

Societies in the World

Katie Rainwater

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In-person Office Hours (SIPA 316B): Tuesdays 3-4pm; or by appointment

Course Description and Purpose

The comparative study of societies is one of the foundations of sociology. But societies can only be understood within wider contexts. This course seeks to deepen your understanding of human societies by examining them within a series of “world” perspectives: historical, environmental, global, and systemic. It will introduce you to some of the key concepts and ideas underlying a comparative, historical, and ecological perspective on our social world, including:

- How societies have been shaped by such forces as the agricultural revolution, the rise of cities, states, and empires; epidemic diseases; human migration; and the development of capitalism and globalization;
- How social hierarchies of class, gender, race, and ethnicity are created and perpetuated within and among societies; and
- The prospects and challenges for sustainable and equitable societies in the contemporary world.

The course readings and other assignments will introduce you to or broaden your knowledge of a wide variety of societies all over the globe. We will explore the uneven process of the global development of capitalism in the post-WW II period. The course is divided into two modules. In the first module, we consider sociological theories of capitalist development and the two interrelated social processes – agricultural modernization and proletarianization – in the Post World War II world. In the second module, we examine how social movements are contesting the agricultural modernization and proletarianization process.

The course fulfills both the *Discipline-specific Global Learning requirement* and a *core requirement for the Department of GSS's B.A. in Global Studies* as well as the *B.A. in Sociology/Anthropology*.

By the end of the semester, students are expected to achieve the following course and global learning objectives:

- *Global awareness*: basic knowledge of the interrelationships between the world-historical development of capitalism and contemporary global social issues.
- *Global perspective*: basic ability to analyze social issues in comparative, transnational, and historical perspective including a clearer sense of how your

own life and society is related to the lives of individuals and societies in other parts of the world.

- *Global engagement*: basic ability to evaluate complex written arguments on global development and to understand and articulate political-action proposals addressing global problems.

Required Co-curricular Activity

As with other Global Learning courses, this course has a required co-curricular activity. For your co-curricular activity, you will be required to attend one event outside of class and write a response paper connecting the event to course content. See the co-curricular activity page on canvas to learn the details of this requirement.

Course Communication and Office Hours

- Email: krainwat@fiu.edu
- Virtual Office Hours (<https://fiu.zoom.us/j/5456764451>(Links to an external site.) Links to an external site.): Wednesdays 12 - 1pm or by appointment
In-person Office Hours (SIPA 316B): Tuesdays 1-2pm; Thursdays 11 - 12PM; or by appointment

Please get in touch via email if you have a logistical issue that you need to communicate. For discussion of course materials or assignments please come to my office hours.

Office hours are not only for students who are struggling with the material. (However, if you are having difficulties, please reach out sooner rather than later). I'm also here to help you engage more deeply with the readings, to recommend further readings, or to talk about applications of course material beyond school. So please stop by!

Readings and Digital Resources

There is no required textbook for this course. All readings are available to download on Canvas. I recommend downloading and printing the readings. Research demonstrates that students generally display higher levels of reading comprehension when reading from printed texts than from digital texts.

Course Expectations & Assignments

Course Citizenship

The success of this class depends on the participation of ALL students. We each bring a unique perspective to this course and mutual learning occurs when we share our perspectives. Pedagogy research moreover indicates that class participation helps students in retaining knowledge and maintaining focus.

You are expected to attend class, to prepare for class by completing the readings, and to engage in class discussion about the readings.

Co-Curricular Activity (10%)

You will complete a co-curricular activity. (Attend an event and write an essay connecting the event to course content). Instructions for presentations and your co-curricular activity will be made available on the assignment page on Canvas.

The co-curricular activity will serve as an assessment of global perspective and global engagement.

Attendance (15%)

I will check attendance every class. I will drop your two lowest attendance grades.

In-Class Writing Assignments (15%)

You will be required to submit short written assignments about the course readings and content. These writing assignments (there will be 12 -15 for the semester) will be given at the beginning of class on random days. The purpose of these writing assignments is to incentivize you to complete the reading before class and to prepare you for class discussion by providing you with an opportunity to reflect on the reading. I'll often ask you to reflect on a specific question from the reading, but more general inquiries may include:

- What is the main idea of the reading?
- What evidence did the author give in support of their argument?
- What is a question that you have about the reading? (Something that you did not understand or something you would like to discuss more).
- Compare and/or contrast the argument in this reading to another reading in the course.

In-class writing assignments cannot be made up. However, I will drop your two lowest grades at the end of the semester. These assignments will be graded on a pass-fail basis.

In-class writing assignments will serve as an assessment of global awareness.

Exams (Mid-Term and Final) (30%)

There will be 2 exams. Exams may include a mixture of multiple choice, short answer, and essays. A study guide will be given in advance, and we will have a review in class.

