

# GLOBALIZATION AND SOCIETY

## Course Description

Globalization is an often-discussed but seldom-defined phenomenon. At a broad level, globalization is an increase in the impact on human activities of forces that span national boundaries. These activities can be economic, social, cultural, political, technological, or even biological, as in the case of disease. Additionally, all of these realms can interact.

Globalization has taking place for centuries and, with time, has accelerated, from the colonization of the inhabited parts of the world to the appearance of nations, from conquests to independent countries, from sailboats and caravans to steamboats, truck fleet and cargo planes, from trade in a few commodities to global production and distribution networks and to the present explosion of international flows services, capital, and information.

The effects of globalization are widely debated. Globalization attracts increasing interest and importance in contemporary world affairs. It also inspires passionate supporters and critics. This class is aiming to explore different facets of the complex, evolving phenomenon of globalization. The course introduces the main debates about the global economy and their implications for real life from many different aspects: culture, economics, gender differences, etc. We will illustrate what globalization has seemed to accomplish and what problems are being faced.

First, we will discuss the various definitions for the concept of globalization. Then, we will try to develop a historical point of view to understand the roots of globalization. After this general discussion on the subject, we will assess the importance of globalization via different disciplines and perspectives. Globalization has five primary economic dimensions: trade, finance, aid, migration, and ideas. Do increases in these dimensions of globalization, if managed in a way that supports development in all countries, can help to alleviate global poverty?

The impact of globalization on culture and the impact of culture on globalization merit discussion. Globalization has economic roots and political consequences, but it also has brought into focus the power of culture in this global environment - the power to bind and to divide in a time when the tensions between integration and separation tug at every issue that is relevant to international relations.

The next topic that we will discuss is the interaction of sociology and globalization. Sociology has been traditionally defined as the study of society and as the boundaries of society have expanded from local community, through states to global society, sociology has become the study of the global society. This is a good illustration of how ideas, knowledge and (social) sciences expand with the changes and expansion of realities.

What is the role of globalization understanding of gender relations in the 21st century? We will spend a week to investigate this question. Gender relations refer to the sum of social norms, conventions and practices which regulate the multifaceted relationships between men and women in a given society at a given time. One pervasive trait of gender relations across different cultures consists of the power asymmetries between men and women.

The next topic is about the environment and globalization. Economic globalization impacts the environment and sustainable development in a wide variety of ways and through a multitude of channels. In recent years, rapidly rising global concentrations of atmospheric pollutants have threatened to cause severe damage to the ozone layer as well as dramatic climatic changes such as global warming. To reduce the severity of these environmental threats, global emissions must be sharply curtailed.

The aim of the next topic is to explore and demonstrate the role of the media in the process of globalization by introducing the relevant literature, by examining various aspects of globalization and by identifying their relevance in understanding the media.

Lastly, we will talk the challenges to globalization. Is Globalization a vital step toward both a more stable world and better lives for the people in it? There is no single answer for this question. All the topics that mentioned above are the parts of this question.

## **Course Objectives**

A main objective of this class is to familiarize students with ideas, concepts, and ways of analyzing globalization. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Recognize and understand the basic concepts of globalization and its interaction with the world we live in.

- Assess the trajectory globalization has taken, and begin to consider new directions for globalization and society.
- Enter the global dialogue that is a product of globalization.
- Improve their written and spoken communication skills.

## **Course Requirements**

The class is open to all students from any major. Students in economics, history, sociology, planning, communication and journalism, and international relations are especially welcomed. There is NO prerequisite for the class.

**Participation:** The Class will meet **2 hours each week in a seminar format.** Active, effective contribution to seminar discussion is the most important expectation of participation in the course.

Each session will cover one theme as per the syllabus of the course. Students will be encouraged to participate actively in the discussion. Students are expected to read readings. There will be no control of the readings, but it is assumed that the readings included in the syllabus will help considerably the understanding of the subject, thus the elaboration of the papers and the participation in the discussion in class.

**Grading:** There is one requirement to pass this class: writing of a paper on a topic related to the area of study in the course. The paper must be analytical, and deal with a concrete topic. The topic of the paper has to be decided in agreement with the instructor during the first month of the class. Yet the students are completely free to choose their own topic.

*Length of the paper* is flexible: not a letter, not a book, not a message. Quality matters, not quantity. Quality is measured by the originality of the thinking, and the analytical capacity demonstrated in the paper. To write a good paper, you will need to develop a clear argument or point of view in relation to the materials you are using as background information. This kind of paper makes sense if you want to explore one of the topics covered in the course in greater depth.

The students may also be inspired by any sentence or paragraph appears in the books, press, etc. Students, in this case, write their paper based on the arguments that are interested in. I present the following examples that can be used in the writing process.

