

# World Problems in a Global Context

Sociology 3597.01

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University Hall 0082



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Office Hours:  
Tuesday 9-12pm  
Or by appointment

Accordingly, globalization is not only something that will concern and threaten us in the future, but something that is taking place in the present and to which we must first open our eyes.

--Ulrich Beck

## Course Description

Societies do not exist in bubbles. Since the dawn of civilization, societies and cultures have come into contact with each other, facilitating connections and exchanges among various groups. While these connections have always existed in some way or another, the post-World War II era brought many social, technological and economic shifts that have accelerated this exchange across societies. Today, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, we live in a world that is more connected than ever, a process known as globalization. These linkages have transformed the globe. It can be argued that all countries are part of one world system. Nations and societies are not just connected, but also interdependent on flows of money, raw materials, information, technology, and even people. While globalization is a popular buzzword, the consequences of this process for people's lives are only now becoming fully evident.

For the next few months, our goal is to explore society on a global scale and critically examine some of the concerning problems of our rapidly globalizing world. The course is divided into three parts. In the first section, we'll discuss a major area of sociological research: inequality, with a special focus on how global economic forces shape our lives. In part two, we'll explore war, conflict, crime and violence, and discuss how a more peaceful world can be constructed among all the bloodshed, suffering and death. Lastly, in part three we'll examine some of the major environmental, ecological, population and resource issues currently facing the earth. Is our way of life sustainable? If not, can anything be done about it?

There are no simple answers, and we certainly can't change the world in a few months, but the questions we ask are sometimes just as important as the answers. Will industrialization ever come to Africa? Can China wean itself from dirty coal? What is more threatening, global poverty or global climate change? Is it possible to solve both, or impossible to solve either? Did economics or politics spark the Arab Spring? My expectations for this semester are simple: to encourage you to become global citizens by learning about the key issues facing our world and debate the possible solutions.

## Required Texts

Sernau, Scott. 2012. *Global Problems: The Search for Equity, Peace and Sustainability*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Pearson.

## Course Organization

I will direct this class through a mixture of lectures and discussion about course materials. I do not enjoy lecturing for the entire session. Learning is a back and forth process that works best when the student is an active participant in the class. In addition to my lectures, I encourage and expect you to share your opinions, experiences and insights with the class and me. Nobody knows everything about the world. So, I ask all of you to come to class prepared and ready to discuss the assigned readings. I envision each session being about half lecture about the day's topic and half discussion about important issues that emerge from the class materials.

## Attendance

I take attendance at the beginning of each class strictly to help myself learn your names. It does not directly factor into your grade, so you could say it's not required. This is true, but it's important to know that consistently missing class can mean missing important material you'll need to know for the exam. In my experience, students who do not attend class and try to get by on the book tend to do poorly. I encourage you to introduce yourself to a classmate and make arrangements to get notes on days you cannot attend.

## Course Requirements

Your grade for the class will be based on the following assignments, described in more detail below.

Exams:	180 points
Article Reaction Papers:	100 points
<u>Participation:</u>	<u>20 points</u>
Total:	300 points

## Exams (3 at 60 Points Each)

As stated earlier, this course is divided into three broad sections, and as we finish each part, there will be an exam. Each exam is non-cumulative, but covers all textbook readings, articles, lecture material and videos associated with that section of the course. All exams are short answer based. I will provide you with a list of 10 questions, and you will answer any 6 of your choosing. Each question is worth 10 points, for a total of 60 points. **Extensions or make up exams will only be given in the case of extreme circumstances!!!** It is YOUR responsibility to know the exam schedule and be prepared.

### **Article Reaction papers (4 at 25 points each)**

To accompany your textbook, I have chosen three articles that supplement our course material to be read and discussed in class. To help spark discussion, you will be asked to come to class that day with a 3-4 page paper that summarizes the article and interprets it sociologically. In each reaction paper, I will be looking for you to do the following:

1. Summarize the article in your own words.
2. Interpret the article sociologically by applying course concepts.
3. A personal reaction/reflection to the article.

You should devote about equal weight to the three sections of your paper. The due dates are listed under the course schedule here in the syllabus, and of course, I will remind you of these dates as they approach. Late reaction papers are penalized at 5 points per day late.

### **Participation (20 points)**

The final twenty points are earned through your active and energetic participation in class. As stated earlier, I do not want to lecture all class. On the semester system, we will meet more often than most of us are used to. As a member of this class, you will earn these points by showing me that you are an engaged learner and putting in effort to make this class a success. Understand that perfect attendance without participating or participating often without attending class regularly will NOT earn you the full 20 points. A good mix of active participation and attendance is required. Put in the necessary effort and this will be an easy 20 points.

### **Grading**

*Course Grades (Point-Letter Grade Conversions):*

280-300 = A	240-249 = B-	200-209 = D+
270-279 = A-	230-239 = C+	190-199 = D
260-269 = B+	220-229 = C	0 - 189 = F
250-259 = B	210-219 = C-	

### **Other Requirements:**

Be respectful of me and your fellow students. This includes the following: (1) being respectful of others and their opinions during discussions, even if their opinion differs from your own; (2) being considerate by coming to class on time and not leaving early, and by avoiding taking part in distracting behaviors – such as talking during lecture, reading newspapers, or excessive texting. Annoying and distracting behaviors are problematic for instructors and your fellow students, and will not be tolerated; and (3) abiding by academic honesty guidelines as set out in the “Code of Student Conduct” section of the *OSU Resource Guide for Students*. I will report suspected violations of this code, which include but are not limited to plagiarism and cheating on assignments and exams, to the University’s Academic Committee on Misconduct without hesitation. PLEASE take this seriously.

