THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF GLOBALIZATION

Department of Anthropology
Princeton University
ANT 570
Spring 2008

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Course Description

The global is not a given—it is made through intense and highly unequal exchanges. This seminar examines political, social, and subjective processes that accompany economic globalization. We will address shifts in modes of production, governance, consumption, and self-fashioning and we will draw from ethnography and political economic and medical accounts. We will also critically engage the theories that inform the ways social scientists think and write about power, values, and human agency in the global economy. How creative and theoretically generative is ethnography? Which concepts make our science more realistic, better? A film series accompanies the course.

Requirements/Grading

The success of the seminar depends on your commitment to complete all required readings for each session, write and post weekly responses, watch and critique the films, and to participate actively in discussions.

Grading will be based on:
1. Attendance and participation (30%).
2. Reading reports (30%).
3. A final project: a book review essay covering at least three recent publications on the anthropology of globalization OR a research paper on a specific course-related theme. The 12-15 double-spaced page paper is due on May 13th at 5 pm (40%).
Books

The following books will be on reserve at Firestone Library. These books will also be available for purchase at Labyrinth Books (122 Nassau Street). Additional articles and book chapters can be downloaded from Blackboard’s electronic reserve.


Office Hours

- M 3:00-4:30 pm at 128 Aaron Burr Hall. Meetings can also be arranged by appointment.
February 4

Introduction
Themes, Questions, Prospects

- Short Film: *The Shock Doctrine* by Naomi Klein and Alfonso Cuaron (Amazon.com).

February 11

Economic Globalization

Which ideas, institutions, and practices underscore global capitalist reforms?
What do experts and critics of globalization say and what are the speakers’ benefits?
What types of transformations occur as societies engage with or are incorporated into a global economy? How does a globalized economy affect everyday life?


Optional Reading:
February 18

**Anthropology and the World in Pieces**

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

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

*Is there such a thing as a global culture?*

*How does the on-the-ground encounter with globalization reshape anthropology's orientations, methods, concepts, and strategies of representation?*

- Film: *The Corporation* by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbot, Joel Bakan.

**Optional Reading:**


February 25

**Offshore Production, Labor, and Risk**

*Which forms of production and labor enable the global economy? What is the value of gender?*

*How do corporations manage regulatory gaps? What is ethical behavior in the corporate world?*

*Which benefits and risks accompany offshore production and what is the force of auditing?*

*How is global production articulated with local cultural formations?*

*Does globalization lessen inequality within and across countries?*


• Films: *A Decent Factory* by Thomas Balmès and *Maquilapolis* by Vicky Funari and Sergio de la Torre.


Optional Reading:


Optional Reading:


March 3

**Biopower and Beyond**

How has natural life become an object of modern politics?

How does the governamentalization of biological conditions (making live) dovetail with the experience of death (letting die)?

What distinguishes life worth living from “killable bodies,” and who makes these distinctions?

How do life chances and forms of agency change in light of new technological and political developments?

What kind of authority and control comes after biopower?


March 10

Globalization, Statecraft, Rights

How do national institutions and the rule of law enable the global?
Which forms of governance and ideas of citizenship do markets facilitate?


Optional Reading:

SPRING BREAK
March 24

**Underworlds**

*How do postcolonies figure and fare in the global economy and in contemporary theory?*

*How to investigate and account for illegal trade in goods of all kinds?*

*Which forms of life and politics emerge at the interface of markets, criminal economies, and courts?*

- Film: *Darwin’s Nightmare* by Huber Sauper.

Optional Reading:

March 31

**Commodities and Consumption**

*Theories of the growth and spread of capitalism have emphasized transformations in the mode of production, but how is it that societies come to have a taste for the commodities produced?*

*How are consumer desires and life-styles intertwined with modern forms of power?*

• Fim: *The Price of Sugar* by Bill Haney.

Optional Film:
• *Our Brand is Crisis* by Rachel Boynton.

April 7

Technology and Subjectivity
*Where do the discourses of science and of capitalism converge?*

*How does science and technology— in biomedicine, mass media, cyberspace, and commerce— transform and constrain possibilities of agency and subjectivity?*

*Who benefits from these truths and objects, and at what cost?*

*What are the affects and side-effects?*


Optional Reading:
April 14

Desire and the Social Subject

How can we define “public” and “private” and what is the relation between the two in the context of globalization?

How is “private” desire bounded and re-shaped by global forces?

Which clinical forms and forms of camaraderie are characteristic of our times?

In what ways does desire resist, transform, or exceed the categories and constraints of power?

How “powerful” is desire, even in the most oppressive circumstances?


Optional Film:
- Al Jazeera: Voice of Arabia by Tewfik Hakem

- Fim: Estamira by Marcos Prado.

Optional Reading:
April 21

Political Violence and Global Values

How do we observe and react to the plight and suffering of others in the context of globalization and mass media?
What are the possibilities for social mobility and recovery in the context of extreme poverty and political violence?
Does global interconnectedness transform our responsibilities to pain and inequality, far and near?
Are there such things as “universal” human rights and values, and, if so, how are we to define and apply them?


Optional reading:

April 28

Anthropological Voices

How can anthropologists approach research and writing in a globalized world?
Are there unique contributions of ethnography and the anthropological voice?
How creative and theoretically generative is ethnography?