GEO 3001 – Geography of Global Change
Department of Global & Sociocultural Studies, Florida International University
Fall Semester, 2018

Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30-1:45
Ziff Education 150

Course homepage: fiu.instructure.com

Instructor
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Course Overview

In 1848, Karl Marx characterized life in industrializing capitalist societies with the pithy phrase, ‘all that is solid melts into air.’ Over a half century later, Joseph Schumpeter coined the term ‘creative destruction’ to understand the periodic boom-and-bust cycles that characterized economic growth in capitalist societies since the industrial revolution. Even though Schumpeter and Marx were writing from different political leanings, they nonetheless both grappled with the relentless pace of change in their respective societies. They also shined light on the way this change was driven through the circulation and interaction of people, goods, and ideas – circulations made possible through the development of key infrastructure systems such as factories, roads, utilities, communications, and so forth. Since the time of their writing, continued colonialism, development, and post-Cold War globalization have extended the spread of capitalist infrastructure across the world. These processes have intensified social, economic, political, and environmental change.

This course seeks to develop a critical understanding of how change occurs across the globe. While some popular contemporary authors paint globalization as a process that flattens out difference, this course seeks to develop a geographic sensibility that focuses on the difference space and place make. Far from making the world ‘flat’, in Thomas Friedman’s terms, a geographic understanding of global change focuses on the uneven, socially and spatially differentiated spread of infrastructure systems, and the variegated rather than homogenized geographies of change they give rise to. In other words, it recognizes that people and places are differentially affected by the processes of globalization, and that globalization is creating new kinds of differences rather than obliterating difference.

Learning Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of contemporary global changes. Most of the foundations of today’s seemingly new “global” phenomena date back at least to the period of colonialism, sometimes earlier. Furthermore, many “global” problems are exceedingly complex and display great spatial variability, thus meaning there are no easy solutions. Understanding and accepting this complexity will be part of this course. (Global Awareness)
2. *Critically assess multiple perspectives concerning global issues.* Given the complexity of many global issues, there are often multiple perspectives on what drives these processes and how best to address them. Part of the goal of this course is to understand and learn to critically assess these multiple perspectives, what their particular historical geographies are, and how these perspectives shed light on ways students can get involved in changing their world. (Global Perspective and Global Engagement)

3. *Gain the ability to analyze global issues from a geographic perspective.* Though geographers analyze many of the same issues people from other disciplines do, there is a difference in how geographers approach things. Terms like space, scale, systemic analysis and materiality are extremely important to geographers – this course will help you understand why. Similarly, it will focus on the research and publication processes through which geographic knowledge is produced and disseminated.

**Readings**
Readings will be drawn from a variety of geographers and scholars in cognate fields, and will be made available through the module links on the course’s FIU Canvas page.

**Grading**
There will be 500 total points available in this class, broken down as follows:
- 100 points: In-class activities and/or quizzes
- 300 points: Three reflective essays (100 points each)
- 100 points: Research paper

The grading scale is: which translates to, in points:
- A = 100-93%, A : 500 thru 465 points
- A- = 92.9-90%, A-: 464 thru 450 points
- B+ = 89.9-87%, B+: 449 thru 435 points
- B = 86.9-83%, B: 434 thru 415 points
- B- = 82.9%-80%, B-: 414 thru 400 points
- C+ = 79.9-77%, C+: 399 thru 385 points
- C = 76.9-70%, C: 384 thru 350 points
- D = 69.9-60%, D: 349 thru 300 points
- F = 59.9-0%, F: 299 thru 0 points

**Assignments**

**Reflective essays**
The course is informally structured in terms of three modules: Welcome to the Anthropocene!; Development Discourse; and Neoliberal Development. At the end of each module, students will be given a writing prompt that asks them to reflect on and interpret the key concept and processes discussed in each module. The due dates for each essay are as follows:
- Sep 18: Welcome to the Anthropocene!
- Oct 30: Development Discourse
- Nov 20: Neoliberal Discourse
**Term Research Paper**
This assignment will enable you to conduct research on the history of change and infrastructure of a specific city of your choosing. Throughout the term, we will engage in a number of activities that will help you develop your research, including identifying sources, linking course material to your city’s particular historical development trajectory, and structuring and writing an academic research paper. **The paper will be due electronically at noon (12pm) on Tuesday, Dec 4.**

**In-class activities and attendance**
During the course of the term, we will have six unscheduled quizzes and/or activities relating to readings and/or material we covered previously in class. Each quiz will be worth 10 points, and the lowest grade will be dropped. Note that this is a total of 100 points – or 20% of your final grade. This is one letter grade – so the easiest way to ensure a strong grade is to make sure you come to class and get these points!

