

BLS 490C Technology and Globalization Fall 2008

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Introduction

This course provides an opportunity for students to conduct an in-depth senior project on a theme related to technological change and globalization while working together through readings designed to stimulate discussion and evoke ideas for research topics. It also marks the culmination of the IAS undergraduate experience, where students reflect on the academic work they have done up to this point. The main deliverables are a significant work of scholarship, delivered in writing and orally, and a self-assessment that presents a representative selection of the student's work in the program. Smaller assignments and in-class activities aim to stimulate discussion and active learning of the subjects and issues raised by the reading.

Technological innovation and globalization have throughout history served as drivers of social, material, and cultural change. Technological change has accompanied humans since their origin; indeed, to be human is to create and use technology in a considered way. So too has globalization, in the sense of local phenomenon becoming global in scope, been a longstanding part of the human story. The difference today is the speed and intensity with which ideas, artifacts, practices, and beliefs spread from one locale to another. Rapid-fire innovations in communication, transportation, and information technologies have over the past century greatly accelerated the rate of spread of phenomenon across geographic space. When political power, the striving for which is another signature feature of the human condition, drives the spread of these phenomena, embedding itself into them, the effects on human communities at the receiving end can be sudden, jolting, even destructive. We focus attention, therefore, not merely on globalization but globalization serving the ends of political power, propelled by the force of technology. It is a source of great opportunity but also of insecurity. Managing it will no doubt consume more and more of our time and resources.

We will explore the theme of technology and globalization from the perspective of economic geography. I chose this approach in part because my research draws heavily on this literature (specifically on industry location, or why industry distributes itself geographically in the ways that we observe), but also because the field is broadly interdisciplinary, diverse, and dynamic. Among other things, it seeks to understand why industry and wealth are distributed geographically as they are; the organization and behavior of multinational corporations; the patterns of human migration and immigration; the relationship between work and space; differential effects of pollution and environmental change; geographical dimensions of gender and race; and relationship between geography and human health. We'll touch on most of these themes in our reading and discussion. I hope that it stimulates your thinking and supports your exploration and development of a research topic.

Learning Objectives

1. Build skill and confidence in research through successful execution of a major scholarly project.
2. Make connections across learning experiences in the IAS program to date and build self-awareness of accomplishments through completion of a self-assessment.
3. Gain insight into the processes and consequences of technological change and globalization through focused readings in economic geography and related literature.

Texts and Resources for Research

The following two texts are available for purchase in the UWB Bookstore:

Neil M. Coe et al, *Economic Geography: A Contemporary Introduction* (Blackwell, 2007)
James Gustave Speth, *The Bridge at the Edge of the World* (Yale University Press, 2008)

Additional readings, if needed, will be posted on the library's e-reserve
<https://eres.bothell.washington.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=917&page=docs>

If you do not already have it, I urge you to obtain a copy of *The New McGraw-Hill Handbook*, which is an excellent resource on planning and writing research papers.

The library media center holds a number of film documentary programs and series related to the course themes; we may use some of them in class.

1. Life: A Series about Globalization (30 parts) Videorecord BOT-1972
<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/l5.html>
2. City Life (22 parts) Videorecord BOT-2042
<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/cl.html>
3. Life 3 (12 parts) Videorecord BOT-2370
<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/l3.html>
4. Life 4: UN Millennium Goals (27 parts) Videorecord BOT-2379
<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/l4.html>
5. Life 5: Globalization and the Millennium Development Goals (13 parts)
DVD BOT-1415 <http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/l5.html>
6. Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price DVD BOT-1117
<http://www.walmartmovie.com/>
7. Is Wal-Mart Good for America? DVD BOT-593
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/walmart/>
8. China Blue DVD BOT-1555
<http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/china.html>

UWB Library Portals to Research Sources:

1. Global Data Sources

<http://www.uwb.edu/library/guides/subjects/global/globaldata.html>

Especially helpful, and authoritative as sources of data, are the UN's Human Development Report, OECD Economic Surveys, OECD Factbook, and the World Bank's World Development Indicators.

2. Countries of the World

<http://www.uwb.edu/library/guides/subjects/global/countryguide.html>

Information on specific countries as well as links to journals and news sources.

Other starting points for research can be found here, organized by subject:

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/types/databases/>

If, for example, you are interested in a topic related to the environment, you should spend time searching the electronic journals under "Environmental Science" at the above URL.

Finally, the following portal provides links to important general reference materials, including encyclopedias, style guides, and the campus Writing Center:

<http://www.uwb.edu/library/guides/subjects/general.html>

Blackboard: Please enroll in this course on Blackboard. I'll be posting weekly assignments and announcements there. We'll also communicate with each other through it. Next week, I'll open a discussion board we can use to ask questions and share thoughts (using it is optional and won't affect your grade). For information about enrolling in Blackboard and setting up an account, see http://www.uwb.edu/edtech/blackboard/student_index.shtml

Course Requirements

1. Constructive class participation (15 percent): In a seminar we learn collaboratively by sharing thoughts and bouncing ideas off each other. Always come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. Bring the readings with you to class. You will be expected to raise relevant questions and comment thoughtfully on what you read and what you hear from me and your classmates. Occasionally, I may give you exercises to work on in class to facilitate discussion.

