

REVISED June 28, 2006

Summer 2006 • CS 597.02

Global Culture

Prof. Timothy Choy

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30-3:18PM, University Hall 0038

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-5:00, 428 Hagerty Hall

Phone: 688-0121 • no email please (see below)

Course description

Why all the fuss about “globalization?” What do we mean when we say something is global anyway? That the world is interconnected? That it’s shrinking? That corporations are taking over the world? What makes the world global? Technology? Travel? Circulating ideas? Money? To invoke the global today is almost to say nothing; the word encompasses any number of meanings, but without getting specific the word doesn’t capture much. Similarly, the idea of culture has become taken for granted and is used widely, but in a way that has evacuated it of real meaning. What does it mean to invoke the concept of culture in the face of developments that are considered global in nature? Is culture destroyed in global encounters, or is it made? How do we evaluate different cultural values when they conflict? What is culture, anyway? What isn’t?

In this course, we won’t answer such questions directly; in fact, we’ll find that the answers to such questions always require close attention to the specific matters at hand. We will, however, introduce some tools for thinking about what globality and culture mean in the world today, why they’re such hot topics, and how to evaluate the stakes of situations when they appear. We’ll start with basics, by reviewing some working definitions of culture and globalization that social scientists have found useful, noting how and why various definitions differ from each other. How do various definitions highlight notions of human commonality or difference? How do they account for relations of power and inequality? What are ethics or politics in global contexts? We’ll then examine several case studies to illuminate the real-world stakes of getting clear about what terms like “globalization” and “culture” can and cannot capture.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance.** Your attendance, preparedness for class, and active participation in discussion are crucial to the course’s success. Students with more than two unexcused absence, and/or who are consistently unprepared for class, will see these aspects of their performance prominently reflected in their letter grades.
2. **Keep up with the reading.** Our class discussions and my lectures will focus on specific arguments in the readings. It is imperative that you complete the readings for each week before class. There will be occasional pop quizzes; these quizzes will not be extremely challenging, but you are sure to do better on them if you’ve done the reading for the day.
3. **Active learning.** I will provide some orienting lectures during the quarter, but by and large, the real learning will take place when you engage the material actively — through discussion, through analyses done in take-home assignments, through questions you raise of me and each other. There will certainly be exams in this class, but you will be making a mistake if you approach this class with only an eye for what will be on the exams or if you approach our readings and discussions looking for the “right” answer to give to some imagined question. The goal of this course is to provide you some critical concepts and case examples with which to think about phenomena that people typically call instances of globalization, as well as to think about what is meant and what is at stake when the term ‘culture’ appears in our everyday lives. In other words, we are after tools for analysis, not ready-made pat answers about the state of the world. Our task in this course will be to try these tools out, to think about what they enable and what they foreclose in grasping the worlds around us. Exams will ask you to demonstrate an understanding of these tools and an ability to use these tools in written analysis; the best way to gain this ability is by practicing. Our class sessions are designed to give you the chance to practice.

4. **Participation – informed speaking and listening.** The success of the course thus hinges on your participation. That said, talking does not necessarily mean that one is participating. Engagement requires thoughtful speaking and *listening*. Your comments should also reflect a solid engagement with our readings. Those of you who are very comfortable speaking in class: be sure to monitor how much “air-time” you take up and be attentive to whether you’re fostering an environment conducive to everyone’s participation. Listen attentively and respectfully to your colleagues. Some of your participation will include in-class writing.

5. **Requirements.** There will be three Assignments and two in-class Exams (one midterm, one final). Assignments and Exams will cover material from the readings and from class. You will also be asked occasionally to write up responses or questions concerning the readings and films.

Evaluation

Students' final evaluation will be based on the quality of written and oral work.

15% - Active learning and informed participation

5% - Assignment #1

15% - Assignment #2

15% - Assignment #3

25% - Midterm

25% - Final

Accommodation

For you: Any students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately in the first or second week of class to discuss their specific needs. I rely on the assistance of the Disability Services office in making accommodations for students with documented disabilities, so please contact the office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall if you wish me to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

For me: I have severe computer-related repetitive stress injuries in my hands and arms, so I regret I am unable to use email for class purposes. Please do not send me email unless I specifically ask you to do so. I am happy to speak with you before or after class or during office hours.

Academic misconduct

Plagiarism is the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own. This includes not only the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, but also the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

Books and Course Packet

A Small Place, by Jamaica Kincaid

Twice Dead, by Margaret Lock

Both books and the required course packet can be purchased at SBX.

Schedule

READINGS MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE CLASS PERIOD.

