact? Does it have a different impact on advanced industrialized countries than on LDCs? How are we to understand the apparent dichotomy between the growth rates and standards of living advanced industrialized countries, on the one hand, and less-developed nations, on the other? What does it mean to differentiate between “core” and “periphery,” “North” or “South,” “West” or “East”? What role does historical memory play in the globalization process? Why is this concept important for understanding reactions to globalization in the West and non-West?

To help us address critical issues examined in this course, we will be inviting a number of guest lecturers who will use their research and policy specialization to help us a gain a better understanding of global affairs.

**Course Objectives**

This class emphasizes *active learning*. Beyond completing course readings and taking notes, students are expected to actively engage in classroom discussions. Course readings and discussions will be supplemented by group projects meant to demonstrate the student’s ability to apply the concepts and knowledge learned. Students are encouraged to challenge all conceptual formulations and arguments presented in course readings, and to develop their own approaches to the problems and issues we discuss.

Because our meetings will rely heavily on discussions of the readings, and critically analyze points and counter-points to many arguments, students are expected to attend class and arrive having completed the required reading. Because participation is an integral part of the learning process, class attendance is *required*. More than *two unexcused absence* will negatively affecting your final evaluation, resulting in the reduction of a half grade for each unexcused absence.

*Instructor expectations*

A key component of the course will be the *group project*. The class will be divided into groups that will present a project at the end of the course. This group project should address two issues. First, students will be asked to focus on one or more aspects of globalization which they feel is/are affecting their daily lives, either positively or negatively. Second, the group project should address how its members feel that they can have an impact on globalization, either by enhancing the impact of a positive aspect(s), or resisting an aspect(s) which they feel is having a negative impact. The final evaluation of the course will be a comprehensive exam at the end of the course.

* Attend ***all***classes (students are allowed *one* unauthorized absence per term; additional absences will lead to a diminution of your final grade)
* Silence and put away your cell phone for the duration of the class. Reading or sending text messages is inappropriate behavior during class.
* A laptop can be used during class ONLY to take notes. Please remember that your chatting, web-searching, etc. is distracting not only to you but also to your neighbors.
* Complete each day’s reading assignment ***before*** coming to class. I may ask questions in lecture about the reading. I will presume as I lecture that you have at least read the assignment carefully if not fully mastered it.
* Arrive in class on time.

*Academic integrity*

Every Rutgers student needs to be familiar with the details of the university’s academic integrity policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy>

Course Description

I. Introduction

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 57-74

Weiss, Thomas and Sam Dawes, *The Oxford Handbook on the United Nations*, 3-38

Friedman, Thomas, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 29-43

Huntington, Samuel, *The Clash of Civilizations*, 207-265

Recommended:

Davis, Eric, “Global Citizenship: Theoretical and Pedagogical Perspectives,” *Civic Education for Diverse Citizens in Global Times: Rethinking Theory and Practice*, 133-145

II. Conceptualizing Globalization

Cochrane, Allan and Kathy Pain, “A globalizing society?,” *A globalizing world: culture, economics, politics*, 6-43

Gilpin, Robert, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century*, 15-51

Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson, *Why do Nations Fail The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, 7-69

Bhagwati, Jagdish, *In Defense of Globalization*, 3-27, 51-91

Berger, Peter, “Four faces of global culture,” *The National Interest*, 49 (Fall 1997): 23-27

Friedman, Thomas, *The World is Flat*, 49-172

III. The Global and Local

Mazlish, Bruce, “The Global and the Local,” *Current Sociology*, 2005

Guy, Jean-Sebastian, “What is Global and What is Local? A Theoretical Discussion Around Globalization,” *Parsons Journal for Information Mapping*, 2009.

Hale, Thomas & Denise Mauzerall, “Thinking Globally and Acting Locally: Can the Johannesburg Partnerships Coordinate Action on Sustainable Development?” *Journal of Environment & Development*, 2004.

Alfasi, Nurit & Tovi Fenster, “Between the ‘Global’ and the ‘Local’: On Global Locality and Local Globality” *Urban Geography*, Vol. 30, Issue 5, pp. 543-566.

