GLOBALIZATION AT A CROSSROADS:
CRISIS, CONFLICT, AND ‘COMMON SENSE’ IN A TIME OF REVOLT

Instructor: Meleiza Figueroa
Email: melfig@berkeley.edu
Office Hours: Weds 12-2pm, 583 McCone

Introduction: Crisis, Revolt, and Rupture

In a globalized world, local problems have planetary consequences. The strikes, riots, occupations, and radical movements that erupted around the world in the last few years can be read as a ‘map’ of fault lines in our global political-economic system – where mounting pressure from these instabilities can produce a rupture affecting the whole. Understanding how globalization works is now more important than ever, as the Eurozone crisis reaches this critical point. Greece’s referendum of July 5th, which delivered a clear “No” vote to the EU-mandated terms of the nation’s bailout agreement, highlights a fundamental political conflict at the heart of ‘free-market’ globalization: Can the dictates of international finance override national democracy? Whereas Greece’s former ruling parties conceded as much, the ‘far-left’ Syriza party owes its very existence to the possibility, and popular demand, for a different answer to this question. Like Spain’s Podemos, Syriza’s rise to power is a localized expression of the global wave of revolts that has swept the world since 2011. From the Arab Spring and Occupy to Greece, Gezi Park and beyond, revolt has become a defining feature of our current age: a globalized response to the global specter of economic, political, and ecological crisis that has also stalked the world since the great financial crash of 2008.
Given this state of affairs, what do we make of ‘globalization’ today as a political, social, and economic paradigm for ordering our world? Are we talking about the same ‘globalization’ as that which existed in 2007, before the financial crash? How was the suicide of a fruit seller in Tunisia able to spark a worldwide firestorm of protest? Are these protests a series of ‘isolated incidents’ – or do the twin themes of global crisis and revolt signal a kind of systemic breakdown, a ‘tipping point’ into an unknown and unpredictable future?

This course will provide a world-historical overview of ‘globalization as we know it’ – the economic objectives, power relations, and socio-spatial arrangements that structure our current global political-economic system – and poses it in the context of ‘globalization as we are experiencing it now,’ in terms of three Big Questions that drive the course:

1) Is ‘globalization’ as we know it undergoing a crisis – as an idea/paradigm for organizing the world, and as a lived reality?
2) How did we end up here? What are the major factors – historical, social, cultural, economic, and spatial – that led to this current ‘conjuncture’ of crisis and revolt?
3) What are the contours of the various crises and challenges facing globalized societies today? How have people responded so far, and what do their reactions tell us about their experiences of globalization? Is it possible to develop a different kind of ‘common sense’ for how we see the situation and respond to its challenges?

---

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING**

Attendance & participation in lecture.................................................................10%
Three (3) reading responses (due Thurs of weeks 2-5).................................10%
Midterm Quiz (July 28th)..................................................................................15%
Research Paper – Country Case Study............................................................30%
  - Paper Topic: due July 16th (end of wk 2)
  - Source Bibliography: due July 23rd (end of wk 3)
  - Final Paper: due August 13th (last day of class)
Group Presentations – Research Papers (Wk 6)..............................................10%
Final Exam (August 13th).................................................................................25%

**Class Groups/Teams**
- On the second day of class, you will be grouped into teams of approx. 6-8 students each (depending on final enrollment). You'll be engaged in class work and discussions with your group throughout the course; in this way, you can and should support your teammates in their work, and they will support you in return.
- At the start of Week 2, each team will be assigned a country for your research papers (see below). Each team member will then pick a topic or sector within that country to write about. (Some examples: ‘maquila’ manufacturing in Mexico; ‘energy/tar sands industry’ in Canada; ‘higher education’ in Chile, etc.)
- In Week 6, your team will give a joint presentation of all your papers, in which each team member presents a short 3-5 minute summary of their paper.
- **Don’t hesitate to count on your fellow team members as study buddies!** The reading load can be heavy on some days, so in this case it's OK for teammates to help each other and share the work. Explaining what you are learning to someone else is one of the best ways to really get the material in your head.
Reading Responses
- At the end of Thursday class weeks 2-5, please provide – in hard copy – a one(1)-
  page response to a selection of that week’s readings. (NOTE: I will drop the lowest
  reading response grade, so if you are overwhelmed and need to skip a week, it’s OK.)
- Responses should include: 1) a ONE- or TWO- sentence summary of the reading’s
  main point; 2) The reading’s relationship to themes we have discussed in class;
  and 3) your own thoughts and/or opinions on the reading’s content.
- You don’t have to comment on all readings; but please try to cover at least one or
  more reading for each day. Discussing them in relation to one another is a plus!
- For at least the first couple of weeks, your responses will be handed back with
  comments. This feedback is intended to help build your writing and analytic skills
  throughout the course. Notable improvements will factor in to your final grade.

