CULTURES OF GLOBALIZATION

ANT 220
M/W 11:00-11:50 am
219 Aaron Burr Hall
Spring 2007

Prof. João Biehl
128 Aaron Burr Hall
Phone: 258 6327
Email: jbiehl@princeton.edu

Teaching Assistants:
Maria McM (mmcmath@princeton.edu)
Leo Coleman (lcoleman@princeton.edu)

Course Description

The global economy is now characterized by an almost instantaneous flow and exchange of capital and information. This course explores the structures of power and situated cultural processes that come with globalization. The global is not a given—it is made through intense, contradictory, and often unequal encounters and negotiations. The course draws from political economy, media, and ethnography and familiarizes students with critical debates on globalization and local responses to globalizing processes. We will inquire, for example, into how open markets and the expansion of human rights discourses dovetail with reforming nation-states; the extent to which globalization promotes new labor regimes and cultural homogenization; the ways people reinvent themselves and their communities via consumerism and new medical technologies; and the real possibilities of cosmopolitanism amid culturally motivated violence. We want to bring our empirical insights to bear on theories of social justice and human agency.
Requirements/Grading

Students are expected to critically reflect on the films and readings assigned for each class, to participate actively in class and precept discussions, and to creatively integrate these insights in their assignments. Grading will be based on:

- Attendance and participation (10 percent).
- A weekly précis addressing readings and films assigned for that week (20 percent). A paper copy of your précis has to be submitted every week in precept beginning on February 14th or 15th and ending on April 25th or 26th. Each précis should not be more than one page long (or have more than 400 words).
- Midterm take-home exam (30 percent).
- A research paper (10-12 double-spaced pages) in lieu of final (40 percent). An outline is due on April 4th, and the paper is due on May 15th at 5 p.m.

Required Books

The following required books will be available for purchase at the U-Store and will also be on reserve at Firestone Library. Additional articles and book chapters can be downloaded from Blackboard’s electronic reserve.


Office Hours:

- Prof. Biehl—M 12:30-2:00 pm (128 Aaron Burr Hall)
- Maria McMath—M 1:00-2:00 pm (121 Aaron Burr Hall)
- Leo Coleman—W 2:00-3:00 pm (121 Aaron Burr Hall)

Meetings can also be arranged by appointment.
February 5

Introduction
How does the globalized world economy affect ordinary people?

- Film: Life: The Story So Far by Steve Bradshaw.

February 7

What Is Globalization?
Do all countries follow the same path to a new capitalist economy?
Which ideas, institutions, and technicians underscore economic reform?

- Film: The Agony of Reform, Episode Two of Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy by William Cran.

February 12

Globalization and Its Discontents
What types of transformations occur as societies engage with or are incorporated into a world capitalist economy? What happens to local worlds?

February 14

The Global Cultural Economy

What happens to the concept of bounded cultures or societies in a globalizing world?

What is global culture?

How do individuals and groups articulate identity vis-à-vis global forces and commodities?

• Film: The Global Assembly Line by Lorraine Gray.

February 19

Tracking and Historicizing Global Connections

On how does the on-the-ground encounter with globalization reshape anthropology’s orientations, methods, and strategies of representation.

• Film: Geraldo’s Brazil by Patrice Barrat.

February 21

Corporations—the Legal Pursuit of Profit and Power

How do national institutions and the rule of law enable the global and which forms of governance do corporations facilitate?

• Film: The Corporation by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbot, and Joel Bakan.
February 26

**Offshore Production and the Gender of Labor**

*Which forms of production and labor enable the global economy?*

*How is the mobility of capital and production articulated with local cultural formations?*

*What is the value of gender?*

- **Film:** *Maquilapolis* by Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre.

February 28

**Outsourcing, Self-Discipline, and Ethical Audits**

*Which trading and laboring practices are profit-making?*

*How do corporations manage regulatory gaps?*

*What is ethical behavior in the corporate world?*

- **Film:** *A Decent Factory* by Thomas Balmès.

March 5

**International Trade and National Crisis**

*How does globalization foster growth and who are the beneficiaries?*

*Does globalization lessen inequality within and across country?*

- **Film:** *New Rules of the Game*, Third Episode of *Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy* by William Cran.
March 7

**Globalization and What Is Governmentally Possible**

*What is happening to nation-states, sovereignty, and politics in a globalized world?*

*Which forms of governance emerge through market-based politics?*


March 12

**Global Cities**

*What is the role of cities in global capitalism?*

*Which social forms and ways of being accompany urban life?*

*Which new national and transnational alignments of citizenship are manifest in global cities?*


• Film: *Life and Debt* by Stephanie Black.

March 14

**Volatile Capital Movement and Everyday Realities**

*Mid-Term Review: On the flexibility of high finance, production systems, and labor markets, and on the pace and unevenness of the social life that sustain this flexibility.*

- Film: *1-800-India* by Anna Cater.

**Spring Break**

March 26

**Commodities and Consumption**

*Theories of the growth and spread of capitalism have emphasized transformations in the mode of production, that is, the new technologies and social relations that made industrialization possible. But how is it that societies come to have a taste for the commodities produced? How are consumer desires intertwined with modern forms of power?*

- Film: *Advertising Missionaries* by Chris Hilton and Gauthier Flaunder.

March 28

**Branded Lives**

*Must successful corporations primarily produce brands? Beyond commodities, the brand as experience and lifestyle.*

- Film: *Knock Off: Revenge on the Logo* by Anette Baldauf and Katharina Weingartner.
April 2

**Fast Food**

*How does the food industry look from the perspective of the consumer? Cultural imperialism—or?*


April 4

**Consumer Citizens**

- Film: *Our Daily Bread* by Nikolaus Geyrhalter.

April 9

**The Mass Media and Imagined Communities**

*What is the role of the mass media in creating various imagined communities, from the political entity of the nation-state to the diffuse cultural communities that cut across national boundaries? Which cultural alternatives do people engineer via mass media productions?*

- Film: *Al Jazeera: Voice of Arabia* by Tewfik Hakem.
April 11

Advertising Agency

- Film: *Our Brand is Crisis* by Rachel Boynton.

April 16

Enhancement Technologies and Market-Driven Medicine

*On how technological transformation and global medicine inform health planning, popular culture, and affect the intimate realms of bodily experience.*


April 18

Darwin’s Nightmare and Humanitarianism

*A tableau of ecological catastrophe, economic exploitation, and human misery.*

- Film: *Darwin's Nightmare* by Huber Sauper.
April 23

Zones of Social Abandonment
On how economic globalization and state and medical reform coincide and impinge on a local production of social death.


April 25

The Real in Fieldwork and in Analysis


April 30

The Future
Reflections on Human Values and Human Rights


May 1

Review of the Course’s Themes and Discussions