

**GEOGRAPHY 165: GLOBALIZATION**  
University of Connecticut

Instructor: Dr. Alexander C. Vias.

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**Introduction**

One of the most prominent processes driving change in society today is globalization. In recent years, as communications and transportation technologies have increased the degree of spatial interaction between peoples of the world, few parts of the world remain isolated and removed from events in distant places. The impacts of globalization are considerable and varied. At one extreme we hear about the increasing significance of international trade and large international corporations in the global economy, decimating small, locally-owned indigenous industries around the world. The same fears derive from the spread of a global culture (“cultural imperialism”) dominated by American values and ideas.

The primary objective of the course is to introduce students to globalization as a complex process that can be examined from any number of perspectives. However, central to the course will be the geographical nature of the process—the shrinking of the space-time continuum through technological innovation (e.g., the internet) and international migration—that has accelerated the degree of spatial interaction taking place around the globe today. An additional objective is to help students appreciate how globalization works at multiple spatial scales, and the interaction of the local with the global, and vice versa. From this initial geographic core of ideas, the final objective of the course is to demonstrate to students the broad nature of globalization and its impacts, and how the process touches virtually all aspects of society and the environment. Specifically, topical areas to be discussed will include the economy (transnational corporations, international trade and finance, production networks, etc.), politics (the UN, regional political and trade bloc formation, trade agreements, foreign aid, rise of other non-governmental organizations, etc.), culture (media and entertainment growth, language, loss of local indigenous cultures, gender issues, etc.), and the environment (resource destruction, environmental sustainability, climate change, etc.). These constitute only a brief array of the wide range of topics that are to be examined throughout the course. In the end, the objective of this course is to develop students who are aware of the global forces affecting their own lives, and the lives of other peoples in various parts of the world.

This course meets the broad goals of the new general education curriculum. Specifically, this course tries to: give students intellectual breadth and versatility, critical judgment, moral sensitivity, awareness of their era and society, consciousness of the diversity of human culture and experience, and a working understanding of the processes by which one can continue to acquire and use knowledge.

This course also fulfills the requirements for Group Two – Social Sciences and Group Four – Diversity and Multiculturalism (International Perspective).

## **Structure of the Course**

The course will meet two times a week. The first class and much of the second will consist of lecture material focusing on the theory and impacts of globalization, along with the presentation of numerous case studies. In general, lectures will be Powerpoint-based to take advantage of the wide number of tools such as photos and movies clips that can be incorporated into each Powerpoint presentation. Students must download and print out the class notes which are in Adobe pdf format on WebCT. There are several blank spaces in each slide that students can fill out when they attend class lectures.

The latter part of the second class each week will be left open to some extent based on the topic of the week. For example, in a typical week, a journal article, a book chapter, or even a recent newspaper story may be assigned as a reading for the class, and an open-ended question(s) from the instructor about the material will be posted for a threaded on-line discussion through WebCT, a discussion in which all students are required to participate. (Note: In some weeks, the discussion may not even rely on a particular reading, but focus on contemporary events). Alternatively, this part of the class may also involve a video with brief in-class reaction write-ups from students, especially on how the material pertains to class lectures. Other scenarios might involve bringing in guest lecturers from other departments with an in-depth knowledge of the topic, or engaging students in class discussions of the issues at hand (a large section would be broken down to small groups).

Students will also take three primarily multiple choice exams (this includes the final), with questions based on the lectures and readings. Tests will also contain several short essay questions that will permit students to expand on their own ideas and opinions on topics related to globalization. Students will also participate in in-class writing activities, on-line discussions, and two short take-home assignments.

### **Course materials to be purchased (Required):**

Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. (Anchor Books: New York, 2000) Please get most recent and updated version

### **Readings**

Reading assignments are of two types: (1) required readings in the book by Tom Friedman; and (2) required readings on the web through Webct-Vista.

### **Attendance**

Attendance is the responsibility of each student, and no formal record will be maintained. However, regular attendance of lectures is crucial to do well on the examinations, and to complete important in-class activities at the end of each week. Also note that a large part of the lecture material is not based on the textbook, so attendance is important. The instructor's notes are not available for students who miss class lectures.

### **Grading Policies**

Grades are based on short writing assignments, in-class activities, participation in on-line discussions, 2 midterms and final. Grades (0-100) are assigned to all exercises and examinations, which are weighted and averaged to determine the student's final letter grade using a standard scale (94-100 A; 90-93 A-; 87-89 B+; 84-86 B; 80-83; 77-79 C+; 74-76 C; 70-73 C-; 67-69 D+; 64-66 D; 60-63 D-; less than 60 - F). Note that numeric grades are rounded to nearest whole number).