Lyn Calcutt, Ian Woodward and Zlatko Skrbis, “Conceptualizing otherness: An exploration of the cosmopolitan schema,” *Journal of Sociology*, 2009.

Gunesch, Konrad, “Intercultural understanding via local and global educational

citizenship: A contribution to international education via a lived-in

substantiation of multilingualism and cosmopolitanism,” *Journal of*

Hongladarom, Soraj, “Negotiating the Global and the Local: How Thai Culture,” Co-opt the Internet <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/782/691>.

Recommended:

Liedgren, Pernilla, “Transfer of Teaching Styles: Teaching Social Work in Iraqi

Kurdistan as a Swede,” *International Social Work*, 2013.

IV. The Rise of the Global Market

Smith, Adam, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 3-23

Heilbruner, Robert, *The Worldly Philosophers*, 42-74

Hale, Thomas, David Held and Kevin Young, *Gridlock*, 18-48

Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*, 199-207

Krugman, Paul, *The Return of Depression Economics’ and the Crisis of 2008*, 9-29,

166-196

V. Global Governance – Past, Present and Future

Held, *A globalizing* world, 128-167

Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, 246-273, 335-367

Benjamin Barber: *Jihad vs. McWorld*, “Securing Global Democracy in the

World of McWorld,” 268–292

Hale, Thomas, David Held and Kevin Young, *Gridlock*, 113-188

Knight, W. Andy, “Good Governance,” Weiss and Dawes, *Handbook of the United*

*Nations*, 62-633

Sassen, Saskia, “The Repositioning of Citizenship and Alienage: Emergent Subjects and Spaces for Politics,” *Globalizations*,

Yunxiang Yan, “Managed Globalization: State Power and Cultural Transition in

China, *Many Globalizations*, eds. Peter Berger and Samuel Huntington, 19-45

VI. Income Inequality and Poverty

Held, *A globalizing world*, 86-126

Sachs, Jeffrey, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for our* Time, 1-50

Acemoglu and Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, 428-462

Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization*, 122-134

\*Class simulation - Assign class members to Globalization Project Working Group

VII. Trans-national labor migration and human trafficking

Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 195–215

Collier, Paul, *Exodus*, 11-53, 145-176

Hepburn, Stephanie and Rita J. Simon, *Human Trafficking Around the World*, 1-72

VIII. Gender and Globalization

Geertsema, Margaretha, “Women and News: Making Connections Between the Global and the Local” Feminist Media Studies, 2009: 149-172.

Davids, Tine and Francien Van Drie l. 2009. "The Unhappy Marriage between Gender and Globalisation." *Third World Quarterly* 30:905-920.

Eschle, Catherine. 2004. "Feminist Studies of Globalisation: Beyond Gender, Beyond Economism?" *Global Society: Journal of Interdisciplinary International Relations* 18:97-125.

IX. The Politics of Consumerism: Implications for Democracy and the Global Environment

Cohen, Lizabeth, *A Consumer’s Republic*, 112-165

Schlosser, Eric, *Fast Food Nation*, 1-10, 13-30

Hale, Held and Young, *Gridlock*, 201-272

Recommended:

Niall Fitzgerald, “Harnessing the Potential for Globalization for the Consumer and Citizen,” *International Affairs*, 73, no. 4: 739-746.

Cohen, *A Consumer’s Republic,* 257–289

Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 59–87

\*Preparing for the Globalization Project Working Group – Theme: the role of social media in economic, political social and cultural change

X. Protecting Traditions and Cultural Heritage

Harrison, Rodney, *Understanding the Politics of Heritage*, 5-39, 154-196

Benton, Tim, *Understanding Heritage and Memory*, 7-43

XI. Measuring Globalization’s Technological and Economic Impact

“Measuring Globalization: The Global Top 20,” *Foreign Policy*, May-June 2005: 52-60

Robert Gilpin, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism*, 293–324

Jeffrey Sachs, “International Economics: Unlocking the Mysteries of Globalization,” *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1998): 97-111

Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat*, 225-275, 371-413

Friedman, *Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Chapter 4, 44-72

Recommended:

Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 23-58

Friedman, *Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 101-111; 112-117

XII. Social Media and Global Change Simulation

XIII. Course Evaluation and Review for Take-home Final Examination