1. Consider the following quotations:

*A world integrated through the market should be highly beneficial to the vast majority of the world's inhabitants.*

Martin Wolf (2004)

*While promoters of globalization proclaim that this model is the rising tide that will lift all boats, citizen movements find that it is instead lifting only yachts.*

International Forum on Globalization

2. Looking back on the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, John Maynard Keynes, one of the most influential economists of all time, described the vanishing of the British economic empire as follows:

*The inhabitant of London could order by telephone, sipping his morning tea in the bed, the various products of the whole earth, in such quantity as he might see fit, and reasonably expect their early delivery upon his doorstep; he could at the same moment and by the same means adventure his wealth in the natural resources and new enterprises of any quarter of the world, and share, without exertion or even trouble, in their prospective fruits and advantages; or he could decide to couple the security of his fortunes with the good faith of the townspeople of any substantial municipality in any continent that fancy or information might recommend...But. Most important of all, he regarded this state of affairs as normal, certain, and permanent, except in the direction of further improvement, and any direction of further improvement, and any deviation from it as aberrant, scandalous, and avoidable.*

Keynes (1920, pp.11-12)

3. *For the first time in human history, the world is close to creating a single, unified global system.*

UNITED NATIONS, *Human Development Report, 1992*

4. *We are at the service of the world's peoples and we must listen to them. They are telling us that our past achievements are not enough. They are telling us we must do more, and do it better.*

Kofi Annan,  
Secretary General of the United Nations and 2001 Nobel laureate for Peace

5. *These constructs that we're living in now—economic globalization based on the growth imperative— is killing the planet. It's dividing the Earth into rich and poor.*

Maude Barlow, "Canada AM," CTV News, March 26, 2001

## Course Outline and Readings

### Week 1: Introduction and Definition of Globalization

At the most generic level, globalization is simply the shrinking of geographic space of politically defined borders that accelerates and magnifies flows of money, goods, people and culture around the world.

**Readings:** What is Globalization?  
<http://globalization.about.com/od/whatisit/index.htm>

**Friedman, Thomas L.** *The World is Flat*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005 (especially Introduction).

**Stiglitz, Joseph E.** *Making Globalization Work*. WW Norton: 2006

### Week 2: Stages of the Modern Era of Globalization: A Historical View

Globalization has deep historical roots. Although in popular accounts globalization is a recent phenomenon, historians recognize that, in some important respects, it is not new. Economic historians date the modern era of globalization to approximately 1870. The period from 1870 to 1914 is often considered to be the birth of the modern world economy. The first modern stage of globalization was followed by two additional stages, one from the late 1940s to the mid-1970s and another from the mid-1970s to the present.

**Readings:** **Friedman, Thomas L.** *The World is Flat*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

**Fukuyama, Francis.** *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

### **Week 3: *Economic Dimensions of Globalization***

Globalization has changed the natures and qualities of the different economic dimensions. We will try to understand some of the dimensions as follows. **Trade** is the exchange of goods and services among countries. **Finance** involves the exchange of assets or financial instruments among countries. **Aid** involves the transfer of loans and grants among countries, as well as technical assistance for capacity building. **Migration** takes place when persons move between countries either temporarily or permanently, to seek education and employment or to escape adverse political environments. **Ideas** are the broadest globalization phenomenon. They involve the generation and cross-border transmission of intellectual constructs in areas such as technology, management, or governance.

**Readings:** Development and Globalization: Facts and Figures  
[http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdscsir20041\\_en.pdf](http://www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdscsir20041_en.pdf)

**Bhagwati, Jagdish.** *In Defense of Globalization*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

### **Week 4: *Effects of Globalization on Culture: Identity, Culture, and Conflict***

World culture refers to the cultural complex of foundational assumptions, forms of knowledge, and prescriptions for action that underlie globalized flows, organizations, and institutions. It encompasses webs of significance that span the globe, conceptions of world society and world order, and models and methods of organizing social life that are assumed to have worldwide significance or applicability.

Cultural implication is that globalization involves not the simple enforced distribution of a particular western (say, liberal, secular, possessive-individualist, capitalist-consumerist) lifestyle, but a more complicated dissemination of the entire range of institutional features of cultural modernity.

**Readings:** Globalization and Culture:  
[http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy\\_report/v25n3/globalization.pdf](http://www.cato.org/pubs/policy_report/v25n3/globalization.pdf)

Globalization and Cultural Identity  
<http://www.polity.co.uk/global/pdf/GTReader2eTomlinson.pdf>

Globalization and World Culture  
<http://www.sociology.emory.edu/jboli/isb408026.pdf>

## **Week 5: *Sociology of Globalization***

Sociology has long been concerned with comparisons across societies and relations among them. While nations remain key units of social analysis, our understanding of societies as an analytical unit defined by the geographical boundaries of nation states must be complemented by analysis of what is going on at the global level. Sociology is needed to have historically-oriented knowledge that integrates insights from economics, history, political science, and anthropology so that we can better able to analyze a large-scale social change over long periods of time.