Essay (30%)

I will assign 2 3-5 page essays. I will provide a rubric for each essay and we will discuss expectations in class.

Course Policies

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- [Accessibility and Accommodations](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Statement](#)

Religious Holy Days

The University's policy on religious holy days as stated in the University Catalog and Student Handbook will be followed in this class. Any student may request to be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of his or her faith.

Statement on Academic Freedom

“Academic freedom and responsibility are essential to the integrity of the University. The principles of academic freedom are integral to the conception of the University as a community of scholars engaged in the pursuit of truth and the communication of knowledge in an atmosphere of tolerance and freedom. The University serves the common good through teaching, research, scholarship/creative activities, and service. The fulfillment of these functions rests upon the preservation of the intellectual freedoms of teaching, expression, research, and debate. The University and UFF affirm that academic freedom is a right protected by this Agreement in addition to a faculty member’s constitutionally protected freedom of expression and is fundamental to the faculty member’s responsibility to seek and to state truth as he/she sees it.”

UFF-FIU CBA

Academic Honesty Statement

FIU defines academic misconduct in the Student Conduct and Honor Code (Code) as, “any act or omission by a Student, which violates the concept of academic integrity and undermines the academic mission of the University in violation of the Code.” Code violations include, but are not limited to: academic dishonesty, bribery, cheating, commercial use, complicity, falsification, and plagiarism. The Code is available here: <https://studentaffairs.fiu.edu/get-support/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/student-conduct-and-honor-code/index.php> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

A Note on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. **Don’t do it.** The minimum penalty for plagiarism will be a zero on the assignment. I will pursue the case with the Office of Academic Integrity. The reason I take this so seriously is that plagiarism completely undermines our educational aims. You are expected to think for yourself in this class and passing off someone else’s work as your own is the worst way to fail at this.

Not knowing what plagiarism is does not count as an excuse. Even quoting someone’s definition of a term can count as plagiarism. Whenever you use someone else’s wording, *you must put it in quotation marks and cite the source.* Do not use someone else’s words as if they were your own.

If you are unsure, you should familiarize with the definition and the university's policy. Here is a list of things that count as plagiarism (the list is not exhaustive):

1. Using someone else's words without attribution (even for something as small as a definition). You are welcome to use someone else's words. Quoting other people is fine. Just put those words in quotation marks and *cite the source*.
2. Paraphrasing someone else's words. This even applies to assigned readings. Do not simply paraphrase something or replace words with synonyms. That's plagiarism.
3. Using someone else's ideas and arguments. Let's say you consult a secondary source. You do not steal their words or paraphrase them (so you are not breaking the rules mentioned above). But you take the structure of their argument and their ideas and you present them as your own. That's plagiarism.

Avoiding plagiarism is not hard. All you have to do is give credit to the source. Be very careful about consulting outside materials. If you do decide to use an outside source you **must** tell me about it by citing the source.

Names and pronouns

I invite you, if you wish, to tell us how you want to be referred to both in terms of your name and your pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc.). I will do my best to address and refer to all students accordingly and will support you in doing so as well.

Disability Services

FIU is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who require course accommodations are required to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) by the beginning of the semester and to follow the DRC's procedures. Contact information:

- MMC, Graham Center 190, (305) 348-3532, email: drcupgl@fiu.edu
- BBC, Wolfe University Center 131, (305) 919-5345, email: drcbbc@fiu.edu

Course Topics

Module 1: Post War Capitalist Development

Introduction

August 22 – Development and Inequality

August 24 – Historical Precedents

Theories of Development

August 29 – Development Economics

August 31 – Marxist Political Economy

State led Development

Sept 5 – China & Egypt

Sept 7 – South Korea

Neoliberal Development

Sept 12- Chile

Sept 14 – Comparative case study

***Paper One Assigned**

Food Systems

Sept 19 – The Green Revolution

Sept 21 – Commodification

Sept 26 – Land grabs

Proletarianization

Sept 28 – Standard Employment Contract Labor

***Paper One Due**

Oct 3 – Informal Labor

Oct 5 – Racialized Surplus Labor

Review and Exam

Oct 10 – Review

Oct 12 - Exam

Module 2: Social Movements

Social Movements

Oct 17 – Introduction

Food Systems

Oct 19 – India Farmers Protest

Oct 24 – India Farmers Protest

***Paper Two Assigned**

Oct 26 – MST

Oct 31 – MST

Nov 2 – Global North

***Paper Two Due**

Proletarianization

Nov 7 – Informal Workers Movements

Nov 9 – Informal Workers Movements

Nov 14 – Teachers

Nov 16 – Teachers

Nov 21 – South Africa

Nov 28 – Global North

Review

Nov 30 – Review