



## **CLPS W3910. Unequal Geographies: Key Concepts in Conceiving the Global**

Tuesdays 4:10 – 6 pm

Instructors:

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### **Course Description:**

Humanity's most recent globalization has prompted a rethinking of the human sciences. Established fields across the humanities and social sciences from history to anthropology have "gone global," along with the cultural forms they refract. Simultaneously, concepts for conceiving culture, history, politics, and economic and social life have been under pressure from global, international, and transnational shifts in the flow of information and capital. This produces a number of what Anna Tsing calls effects of "friction" between global forces and pressures and their localized implications. Inhabitants of the planet come to perceive (or misperceive) the global as it manifests locally. As this takes place, the friction between what is understood to be universal and its particularities shoots off sparks that blind even as they reveal.

This course will introduce students to various political, social, and economic concepts that have shaped and shifted in relation to the globalizing world of the twenty-first century. Such enlightenment concepts as liberalism, the public sphere, the market, and the modern nation state will be subjected to a genealogy that also takes seriously the fact that as these concepts globalize they reform and alter. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, this course will provoke students to ask why intellectuals from scholars to policy makers to artists have addressed the simultaneous connectedness and disconnection that comes with globality.

Through such key concepts, students will engage multiple cultural, linguistic, and geographic spaces as diverse as East Asia, West Africa, and First Nations Canada. Coordinated by members of the 2012-13 INTERACT Postdoctoral Collective, the course is taught with the participation of a group of 5 lecturers

who are experts in specific regions and issues. The interdisciplinary course offers students the opportunity to engage methodologies and approaches from across the humanities and social sciences from cultural anthropology and history of ideas to literary analysis and cultural studies.

## **Course Requirements and Grading**

### *Attendance and Participation (20% of total grade)*

Attendance at classes is required. Unexplained absences after the first two begin to incur a grade reduction. In addition to actively attending and participating in class, you will be asked to write 7 short responses. These are due by email to the instructors the evening before class each week and should actively engage with one or more of the readings for that week.

### *Three Response Papers (45% of Total grade)*

Throughout the semester, you must submit three 3-5 page response papers. These responses should thoughtfully engage with reading across several units in an effort to synthesize ideas from these readings and produce further questions for investigation (questions that might, for instance, lead to a final paper topic). You may submit these papers when you choose, but you must submit at least one of these prior to week 6.

### *Final Project (20% of final grade)*

The final paper is an exercise in synthesizing ideas from across the class and applying them to an object of inquiry. Your object of inquiry could be a literary or cinematic text, a media event, an ethnographic encounter, an archival source, or another site of investigation. You are required to meet with either or both of the course instructors to discuss your project sometime throughout the semester.

### *Presentation (15% of final grade)*

Across weeks 12 and 13, students will present to the class for 5-7 minutes on their final paper. Presentations should give an abstract of the argument, referencing a summary understanding of the texts from the course that framed this argument, and the questions these texts precipitated, which the abstract will attempt to address, answer or redefine.

## **Course Outline:**

### **Unit 1: Introduction (Week 1-2; Jan 22, Jan 29)**

This unit introduces students to key issues concerning the recent emergence of the discourse of the global and all the ensuing effects. Students will be asked to discuss their own Columbia experience and personal lives in relation to class readings and contemporary debates about globalization. Readings will include selections from the following:

- Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (1996). (Required).
- Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (2005). (Required).
- James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (2006). (Required).

## **Unit 2: Modernity, Enlightenment, and Orientalism (Week 3-4; Feb 5 and 12)**

This unit will look at the emergence of the concept of the global in Hegel's notion of the "world historical." It then turns to examine the limits and pitfalls of the total enlightenment European imagining of the world, through a reading of Said's seminal *Orientalism*. Finally, through Partha Chatterjee's recent work, we will examine recent questions of the transnational and of nation in the methodology of historical writing, as well as the tension between democratic recognition and the idea of modernity. Some reference will be made to the vestiges of Hegel's ideas in those of Niklas Luhmann.

- Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* (1821-31) (Required).
- Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1975) (Required)
- Partha Chatterjee, "Beyond the Nation? Or Within?" (Required).
- Niklas Luhmann, *Observations on Modernity* (Recommended).

## **Unit 3: Art and the Public Sphere (Week 5; Feb 19)**

This class will engage Habermas' idea that the production of arts and literature were crucial in creating a liberal bourgeois public sphere. We will draw on a variety of discussions of the artists' role in the production of this space, particularly in light of subsequent critiques of Habermas's argument (including feminist and Marxist engagements) through a consideration of art productions.