**Readings:** Glocalization as Globalization: Evolution of a Sociological Concept  
<http://www.bangladeshsociology.org/Habib%20%20journal%20Paper%20GlobalizationHHK,%20PDF.pdf>

**Moore, W.E.** (1966) "Global Sociology: The World as a Singular System"  
*American Journal of Sociology*, 71 (5).

## **Week 6: *Gender and Globalization***

The purpose of this section is to give such an overview of our current knowledge of the complex relationship between gender inequalities, on the one hand, and the economic liberalization policies that underpin globalization processes, on the other. More specifically, we will examine:

- The gender-differentiated effects of globalization;
- The effects of gender inequalities on the outcomes of globalization processes;
- Initiatives by a variety of actors, including governments, civil society organizations and international institutions that aim to promote gender equality, including in the sphere of policies and outcomes of globalization.

**Readings:** Gender and Globalization:  
[http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/download/publicat/4\\_3\\_204\\_wcsdg-wp-19.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/integration/download/publicat/4_3_204_wcsdg-wp-19.pdf)

Ehrenreich, B and A.R. Hochschild, eds. 2003. *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. New York: Metropolitan Books.

Naples, N. and M. Desai, eds. 2002. *Women's Activism and Globalization: Linking Local Struggles and Transnational Politics*. London: Routledge

## **Week 7: Globalization and Environment**

This session stresses that globalization impacts the environment and sustainable development in a wide variety of ways and through a multitude of channels.

The primary goals of the session are:

- to identify the key links between globalization and environment
- to identify the major issues addressed in multilateral economic agreements in trade and finance that affect environmental sustainability
- to review priority policy issues affecting the environment in multilateral economic agreements and environment, thus identifying incentives implicit in trade and investment policy measures that affect environmental sustainability

**Readings:**     ["A New Agenda for Global Warming,"](#) *The Economists' Voice*, Vol. 3, No. 7, Article 3.

World Bank, *World Development Report, 1992: Development and the Environment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), box 9.5. For the full report plus analysis, see United Nations, *The Global Partnership for Environment and Development: A Guide to Agenda 21* (New York: United Nations, 1992), and *World Resources, 1994–1995*, chap.13.

Globalization and Environmental Protection: a Global Governance Perspective  
<http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/globus/activities/conference/papers/ivanova.pdf>

## **Week 8: The Media and Globalization**

This section is about globalization focusing on the role of media. Globalization has brought about changes in the way we live. There is practically no globalization without media and communications. Yet this relationship is so obvious it is often overlooked.

Media has been central to the different forms of globalization. Indeed, the consolidation of mainstream media ownership into the hands of fewer companies concomitant with the rise of a global market place and rapid technological innovation has resulted in the widespread discussion of communications and globalization. We will discuss that globalization cannot be understood without studying the role of the media.

**Readings:** **Rantanen, Terhi.** *The Media and Globalization.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005

**Volkmer, Ingrid.** *News in the Global Sphere: A Study of CNN and Its Impact on Global Communication.* Luton: University of Luton Press, 1999. 91-217.

**Central Intelligence Agency (2004).** Internet Users. *World Factbook.*  
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/rankorder/2153rank.html>

### **Week 9: Challenges of Globalization: IS A BETTER WORLD POSSIBLE?**

We live in an increasingly interdependent world. For developing countries, dependence on rich nations is and has always been a stark fact of economic life. It is the principal reason for their heightened interest in promoting greater individual and collective self-reliance.

At the same time, the developed world, which once prided itself on its apparent economic self-sufficiency, has come to realize that in an age of dramatically increased capital flows, increasingly scarce natural and mineral resources, global environmental threats, accelerated international illegal migration, and burgeoning world trade, it too is becoming ever more economically dependent on the developing world.

**Readings:** Ancelovici, M. 2002. Organizing against globalization: The case of ATTAC in France. *Politics & Society* 30 (3):427-463.  
see also: <http://attac.org/indexen/index.html>

International Forum on Globalization, "Alternatives to Economic Globalization" 2002.  
available at [http://www.ifg.org/alt\\_eng.pdf](http://www.ifg.org/alt_eng.pdf)

Robert D. Kaplan, "The coming anarchy: How scarcity, overpopulation, tribalism, and disease are rapidly destroying the social fabric of our planet," *Atlantic*, February 1994, pp. 44-76. (For a particularly provocative analysis of the threat of global anarchy rather than global harmony)

Globalization, Diets, and Non-communicable Diseases.  
<http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/9241590416.pdf>

### **Week 10: Concluding Remarks**

*Submission of the seminar paper.*