

HIST 283
Globalization

Instructor: Viren Murthy
Class meets: Friday 3:30-5:30
Location: Humanities Building 5255
Office Hours: Wednesday 10:50-11:50

Course Description:

In the past few years, leaders and politicians have constantly been defining, avoiding and responding to political, “globalization.” However, scholars often discuss the concept without asking fundamental questions about it. What is globalization? When did it begin? Does it imply that countries all over the world will become the same? Can and should we overcome it? We will begin with Janet Abu-Lugod’s now classic attempt to argue that globalization is nothing new and that we need to look back to the 13th century to understand its origins. We will then shift to a more theoretical focus by examining Michel-Rolph Trouillot’s text on globalization and how it affects our conceptions of the non-West. As we will see, a key issue that emerges in relation to the issue of globalization is the problem of modernity. Global relations are often uneven and split between modernized and modernizing nations, which is inextricably connected to a colonial relation. From this perspective, we will ask whether modernity is singular or plural. Do various countries in a globalized world have their own modernity? What would that mean? The last section of the course builds up to a type of history of the present, by focusing on transformations taking place around the world in the 1970s. To grasp this shift in historical context, we will look at George Duménil and Dominique Lévy.

Learning Objectives:

Through taking this course, students will learn how to think about our present and past from a global perspective. More fundamentally, students will become clearer about what a “global” perspective is and how different scholars have attempted to define the “global” in globalization.

This course will provide students with knowledge of several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.

Moreover, because the course is about globalization, it emphasizes the study of cross-cultural and transnational historical connections.

In particular, through the various assignments in class, students will examine how since at least the 13th century the history of what we now call nation-states is best understood in an international context.

Although our current History Department usually separates History according to nations (i.e Chinese History, Japanese History, French History), none of these histories can really be grasped without understanding transnational trajectories, including global economic crisis. A major part of this course will also involve interrogating whether there is really something new about the way in which globalization affects our world today, as opposed to the past. Students will also learn to express themselves both in writing and in oral presentations about topics related to globalization.

Assignments:

In oral assignments students will convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.

In particular, students will be required to present two readings in class and lead the discussion by asking questions. This will be good training for taking some complex ideas in the texts we read and making them relevant for us.

In written assignments, students will present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.

Students will write two papers, which will first be subject to peer-review. Students are expected to incorporate the comments of peers into their final product, which I will then grade. In class, I will give instructions about how to comment on the papers of your peers.

Grading:

Attendance and Weekly Reading Response 20 %

(A 200-250 word reading-response will be due on the Friday of every week)

Mid-term paper 30 %

In-class Presentation #1 10%

In-class Presentation #2 10%

Final paper 30 %

Required Texts:

Janet Abu-Lugod, *Before European Hegemony: The World-System AD 1250-1350*, Oxford University Press, 1989.

Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*, Polity, 2009.

Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, *The Crisis of Neo-Liberalism*, Harvard University Press, 2013.

Other readings will be on the Leart@UW website.
Weekly Schedule of Readings and Assignments
(Schedule is subject to change based on the judgment of the instructor)

Reading Schedule:

Week 1 9/2 No Class

Week 2 9/9 Overview: What is Globalization?

Micheal Lang, “What is Globalization”
Micheal Lang, “Globalization and its History”

PART I: WHEN DID GLOBALIZATION BEGIN?

Week 3 (9/16)

Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*, 3-43, 78-137

Week 4 (9/23)

Abu Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* 153-185, 251-291

PAPER #1 DUE FOR PEER REVIEW

Topic: When did globalization begin?

Notice: Construct an argument stating whether you believe that globalization begin in the 13th century and why this question is important. (5 pages)

Week 5 (9/30)

Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* 316-371

Comments from peers due.

Week 6 (10/7)

Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, Introduction.

PAPER #1 DUE FOR A GRADE

Notice: You should incorporate comments from your peers.

Week 7 (10/14) Does Globalization Imply Homogeneity?

Trouillot, “State and Globalization” and “North Atlantic Universals”

PART 2: IMPERIALISM AND THE THIRD WORLD

Week 8 (10/21)

Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold-War*,1-73.

Week 9 (10/28)

No Class

Week 10 (11/4)

Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*, 1-62.

Week 11 (11/11)

Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*, 67-137.

PAPER #2 (5 pages) DUE FOR PEER REVIEW

Topic: How should we understand imperialism from the perspective of globalization?

Notice: Go back to Abu-Lughod and note what Callinicos believes makes the modern world different with respect to imperialism and capitalism. Would you now re-evaluate your earlier position on Abu-Lughod? Why or why not?

Week 12 (11/18)

Alex Callinicos, *Imperialism and Global Political Economy*, 137-228

Comments from peers due

Part III Neo-Liberalism

Week 13 (11/25)

Dumeneil and Levy, *The Crisis of Neo-Liberalism*, 1-73.

Paper #2 due for a grade.

Week 14 (12/2)

Dumeneil and Levy, *The Crisis of Neo-Liberalism*, 101-156

Week 15 (12/9)

Dumeneil and Levy, *The Crisis of Neo-Liberalism*, 267-339

FINAL PAPER DUE FOR PEER REVIEW. Topic for Final Paper (7-10 pages): What is Neo-liberalism and why did it meet with crisis? In this paper, ask whether Callinicos' arguments about neo-liberalism would add to Dumeneil and Levy's analysis. Which explanation would you prefer and why?

Comments from peers due promptly and sent by e-mail

Week 16 (12/16)

Final paper due for grade