

Boston University
Department of Sociology
SOC5OLOGY SO447/847
Global Sociology

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, intended for approved advanced undergraduates or graduate-level students, examines different sociological perspectives on global social dynamics and processes. Most sociology, and indeed much social science, has been “state-centric” and “methodologically-nationalist”: it is premised on the assumption that social relations are contained by the boundaries of nation-states. Sociology, political science, and international relations often take the nation-state as primary unit of inquiry (even “international” relations refers to relations between *nations*). But as scholars have increasingly recognized, social relations, social forms, and processes (often mingling with economic, political, and economic processes) have always been *global* and *transnational* as well as national and inter-national, taking place across and through nation-states. This course explores the spate of theory and research within disciplinary sociology but also from interdisciplinary scholarship on these relations, forms and processes. Substantive topics include but are not restricted to how empires, global cities, and diasporas constitute alternative social forms to nation-states; the emergence of global humanitarianism; the dynamics of global capitalism, global inequality, “world society”, and “the world-system.” Theoretical and methodological perspectives include but are not restricted to “civilizational analysis”, postcolonial social theory, global “fields”, global “networks” and “actor-networks” and “global ethnography.”

Prerequisites: Graduate Students: none; Undergraduate Students: approval of instructor

CLASS FORMAT

This course is a seminar, which means that all of you are expected to contribute to class discussions. For this, you need to come prepared. I expect you to have done the readings and to have thought upon them. I also expect you to be able to discuss the readings in class (I reserve the right to call upon you to present your views on the reading or on a related issue). In return, I will guide discussions, clarify the texts or elaborate upon them, and help you along in every way possible. Some lectures will be necessary to push the course along, but my goal is that the course will serve as a forum for us to exchange ideas, debate them, and come to a mutual understanding of key issues – or at least a recognized and civilized disagreement.

READINGS

Most materials for this course will be available online at the course’s Blackboard page except for the following required texts available for purchase at Barnes and Noble or on reserve at Mugar library’s reserve desk:

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING (These pertain to both those enrolled in SO447 and SO847 except where noted with an asterisk following each item)

- Attendance & Participation (15%). All students are expected to contribute to class discussions. Please come to class prepared with thoughts on the readings, questions, ideas on how they relate to other themes or discussions in the class.

•Midterm Take Home Essay (20%). Halfway through the semester there will be one take-home essay assignment (5-7 pages double-spaced, 12 pt. font). One week before the essay is due, I will distribute a question that you must answer in essay form. More about the essay will be discussed when it is distributed in class.

•3 Short Reaction Papers (10% each = 30% total).* On the second meeting of class, each of you will be randomly assigned to 3 course sessions spread out throughout the semester. On the day of your assigned sessions, you are to provide a short reaction paper to the readings for that day and be prepared to discuss it in class. I reserve the right to call on you to present your paper to start discussion. The paper should react to the readings assigned for the chosen class session. It should *not* summarize the reading(s) but provide your critical reaction. You can criticize the content or argument of the readings or relate them to other readings or ideas in class. You have some freedom here. *But you must make an argument about the reading*. The key is to demonstrate a clear and critical understanding of the texts. Note: I will not remind you individually of these papers; the responsibility to do all of them is yours alone. Hint: get started on the reading early, because you'll have to do the readings for that class AND write a paper on those readings.

*FOR STUDENTS IN 447: The reaction paper should be 3-5 pages long (double-spaced 12 pt font).

*FOR STUDENTS IN 847: Reaction papers should be fully-formed critical essays of 5-8 pages and should discuss an additional reading besides the assigned one (the additional reading should be on the same topic and is of your choice; but you can talk to me for suggestions)

•Research Paper (35%)*

At the end of the class you will turn in a final research paper for the course. Prior to that you will also hand-in a proposal for the paper which I must approve. The paper will be on a topic of your choice but it must relate to the literature, concepts, and theories from the course. Papers that do not demonstrate an understanding of the relevant literature and issues from the course will fare poorly. The goal is to apply the work from the course to a more specific topic that interests you. Besides drawing upon course information, you should use at least 10 sources from outside the course (scholarly articles, books, databases) but the more the better. *Papers based upon original or primary data are welcomed but not necessary. A more detailed set of guidelines and some tips for how to undertake this paper will be distributed in a separate document later in class. I will also set up times to discuss your paper topics individually with each of you.* Here are the broad guidelines:

(a) Proposal. Roughly 3 pages text + bibliography. This should state the topic/question/issue you will examine in the paper and briefly discuss the sources or sorts of sources you'd use (at least 5 sources; you can add more later).