- For this paper, you and your group will explore how processes of change on a ‘macro’
  or global scale are experienced in the everyday lives of people in their particular
  contexts. Each group will be assigned a country, and each member will choose an area
  of focus within that country (for example - an economic sector, the health or education
  system, a city, a significant event, etc.). What are the recent changes or developments
  that have affected this sector? What kinds of tensions or conflicts do these changes
  generate, and why? How do people experience them, and how do they respond?
- Papers must be between 8-10 pages in length, with a minimum of TWO academic
  sources, and no less than FOUR sources overall. (Other source types, such as
  newspapers, blogs, etc., are also acceptable in the paper – but at least two must
  come from peer-reviewed academic journals or academic-press books.)
- Research topics are due at the end of Week 2. A bibliography of your sources, along
  with a very brief note on why you find them useful, is due at the end of Week 3.
- USE THE READING LIST! The “Secondary Readings” on the reading list are intended
  to help you in your analysis for this paper. (See below.)

Midterm Quiz and Final Exam
- If you’ve begun to panic by this point, please don’t! ☺ The exams – though they are a
  major part of your grade – are simply to assess how clearly you’ve grasped key
  concepts and terms used in the course.
- The Midterm Quiz will mainly involve identification of terms from the Key
  Terms /Concepts list (handout in first class session & posted on bCourses). Keep this
  list with you throughout the course and fill in definitions as you go along.
- The Final Exam will be very similar, except you will also be asked to write a couple
  of short essay responses in addition to identifying key terms.

CLASS POLICIES

Office Hours (Wednesdays 12-2pm, 583 McCon Hall)
- Although you may drop in at any time during my office hours, it may be better use of
  our time if you let me know in advance. Just send me an email with the time you
  plan on coming and what you would like to discuss. If you cannot make my office
  hours, send me an email and we can set up an appointment.
- I am open to discussing anything from readings, lectures, and paper writing to
general questions about graduate school, research, or other areas of interest.
- I am also very accessible by email, but please use email primarily for
housekeeping/logistical questions.
- Questions about course content and grading should be handled in office hours.
- Hard and fast rule: if you have a question, and it’ll take me more than 3-5 sentences
to explain the answer, come into office hours or make an appointment.

Attendance
- Due to the short timeframe of the Summer Sessions, this class will go at a very fast
pace, covering a LOT of material on a different topic each day. You will be expected
to show up to class every day, having already done the readings, and prepared to
comment or ask questions in lecture.
- We will have a signup sheet for each class. If you come in late and the signup sheet
has already circulated, it will be counted as an absence.

Participation
- Your participation during discussion section is central to learning and
understanding the course material.
- “Participation” does not mean simply speaking out a lot. Content, quality, and depth
of your participation are more important than how many times a week you speak.
- Please come to class prepared with thoughts on the readings and be ready to share
them with your teammates as well as the rest of the class.

Safe Classroom Spaces
- We are committed to creating a safe space for students to discuss, debate and
grapple with the complex and sensitive ideas and issues presented in this class.
- When you speak in class, please do so with respect for me and for your fellow
students. Please also respect the diversity of opinions shared in the classroom.
- Disruptive behavior, offensive comments, and personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Use of CELL PHONES, LAPTOPS, iPADS etc. is STRONGLY discouraged in class.
- Since there are many international students in this class who may require the use of
a computer, I won’t prohibit them in class, as I usually do. But I really discourage it.
- Just consider: Class is so much more fun and interesting when people look up from
their screens and engage with one another. A recent scientific study also shows that
student cognition & efficiency improves dramatically when taking notes by hand:
http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don’t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/
Even if you are unaccustomed to it, please at least give it the ol’ college try!
- Pocket translators (that have no other function) are OK to use in class and exams.
- If you are a DSP student with a letter of accommodation that requires a laptop or
other note-taking device, please see me.

Academic Dishonesty
- All students are required to abide by the UC Berkeley Code of Conduct and Academic
Integrity (available online at: http://sa.berkeley.edu/conduct/integrity). Please see
me if you are unclear about the code.

**To avoid academic misconduct, follow these 3 simple rules:
1. If the ideas are not yours, CITE them.
2. If the words are not yours, QUOTE and CITE them.
3. When in doubt, QUOTE and CITE.
Special Accommodations
- If you have special needs that affect your work in this course, please come see me ASAP.
- DSP students: please provide a letter of accommodation before the end of Week 2.
- If something unforeseen happens during the semester, let me know right away. I can be of much more help if you don't wait until assignments are due to talk to me.

**If English is not your first language, or you have trouble writing in English:**
There are many great resources on campus to help in writing your papers. I will be happy to direct you to some of them - just send me an email, or see me in office hours. Some campus resources are listed at the end of this syllabus.