® denotes that reading is found in Course Packet.

| Week | Date | Topic | Readings/Assignments Due |
|------|-----------|--|--|
| Wk 1 | Tue, 6/20 | Intro | |
| | Thu, 6/22 | Unit 1: What is the "culture" of "global culture?" | <p>Ⓢ Miner, Horace. "Body Ritual among the Nacirema." <u>American Anthropologist</u>.</p> <p>Due: Assignment # 1</p> |
| Wk 2 | Tue, 6/27 | <i>Culture</i> , Part 2: Universal or particular? | <p>Geertz, Clifford. "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man" in <i>The Interpretation of Culture</i>. Basic Books, 1973. (handout)</p> <p>Part 1 of [Safe]</p> |
| | Thu, 6/29 | <i>Culture</i> , Part 3: Knowledge. | <p>Ⓢ Dumit, Joseph. "Is It Me or My Brain? Depression and Neuroscientific Facts." <u>Journal of Medical Humanities</u> 24, no. 1 (2002): 35-47.</p> <p>Part 2 of [Safe]</p> |
| Wk 3 | Tue, 7/4 | HOLIDAY | HOLIDAY |
| | Thu, 7/6 | Unit 2: What is the "global" of "global culture?" | <p>First half of Jamaica Kincaid's book, <u>A Small Place</u>. (about 40 pages)</p> <p>Pop quiz...</p> |
| Wk 4 | Tue, 7/11 | <i>Global</i> , Part 2: Debt, tourism | <p>Kincaid, Jamaica. <u>A Small Place</u>. 1st ed. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988. second half of book (about 40 pages)</p> <p>In-class screening of <i>Life and Debt</i></p> |
| | Thu, 7/13 | <i>Global</i> , Part 3: McWorld? | <p>Due: Take-Home Midterm</p> <p>Finish <i>Life and Debt</i></p> <p>Ⓢ Watson, James L. "Mcdonald's in Hong Kong: Consumerism, Dietary Change, and the Rise of a Children's Culture." In <u>Golden Arches East : Mcdonald's in East Asia</u>, edited by James Watson, 77-109. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997.</p> |
| Wk 5 | Tue, 7/18 | <i>Global</i> , Part 4: Dubbing Culture | <p>Ⓢ Boellstorff, Tom. "Dubbing Culture: Indonesian Gay and Lesbian Subjectivities and Ethnography in an Already Globalized World." <u>American Ethnologist</u> 30, no. 2 (2003): 225-42.</p> |
| | Thu, 7/20 | Case Study: Thinking Globally about Life, Death, and Organs | <p>Lock, Margaret M. <u>Twice Dead : Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death</u>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. (Selections tba)</p> <p>Due: Assignment # 2</p> |
| Wk 6 | Tue, 7/25 | <i>Life, Death, and Organs</i> | <p>Lock, Margaret M. <u>Twice Dead : Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death</u>. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. (selections tba)</p> |

| Week | Date | Topic | Readings/Assignments Due |
|------|--------------|--|---|
| | Thu, 7/27 | <i>Life, Death, and Organs</i> | Lock, Margaret M. <u>Twice Dead : Organ Transplants and the Reinvention of Death</u> . Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. (selections tba) ⑧ Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. "The Last Commodity: Post-Human Ethics and the Global Traffic in Fresh Organs." In <u>Global Assemblages : Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems</u> , edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier, 145-68. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. |
| Wk 7 | Tue, 8/1 | Case Study: Indian Cricket Power and appropriation | In-class screening of Part 1 of <i>Lagaan</i> . ⑧ Appadurai, Arjun. "Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket." In <u>Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization</u> . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. |
| | Thu, 8/3 | | In-class screening of Part 2 of <i>Lagaan</i> ⑧ Majumdar, Boria. "Cultural Resistance and Sport: Politics, Leisure and Colonialism— <i>Lagaan</i> — Invoking Lost History." ⑧ Mannathukkaren, Nissim. "Subalterns, Cricket and the 'Nation': The Silences of <i>Lagaan</i> ." Due: Assignment #3 |
| Wk 8 | Tue, 8/8 | | ⑧ Farred, Grant. "The Double Temporality of <i>Lagaan</i> : Cultural Struggle and Postcolonialism." |
| | Thu, 8/10 | Claims of Culture in Contexts of Encounter | ⑧ Mitchell, Katharyne. "Transnational Subjects: Constituting the Cultural Citizen in the Era of Pacific Rim Capital." In <u>Ungrounded Empires : The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism</u> , edited by Aihwa Ong and Donald Nonini, 228-56. New York: Routledge, 1997. |
| Wk 9 | Tue, 8/15 | | ⑧ Martello, Marybeth Long. "Negotiating Global Nature and Local Culture: The Case of Makah Whaling." In <u>Earthly Politics : Local and Global in Environmental Governance</u> , edited by Sheila Jasanoff and Marybeth Long Martello. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004. ⑧ Sylvain, Renée. "Disorderly Development: Globalization and the Idea Of "Culture" In the Kalahari." <u>American Ethnologist</u> 32, no. 3 (2005): 354-70. |
| | Thu, 8/17 | Wrapping up | Due: Final Exam |