(b) Paper.* The paper should answer the question you are interested in and demonstrate an understanding of the literature. Make an argument. Use the sources to back-up your argument.

*FOR STUDENTS IN 447: Roughly 15 pages (12 point font double-spaced).

*FOR STUDENTS IN 847: Roughly 20-25 pages in length (12 point font double-spaced).

ACADEMIC CONDUCT

Students enrolled in this course must respect the professor, each other, and the guidelines of the university. Derogatory language directed at individuals or groups (i.e. racism, sexism, or homophobia) will not be tolerated. In addition, all work for the course must represent your own, original effort. Plagiarism will be taken seriously. Plagiarism is defined as the accidental or purposeful copying other people's words (either entire sentences or just phrases) without properly citing them, including published work (in

articles and books), material from the internet, and/or someone else's work (a friend/ roommate, etc.). Academic misconduct will be prosecuted as outlined in the CAS/GRS Conduct Code. If the university finds that you have plagiarized an assignment, you will receive an F for it.

For more on the academic conduct codes see the following:

•Undergraduate Students (So447):

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>

•Graduate Students (So847):

<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>

SCHEDULE Please note: this syllabus is open to amendments or modification as the course proceeds. I reserve the right to add or delete readings. If I do so, I will inform you beforehand. "BB" = Blackboard

Sept. 7

INTRODUCTION. NO READINGS.

Sept. 14

STATE-CENTRISM AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Context and Critique

•Immanuel Wallerstein. 2001. *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*. Selections on BB.

•Andreas Wimmer and N. Glick Schiller "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond" *Global Networks* 2002

• Chernilo, Daniel. 2006. "Social Theory's Methodological Nationalism." *European Journal of Social Theory* 9(1):5-22.

Sept. 21

WORLD-SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

•Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, selections on BB

•Patrick Manning, *World History: Global and Local Interactions*, selections on BB

•Chase-Dunn, C., and Hall, T. D. *Rise and Demise: Comparing World-Systems*, selections on BB

•Arrighi, Giovanni. 1994. *The Long Twentieth Century*, selections on BB

Sept. 28

RETHINKING SOCIAL SPACES AND THE SPACES OF CAPITALISM

•Brenner, Neil. 1999. "Beyond State-Centrism? Space, Territoriality, and Geographical Scale in Globalization Studies." *Theory and Society* 28:39-78.

•Harvey, David. 2001: Spaces of capital: Towards a critical geography, selections on BB

•Harvey, David. 2001. "Globalization and the Spatial 'Fix'" *Geographische revue* 2: 23-30

Oct. 5

NETWORKS, ACTOR-NETWORKS, AND COMMODITY CHAINS

Commodity Chains and Value Chains

- Gary Gereffi and Miguel Korzeniewicz. 1994. *Commodity Chains and Global Capitalism*, selections on BB
- Gary Gereffi and Joonkoo Lee. 2012. "Why the World Suddenly Cares About Global Supply Chains," *Journal of Supply Chain Management* 48: 24-32

Actor-Networks and Networks

- Jacqueline Best and William Walters. 2013. "Actor-Network Theory" and International Relationality: Lost (and Found) in Translation" *International Political Sociology* 7: 332-350
- Jason Beckfield J. 2003. "Inequality in the World Polity: The Structure of International Organization" *American Sociological Review* 68: 401-424
- Stone, Diane. 2004. "Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the "Transnationalization" of Policy", *Journal of European Public Policy* 11: 545-66.

Oct. 12

WORLD SOCIETY AND GLOBAL FIELDS

What is a "World Society"?

