SOSC 2290: Understanding Globalization

Dong Zhang

Spring Semester, 2024

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Office Hours: Thursday 13:30–14:30 Office Location: Academic Building 2381
Class Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 15:00–16:20 Class Room: CYT G010
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Course Overview

We live in a deeply integrated and interdependent world. Globalization has boosted the growth of the world economy and raised living standards in many parts of the world. We are also facing great challenges and risks arising from globalization. What are the driving forces behind globalization, and to what extent does it shape the global economic and political order? This course is devoted to understanding the cross-border movement of goods, capital, production, and people from political and economic perspectives. It intends to expose students to the major debates on globalization and equip students analyze the causes and consequences of globalization.

Enrolment Requirement

No prerequisite coursework is required.

Course Objectives

- Understand the basic concepts and major theoretical debates concerning globalization;
- Recognize and critically evaluate conflicting perspectives;
- Discuss various critical global issues currently under debate.
**Understanding Globalization**

**Intended Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the course, the aim is that students will have improved the ability to:

- Use key concepts and theoretical frameworks to enhance understanding of globalization;
- Apply critical thinking and analytical writing skills to examine global affairs;
- Assess the validity of existing arguments based on empirical evidence;
- Develop a logical argument or theory that can be evaluated using evidence.

**Teaching and Learning Activities**

This course consists of lectures, classroom discussion, research, and writing.

**Assessment of Learning Outcomes**

- **Participation (25%)**: Students are required to submit ONE or TWO discussion questions regarding the weekly assigned reading via Canvas each week (usually due on Wednesday before the second lecture on a topic). To secure a good participation grade, students are encouraged to make thoughtful contributions to classroom discussion. Class attendance will not be recorded, but students are expected to participate in TEN randomly scheduled polls or quizzes throughout the course.

- **Group Presentation (20%)**: In groups of three to four, students will present their analysis and discussion of a current news article, examining it through the lens of globalization. Each group is expected to select a recent news piece and apply social science theories and concepts to explore its broader implications from a global perspective.

- **Documentary Film Review (25%)**: This assignment prompts you to: 1) Critically analyze the central themes and concepts related to globalization that are presented in the film, assessing to what extent the film effectively conveys its message about globalization; 2) Reflect on the insights and new perspectives you have gained from watching the film, and explain how they have shaped your understanding of globalization. The review should be approximately 6 to 8 pages (Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced). This assignment will be due on **Thursday, May 2, at noon**. ANY late submission will be penalized by one letter grade per day (i.e., an A becomes an A-).

- **Final Exam (30%)**: The final exam will cover all the course materials in the semester (the lectures and required readings). Further details of expectations will be given in April. Note that no make-up exam will be granted with the exception of officially documented illness (in this case, a doctor’s note stating you are ill do not suffice) or family crisis. All make-up exams consist of long essay questions and an oral session.

**Course Materials**

There are no required books for this course. All readings will be made available in electronic form through the course website.
Course Schedule and Reading List

Introduction to the Course: Requirements, Objectives, and Scope
Thursday, February 1

There is no required reading for this lecture.

Topic 1: History of Globalization
Tuesday, February 6 & Thursday, February 8 & Thursday, February 15


Recommended:

Tuesday, February 20 & Thursday, February 22

- Watching a documentary

Topic 2: Multinational Corporations and Global Supply Chains
Tuesday, February 27 & Thursday, February 29


Recommended:


**Topic 3: International Trade**  
*Tuesday, March 5 & Thursday, March 7*

  
  ○ Chapter 3

**Recommended:**

• Kimberly Clausing, Open: The Progressive Case For Free Trade, Immigration and Global Capital (Harvard University Press, 2019).
  
  ○ Chapter 4


• Chad P. Bown, “There is Little Dignity in Trump’s Trade Policy,” Foreign Affairs, (July 9) 2020.

**Topic 4: International Migration**  
*Tuesday, March 12 & Thursday, March 14*

  
  ○ Chapter 6

**Recommended:**

• Timothy J. Hatton and Jeffrey G. Williamson, Global Migration and the World Economy: Two Centuries of Policy and Performance (The MIT Press, 2005).


Topic 5: International Development

Part I: Prosperity and Poverty
Tuesday, March 19 & Thursday, March 21 & Tuesday, March 26

  - Read pages 46–87

Recommended:

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Mid-Term Break: March 28–April 5 ∗ ∗ ∗ ∗ ∗

Part II Globalization and Economic Inequality
Tuesday, April 9 & Thursday, April 11

  - Chapter 3

Recommended:
Topic 6: Globalization and Peace  
Tuesday, April 16 & Thursday, April 18


**Recommended:**

Topic 7: Globalization and Democracy  
Tuesday, April 23 & Thursday, April 25


**Recommended:**

Topic 8: Globalization and the Coronavirus Pandemic  
Tuesday, April 30 & Thursday, May 2


**Recommended:**


**In-Class Debate**
*Tuesday, May 7*

Topic: TBD

**Review Session**
*Thursday, May 9*