---

### CLASS READINGS

**Required Texts:**
- Globalization N20 Reader: Available for purchase at Copy Central, 2650 Bancroft Way (south side of campus)

**Notes About the 'Secondary Readings':**
1. These are NOT required, but are intended to serve as a kind of ‘reference library’ for you throughout the course. Since we have to speed through a lot of material in very little time, I’ve made some in-depth material available in the reader if you want to learn more about any concept or theme we cover in class.
2. The secondary readings are also somewhat regionally focused and/or elaborate upon economic history, commodity production, political trends, etc. that you may find useful as a guide for an analysis of your country or sector. I also recommend that you explore the bibliographies for these readings (where they are provided) for other potential research leads.

---

### WEEK 1 (JULY 7-9): Seeing the ‘Elephant’ - Conceptualizing Globalization

**July 7: Introductions / Class Requirements / Map Game**

**Secondary Readings**
- Heather Stewart, “Borders are closing and banks are in retreat. Is globalization dead?”

**July 8: Discourses of Globalization**


  *Secondary Readings*

**July 9: Globalization and its Discontents**


  *Secondary Readings*

---

**WEEK 2 (July 14-16): Globalizations before ‘Globalization’**

**July 14: Colonialism & Imperialism – Setting the Terms of the Global Economy**


  *Secondary Readings*

**July 15: The Postwar Project - Bretton Woods & the Rise of Global Governance**


  **Secondary Readings**

**July 16: The Cold War, Decolonization & Development in the Third World (**PAPER TOPIC DUE**)**


  **Secondary Readings**

**WEEK 3 (July 21-23): Neoliberalism & the Rise of a Global 'Free Market'**

**July 21: The Chicago Boys Take Over the World**

Secondary Reading

July 22: Geographies of Neoliberal Capitalism I – Commodities & Capital

Secondary Readings

July 23: Geographies of Neoliberal Capitalism II – Labor in the New World Order (**PAPER BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE)

Secondary Readings

WEEK 4 (July 28-30): Globalization’s Fallout – Inequality and Crisis

July 28: Life and Debt – Global Inequalities on Human Scales (**MID-TERM QUIZ)


*Secondary Readings*

**July 29: Megacities, Urban Poverty, and Informal/Illlicit Economies**


*Secondary Readings*
- Thornton, Christy. 2015. “Mexico: Popular Resistance, the Narco-State, and the US.” Transcript of talk given at the Center for Theory and Comparative History, UCLA.

**July 30: After the Crash – The 2008 Crisis and The New Austerity Regime**


*Secondary Readings*
WEEK 5 (August 4-6): The World You Will Inherit - and Is Another Possible?

Aug 4: “Winter is Coming” – Climate Change and the Future of Food

Secondary Readings

Aug 5: Bursting the Bubble – Populists vs. Banksters in the Eurozone & Beyond

Secondary Reading
- Readings on Greek situation (TBA)
- Zabala, Santiago. “In Europe, Not All Populist Parties Are the Same.” Aljazeera.com, 12/2/2014. (handout)

Aug 6: No reading! Group work + in-class office hours for papers & presentations

WEEK 6 (August 11-13): Group Presentations / Final

Aug 11: GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Aug 12: GROUP PRESENTATIONS / Final Review

Aug 13: FINAL EXAM
**HELPFUL LINKS AND CAMPUS RESOURCES**

For non-native English speakers and international students:

http://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources-non-native-english-speaker

Student Learning Center: http://slc.berkeley.edu/general/index.htm
UC Berkeley – Drop-in Writing Tutors: http://slc.berkeley.edu/drop-tutoring
UC Berkeley College Writing Program: http://writing.berkeley.edu/
Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): https://owl.english.purdue.edu/
UCB Reading & Composition Resources http://teaching.berkeley.edu/reading-composition

Disabled Students Program: http://dsp.berkeley.edu/
Ombuds Office for Students: http://campuslife.berkeley.edu/ombuds
Initiative for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity: http://diversity.berkeley.edu/CampusResources

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Global Exchange – Global Econ 101

http://www.globalexchange.org/resources/econ101

Partners in Health (Paul Farmer’s organization)

http://www.pih.org

PBS Documentary Films: *Commanding Heights*

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/credits/

United Nations – Social Dimensions of Globalization


United Nations HABITAT - State of the World's Cities

http://www.unhabitat.org/

World Social Forum

http://www.fsm2013.org/en

U.S. National Intelligence Council – Global Trends


Food First (organization supporting farmers and food sovereignty)

http://www.foodfirst.org

Transnational Institute (covers issues of food, land, economy)

http://www.tni.org/

Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR)

http://www.cepr.net/

Project Syndicate (great source for op-eds from economists of various stripes)

http://www.project-syndicate.org/