All students are expected to attend class, take notes, and participate. There are no excused absences or assignments except in the case of hospitalization or a religious holiday, both of which require hard copy documentation. If you are not present when materials are collected for points, you will forfeit those points.

**Academic Integrity, Cheating and Plagiarism:**
Cheating and plagiarism are done by pathetic and desperate people – don’t be one of them. If you plagiarize on your research assignment, or cheat on an exam – you will receive **at minimum a zero on that assignment**, which instantly drops your score for the course by about two full letter grades. If you find yourself in a desperate situation while taking a test or up against a deadline – turn in the best work you can do at the time. Getting an F usually means you will get some points – getting caught cheating means you get zero. Furthermore, depending on the severity of the case, I can choose to pursue harsher penalties, including assigning an F0 for the course or pursuing your expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the FIU student handbook’s sections on cheating and plagiarism. Also, if you need to know more about how to not plagiarize, please check out the following websites:

1) “Plagiarism: What It is and How to Recognize and Avoid It (Indiana University)” at [http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html](http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/plagiarism.html)
2) “Paraphrase: Write it in Your Own Words (Purdue University)” at [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html)

**Absences & Make-Up**
Excused absences include serious illness; illness of a spouse or dependent; death of an immediate family member; University-sponsored trips; and major religious holy days. It is your responsibility to **inform me of the absence in advance of class** by e-mail (and within 2 weeks of the start of class if it is a university trip or holy day), but no later than two class sessions after the missed class. In order to have an absence excused, you must provide original documentation which I can keep. If this is done, and I determine the absence to be excused, I will do my best make sure you make up what you missed.

Make-up essays will only be given in extreme circumstances. The essays have been scheduled to provide you with more than enough time to complete the assignment, even if an
illness pops up. In extreme cases, you may receive an extension, but you must: 1) provide documentation to me in class within one class period of the missed essay addressing why your absence qualifies as excused; 2) have that documentation accepted by me; 3) email me asking to be given a extension; and 4) receive back an email from me confirming an extension will be given.

Your choices to attend or not attend have consequences – just like they would at work. I take my responsibilities and role as a teacher seriously; I hope you hold your role and responsibility as a student in equal respect.

**Disability Clause**

Students with disabilities, as defined by law, have the right to receive needed accommodations if their disabilities make it difficult to perform academic tasks in the usual way or in the allotted time frame. In order to receive accommodation, however, students with must register with Disability Resource Center:

University Park Campus, GC 190 Voice: 305.348.3532 TTY: 305.348.3852 Fax: 305.348.3850 Email: drcupgl@fiu.edu

**Course Schedule**

***This schedule is subject to change at the instructor’s discretion. If it changes, the changes will be announced in class. It is the student’s responsibility to mark changes on the schedule.***

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Module 1 – Welcome to the Anthropocene!</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 – Aug 21 &amp; 23</td>
<td>Introduction – The Anthropocene</td>
<td>Amin and Thrift 2016 (Ch 2: pp. 34-45)</td>
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<td>2 – Aug 28 &amp; 30</td>
<td>Infrastructural governance</td>
<td>Amin and Thrift 2016 (Ch 2: pp. 46-64); Jones et al 2013 (Ch. 4)</td>
<td>Aug 28 – Assign reading groups</td>
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<td>3 – Sep 4 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Sep 4 – No Class! Politics of the Anthropocene</td>
<td>Malm and Hornborg 2014; Davis 2004</td>
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<td><strong>Module 2 – Development Discourse</strong></td>
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<td>5 – Sep 18 &amp; 20</td>
<td>Liberal development and the Anthropocene</td>
<td>Malm 2016 (Ch. 2, Ch. 12)</td>
<td>Sep 18 – Reflective essay 1</td>
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<td>6–27</td>
<td>Oct 2 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Modernization and development</td>
<td>Escobar 1999 Excerpts from Sheppard et al 2009 Peet 2003 (Ch. 2)</td>
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<td>8–11</td>
<td>Oct 9 &amp; 11</td>
<td>The limits of modernization</td>
<td>Cullather 2010 (Ch. 5) Plehwe 2009 (Ch. 7)</td>
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**Module 3 – Neoliberal Development**

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>12–8</td>
<td>Nov 6 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Actually-existing development</td>
<td>Rogers 2005</td>
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<td>15–29</td>
<td>Nov 27 &amp; 29</td>
<td>Infrastructure and development: Big Man</td>
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<td>16 – Exam week</td>
<td>Turn in final reflective essay – 12pm Dec 4</td>
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<td>Dec 4 – Research paper</td>
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