## **GE Requirement Statement Cross-Disciplinary Seminar**

### **Goals:**

Students demonstrate an understanding of a topic of interest through scholarly activities that draw upon multiple disciplines and through their interactions with students from different majors.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes:**

1. Students understand the benefits and limitations of different disciplinary perspectives.
2. Students understand the benefits of synthesizing multiple disciplinary perspectives.
3. Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to a topic of interest.

### **Course Schedule (TENTATIVE AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE!!!)**

#### **Week 1**

1/7: Course Introduction  
1/9: Defining globalization  
*Sernau Ch. 1: Class: A World of Rich and Poor*  
1/11: Social class & global inequality

#### **Week 2:**

1/14: National development: modernization or dependency?  
1/16: Case study: Brazil's development  
1/18: Consumption & value

#### **Week 3:**

1/21: **NO CLASS!!! MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY!**  
*Sernau Ch. 2: Work & Trade: The Global Assembly Line*  
1/23: Division of labor  
1/25: The global shot-callers  
**REACTION PAPER ONE DUE IN CLASS!**  
Davis, Mike. 2004. "Planet of Slums." *New Left Review* (26): 5-34

#### **Week 4:**

1/28: Economic crisis  
*Sernau Ch. 3: Gender & Family: Overburdened Women and Displaced Men*  
1/30: Gender: The female perspective  
2/1: Gender: The male perspective

#### **Week 5:**

*Sernau Ch. 4: Education: Access and Success*  
2/4: Education: access & inequality  
2/6: Global education models  
2/8: **EXAM ONE GIVEN IN CLASS**

**Week 6:**

*Sernau Ch. 5: Crime: Fear in the Streets*  
2/11: Crime and violence  
2/13: Organized crime & the international drug trade  
2/15: White collar crime & LIBOR

**Week 7:**

*Sernau Ch. 6: War: States of Terror*  
2/18: The changing nature of war  
2/20: Economics of war  
2/22: Military-Industrial complex

**Week 8:**

*Sernau Ch. 7: Democracy & Human Rights*  
2/25: The democratic boom  
2/27: Democracy in jeopardy  
3/1: Case study: Egypt & the Arab Spring  
**REACTION PAPER TWO DUE IN CLASS!!!**  
Carothers, Thomas. "Think Again: Arab Democracy." *Foreign Policy* March 10, 2011.

**Week 9:**

*Sernau Ch. 8: Ethnicity & Religion: Deep Roots and Unholy Hate*  
3/4: Race & Ethnicity  
3/6: Religion & Terrorism  
3/8: **EXAM TWO GIVEN IN CLASS!!!**

**Week 10:**

3/11: **NO CLASS!!! SPRING BREAK!!!**  
3/13: **NO CLASS!!! SPRING BREAK!!!**  
3/15: **NO CLASS!!! SPRING BREAK!!!**

**Week 11:**

*Sernau Ch. 9: Urbanization: Cities without Limits*  
3/18: Urbanization  
3/20: Global cities & the world economy  
3/22: Cities of despair

**Week 12:**

*Sernau Ch. 10: Population & Health*  
3/25: Demography & population dynamics  
3/27: Immigration  
**REACTION PAPER THREE DUE IN CLASS!!!**  
Bloom, David E. & David Canning. 2006. "Booms, Busts and Echos." *Finance and Development* 43(3).

3/29: Global health concerns

**Week 13:**

4/1: Global healthcare models  
*Sernau Ch. 11: Technology & Energy*  
4/3: Energy & Fossil Fuels  
4/5: Environment & Climate Change

**Week 14:**

4/8: The end of oil?  
*Sernau Ch. 12: Ecology: How Much Can One Planet Take?*  
4/10: The food regime  
4/12: Water: blue gold

**Week 15:**

4/15: Pollution  
**REACTION PAPER FOUR DUE IN CLASS!!!**  
Auyero, Javier & Debora Swistun. 2007. "Amidst Garbage and Poison: An Essay on Polluted Peoples and Places." *Contexts* 6(46): 46-51.  
4/17: TBD  
4/19: The globalization paradox

**Week 16:**

4/22: **FINAL EXAM GIVEN IN CLASS!!!**

## General Disclaimers

### Disability Services

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT)

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an "excuse" for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Other sources of information on academic misconduct (integrity) to which you can refer include:

- The Committee on Academic Misconduct web pages ([COAM Home](#))
- *Ten Suggestions for Preserving Academic Integrity* ([Ten Suggestions](#))
- *Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity*

**Unpaid Fees:** Faculty rules specify that students are to have their fees paid by the first day of enrollment for the quarter. [Faculty Rule 3335-9-12]. If you have not paid your fees, you will not be allowed to continue attending class until: 1. your fees are paid, OR 2. you have met with a Sociology Advisor and a Financial Aid Counselor and are working to get your fees paid.

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