The weights assigned to the projects and examinations are:

Midterms x 2	40%
Final	25%
Writing Assignments	15%
In-Class Activities/On-line discussions	20%

Late exercises, papers, or assignments will be marked down one grade for every day they are late. However, once a graded assignment has been returned, I will not accept any late assignments. Note that all assignments completed outside of class must be handed in during class periods, not dropped off in my mailbox, pushed under my office door, or emailed to me. Check WebCT regularly to see you're grades are listed and correct. Any problems associated with grades received in an exercise, paper, in-class or online activity, discussion or exam must be brought to the attention of the professor within one week of the exercise/test being returned. After one week, no changes in the grade will be made for any reason. All examinations are multiple choice and short answer type tests. The specific content for each test will be announced in class before the exam. As a general rule, missing an examination will result in a zero/F grade.

**Academic dishonesty of any type will not be tolerated in this class. Students should refer to the Student Code (see Part IV on Academic Integrity - <http://www.dosa.uconn.edu>) for specific guidelines. Students must also read the document handed out in class on academic integrity. Finally, WebCT has an online quiz on plagiarism that students must take.**

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the **Center for Students with Disabilities** (486-2020) as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

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## **Part I: Introduction to Globalization, Theory and History**

Week 1 (1/22 and 1/24)

Introduction to Globalization: A Geographic Perspective  
Start Friedman Part 1: Seeing the System  
Complete online plagiarism quiz by end of Week 2

Week 2 (1/29 and 1/31)

Theories and Measures of Globalization  
Required Readings: "Five Mega-trends Changing the World";  
"Geography: Making a Difference in a Globalizing World"  
Start Online Discussion I based on above articles  
Video – "Life: The Story So Far"

Week 3 (2/5 and 2/7)

History of Globalization: How We Got Here  
Optional Readings: "Globalization Then and Now"  
"Globalization Lessons from History"  
Video – "Bridging World History: Early Global Commodities"  
Post comments for Online Discussion I by Thursday of Week 3

Week 4 (2/12 and 2/14)

History of Globalization (cont.)  
Finish and Discuss Friedman Part 1: Seeing the System  
Review for Midterm  
**Midterm 1 on 2/14**

## **Part II: Introduction to Globalization, Theory and History**

Week 5 (2/19 and 2/21)

Economic Globalization I: Evolution and Change in the Global Economy

Economic Globalization II: Transnational Corporations and Agriculture

Required Readings: “Sense and Nonsense in Globalization”

Start Friedman Part 2: Plugging Into the System

Videos – “Globalization in Practice” “Globalization: Winners and Losers”

Week 6 (3/4 and 3/6)

Economic Globalization III: Trade, Trade Blocs and the Role of Nations

Required Readings: “India’s New Face of Outsourcing”

“How China is Eating Mexico’s Lunch”

Start Online Discussion based on above articles

Assignment on Globalization and Trade discussed.

Videos – “Global Banquet” , “Sweating for a T-shirt” or “Globalization is Good”

**Week 7 Spring Break (3/11 and 3/13)**

Week 8 (3/18 and 3/20)

Political Globalization: Nation-States and International Governance

Required Readings: “The Five Wars of Globalization”

Post comments for Online Discussion II

Assignment on Globalization and Trade due by Thursday of Week 8

Video – “Global Neighborhood: What Can Happen”

Week 9 (3/25 and 3/27)

Political Globalization: Nation-States and International Governance (cont.)

Finish reading and discuss Friedman Part 2: Plugging Into the System

Review for the Midterm

**Midterm II on 3/27**

## **Part III: Cultural Globalization, the Environment, and Inequality**

Week 10 (4/1 and 4/3)

Cultural Globalization I: Change from the Top Down

Required Readings: “Globalization and Americanization” (2 parts)

Start Friedman Part 3: Backlash Against the System & Part 4: America and the System

Video – “Global Pop Culture” and “Reflections on Globalization”

Week 11 (4/8 and 4/10)

Cultural Globalization II: Change From the Bottom Up

Required Readings: “Modern Mix”

“All Cultures Are Not Equal”

Start Online Discussion III based on above articles

Video – “Ancient Futures: The Ladakh”

Week 12 (4/15 and 4/17) NO CLASS – on Thursday, 4/17  
Globalization, Sustainability and the Environment  
Required Readings: “China, Globalization and the Environment”  
Post comments for Online Discussion III by Thursday of Week 12  
Assignment on Globalization and the Environment discussed.

Week 13 (4/22 and 4/24)  
Globalization, Sustainability and the Environment (cont.)  
Video – “Rising Waters”  
Assignment on Globalization and the environment due by Thursday of Week 13

Week 14 (4/29 and 5/1)  
Inequality, Development and Globalization  
Readings: “Empty Pockets, Angry Minds”  
Video – “Cappuccino Trail”  
Finish and Discuss Friedman Part 3: Backlash Against the System &  
Part 4: America and the System  
Review for the Final

**-----Final Exam -----**

**Tentative Date/Time is Saturday, May 10, 10:30-12:30**

**All students are required to take the final exam on/at the assigned date/time**

**The time and day suck, but we have no choice**