- Jürgen Habermas, excerpts from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. (MIT:1989)
- Deutsche, "The Art of Non-Indifference"
- Becker, "Herbert Marcuse and the Subversive Potential of Art"
- George, excerpts from *Picturing Islam: Art and Ethics in a Muslim Lifeworld*.
- Kolbowski, "Proximity to Power, American Style"  
(<http://www.silviakolbowski.com/projectDetail.cfm?id=16>);
- Kolbowski, "Dear Sylvia... July 2009" (<http://www.silviakolbowski.com/projectDetail.cfm?id=20>)

## **Unit 4: Liberalism, "the market," and Being Otherwise (Week 6-7; Feb 26; Mar 5)**

In this unit, we will extend our discussion of the nation state in a globalizing world. The broad topic will be issues of nation, internal, colonization, and the experience of indigenous peoples in settler colonial spaces such as Australia, Canada, and the United States. We will take nation states as now framed by transnational processes of "late liberalism," loosely defined as a period in which modes of collective belonging and individual identity are refracted against the market rationality. The first week introduces this logic in a seminar fashion. The second week looks at a specific genealogy of liberalism, its splitting of land and labor, and its effects in constructing settler colonial space, identity, and the category of the minority up to the present.

Guest Lecturer for Week 9: Bruno Cornellier

- Povinelli, Elizabeth. "Introduction," "The Part that has no Part," and "Road Kill," from *Economies of Abandonment* (April 2) (required).
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Land, Labor, and Difference: Elementary Structures of Race." *The American Historical Review* 106.3 (2001): 866-905. (April 9) (required).
- Wilderson III, Frank. "Introduction: Unspeakable Ethics." *Red, White & Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonism*. Durham and London: Duke UP, 2010. 1-35. Print. (April 9) (required).
- Wolfe, Patrick. "Race and Racialisation: Some Thoughts." *Postcolonial Studies* 5.1 (2002): 51-62. Print. (April 9) (recommended).

### **Unit 5: Ideas of Development (Week 8; Mar 12)**

Guest lecturer: Malgorzata Mazurek

The lecture will explore the historical origins of the idea of development. Between the early 1940s and the 1960s the so-called "international depressed areas" divided gradually into socialist Second World and post-colonial Third World. Along these lines we will follow global trajectories of the concept and its historical reconfigurations in the context of decolonization, modernization and post-WWII forms of world governance.

- Cooper, Frederick. "Modernized Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept", in: *International Development and the Social Sciences. Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*, edited by Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997, pp. 64-92.
- Rosenstein-Rodan, Paul, "Problems of Industrialization of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe," *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 53, no. 210/211 (June-Sept. 1943), pp. 202-11 and "The International Development of Economically Backward Areas," *International Affairs*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (April 1944), pp. 157-165.
- Mazower, Mark. "Development as World-Making, 1949-1973." from *Governing the World. The History of an Idea*, The Penguin Press, New York 2012, pp. 273-304
- James Ferguson, "The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho," Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994 chaps. 1–2, 9, epilogue (recommended)

**No Class Mar 20. Spring Recess.**

### **Unit 6: The Nation and its Limits (Week 9; Mar 26)**

Guest Lecturer: Andrew Johnson.

In this unit, we will take as our starting point that transnational processes have shaped and continue to shape personal biographies, specific nation-building projects and international economic and political relations between countries of Southeast Asia and the rest of the world. This unit draws on in-depth studies from history, anthropology and sociology, and takes an intersectional approach (race, class and gender), to introduce students to how transnational processes of globalization – namely economic

integration, cross-border migrations, and technological innovations – are shifting what it means to be “global” in Southeast Asia.

- Anderson, Benedict. 1991. *Imagined Communities, Revised Edition*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Winichakul, Thongchai. 1994. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of the Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Parrenas, Rhacel Salazar. 2001. *Servants of Globalization: Women, Migration and Domestic Work*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. (recommended).
- Ong, Aihwa. 1999. *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. Duke University Press. (recommended).

### **Unit 7: Intimacy, Kinship and Transnational Migration (Week 10-11; April 2 and 9)**

What is intimacy? What is kinship? How does the way people perceive intimacy, family and kinship undergo a change in the globalized era when goods, capital and people easily flow cross national boundaries? This unit explores the question through reading ethnographies about love, marriage and family in non-western contexts, seeking to challenge the Eurocentric configuration of these ideas.

Selected readings from

- David Parkin and Linda Stone, *Kinship and Family* and *Kinship and Gender*
- Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Empire of Love*
- Sealing Cheng, *on the Move for Love*
- Caren Freeman, *Making and Faking Kinship*
- Julie Chu, *Cosmologies of Credit*
- Film: Love Market

### **Unit 8: Student Presentations and Peer Critique on Finals (Week 12-13; April 16-23)**

During this two week period, students will present 5-7 minutes on their final projects.

### **Unit 9: Screening the Global (Week 14; April 30).**

The final week of class will be devoted to discussing the themes of the course, using the film *Babel* as a site to discuss global (dis)connection. A screening outside class time will be arranged for the film *Babel*.

- *Babel* (2006, Alejandro González Iñárritu)

Final Exam Period: May 10<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>.

Final Project Due Date: May 12th.