- Meyer, John W. 2010. "World Society, Institutional Theories, and the Actor." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36:1-20.
- Boli, J., and G. M. Thomas. 1997. "World culture in the world polity: A century of international non-governmental organization." *American Sociological Review* 62(2):171-190.

From Society to Fields

- Go, Julian. 2008. "Global Fields and Imperial Forms: Field Theory and the British and American Empires." *Sociological Theory* 26(3):201-29.
- Bigo, D. and M. R. Madsen. 2011. "Introduction to Symposium 'A Different Reading of the International': Pierre Bourdieu and International Studies." *International Political Sociology* 5(3): 219-224.
- Berling, TV 2012, "Bourdieu, International Relations and European Security" *Theory and Society*, vol 41: 451-478

Take-Home Essay Question #1 Distributed in class

Oct. 19

TAKE-HOME ESSAY #1 DUE IN CLASS

No additional readings. In-Class discussion of research paper topics, methods, and sources (including primary data sources)

Oct. 26

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

- Mark Mazower. 2012. *Governing the World: the History of an Idea*, selections on BB
- Nitsan Chorev. 2011. *The World Health Organization between North and South*, selections on BB
- Aaron Major. 2013. "Transnational State Formation and the Global Politics of Austerity" *Sociological Theory* 31: 24-48

reminder: research proposals due next week!

Nov. 2

HUMANITARIANISM

- Michael Barnett and Thomas G. Weiss. 2008. *Humanitarianism in Question*, chapters by Barnett and Weiss ("Intro") and Calhoun "The Imperative to Reduce Suffering", on BB
- Monika Krause. 2014. *The Good Project: Humanitarian Relief and the Fragmentation of Reason*, selections on BB
- Didier Fassin. 2013. *Humanitarianism: A Moral History of the Present*, selections on BB

RESEARCH PROPOSALS DUE IN-CLASS

Nov. 9

DIASPORAS AND CIVILIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

- Paul Gilroy. 1995. *The Black Atlantic*, selections on BB
- Robbie Shilliam. 2014. *The Black Pacific: Anticolonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections*, selections on BB
- David Inglis. 2013. "Civilizations or Globalization(s)?: Intellectual Rapprochements and Historical World-Visions" *European Journal of Social Theory* 13: 135-152
- Willfried Spohn. 2011. "An appraisal of Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt's global historical sociology" *Journal of Classical Sociology* 11: 281-301

Nov. 16

THE SOCIOLOGY OF COSMOPOLITANISM

- Ulrich Beck, 2000. "The cosmopolitan perspective: sociology of the second age of modernity" *British Journal of Sociology* 51(1): 79-105
- Ulrich Beck, 2010. "Cosmopolitan Europe" ch 6 In *The Cosmopolitan Vision*, pp. 163-177

•Martell, Luke. 2009. "Global Inequality, Human Rights and Power: A critique of Ulrich Beck's Cosmpolitanism" *Critical Sociology* 35

•Saito, Hiro. 2011. "An Actor-Network Theory of Cosmopolitanism." *Sociological Theory* 29(2):124-49.

Nov. 23

NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK.

Nov. 30

GLOBAL CITIES AND GLOBAL ETHNOGRAPHIES

•Saskia Sassen. 1991. *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, selections on BB

•Mike Davis. 2007. *Planet of Slums*, selections on BB

•Michael Burawoy. 2000. *Global Ethnography*, selections on BB

Dec. 7

POSTCOLONIALISM AND SOUTHERN THEORY

•Raewyn Connell. 2007. *Southern Theory*, selections on BB

•Gurminder Bhambra. 2007. *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*, selections on BB

•Magubane, Zine. 2005. "Overlapping Territories and Intertwined Histories: Historical Sociology's Global Imagination." Pp. 92-108 in *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, Sociology*, edited by Julia Adams, Elisabeth S. Clemens, and Ann S. Orloff (BB)

**Wednesday Dec. 12
FINAL PAPERS DUE EMAILED TO ME
(Sociology Department, 96 Cummington)**