2. Short written assignments (10 percent): These will be posted on Blackboard in the Assignments section most Fridays at 5 PM and will be based on the reading for the following week. You will submit the completed assignment to me in class the following Thursday. We will often use these as a basis for discussion in Thursday classes. Look for the first questions at 5 PM Friday, September 26; please bring your answers to class on Thursday, October 2.

3. Self-assessment and portfolio (10 percent): You will assemble a representative body of your work in the program and complete a self-assessment questionnaire in accordance with

instructions given in separate handouts. I will meet with you at least once during the quarter to discuss your experience and self-reflection. These materials will be **due in class October 9**.

5. Seminar paper (65 percent): This of course is the most important assignment. Elements of it will be submitted over the course of the quarter. Your final paper should be about 15-17 pages (including references but not the title page and one-paragraph abstract page), double-spaced, using 12-point Times New Roman Font and one-inch margins (with only the left margin justified). Use APA documentation style, which is explained in detail in chapter 25 of *The New McGraw-Hill Handbook* (see especially the sample student paper on pp. 455-465 showing how your finished paper should look). For an online resource on APA formatting, see <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPA.html>. Diane Hacker's website is good resource on finding resources and documenting them in APA style: <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/social.html> See especially the sample paper.

You have the choice of writing a research paper or policy paper. A *research paper* answers a research question and, in doing so, usually tests a hypothesis. (For example, why did Japan industrialize before any other Asian country? Or in what ways are the US and Chinese economies interconnected, and what are the consequences for the US? Or what are the prospects for an integrated global market in tradable permits for carbon emissions? Or how is the production chain for high-fashion jeans distributed globally, and what are the consequences for workers? Or why have the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa been mired in poverty for so long? Or why is Silicon Valley the leading region in the world for innovation in software and information technology?...

Another option is a *policy paper*, which advocates for action to bring about change or resolve a problem. For example, what national or state-level policies are needed to promote the use of renewable energy technologies (or a specific technology, such as nuclear, wind, solar, etc)? Or what should be done at the global level to reduce extreme poverty in Africa? Or how should genetically modified organisms be regulated? Or how should the international community monitor, deter and punish human trafficking and other types of cross-border criminal activities? Or how should workers organize themselves transnationally to improve their living standards?...Policy papers must not only articulate a compelling, viable solution, they also have to make the case to the reader that the problem exists and merits political action.

You will submit elements of the paper according to the following schedule:

October 16: Statement of research question and working thesis due. This should be in the form of a 1-page memo stating the proposed topic, research question, working thesis or hypothesis, rationale for choosing the topic, and list of sources consulted in the course of choosing the topic. If you're writing a policy paper, this memo should describe the problem, the reason why the problem should be resolved through a policy action, a preliminary statement of what that action might be, and sources consulted to date.

November 4: Annotated bibliography due. Provide an annotated bibliography, using *summative annotations*, for at least ten sources that you have consulted to date. For each document, and evaluative annotation gives a summary, assesses its quality, and notes how it will

be used in the research. Each annotation should be three or four sentences long. For more information, see the Writing Center's "Writer's Resource" page:

<http://www.uwb.edu/writingcenter/resources.html>

Under the "Handouts" section, click on "Annotated bibliography."

November 13: Revised statement of research question and thesis, updated annotated bibliographic, and an outline of the paper due: Refine the original topic paragraph based on the research you have done since submitting the original draft. Make sure the research question or policy problem is clearly defined and posed. Include a *do/say informal outline* like that shown on p. 51 in *The New McGraw-Hill Handbook*. (We'll talk more in class about what this will entail.)

November 26, by 5 PM: Rough draft of paper due in Blackboard digital dropbox. I'll review these over the break and provide you with feedback on December 2.

December 2 and 4: Oral presentation of work in class. Your presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length with 10 minutes or so for questions. You will deliver your presentation using PowerPoint, Keynote, or comparable presentation software, sending me the file through the digital dropbox. You're strongly encouraged to design your presentation in the style recommended by Garr Reynolds in his book *Presentation Zen*, which has a companion website (or rather the book is the companion to the website) at <http://www.presentationzen.com/>. We'll talk about presentation delivery as we near the end of the quarter.

December 10, by 5 PM: Final draft of paper due in my office in hardcopy.

Review of Due Dates

Self-assessment and portfolio: **October 9**

Statement of research question and working thesis: **October 16**

Annotated bibliography: **November 4**

Revised statement of research, bibliography, and outline: **November 13**

Rough draft of paper: **November 26 by 5 PM** (via digital dropbox)

Oral presentations: **December 2 and 4** (presentation file via digital dropbox by 5 PM)

Final draft of paper: **December 10 by 5 PM** in my office in hardcopy

GENERAL POLICIES AND RULES

1. **GRADING:** Final grades are recorded on a 4-point scale, in accordance with UW policy. Tests and problem sets are usually graded on a 100-point scale and converted to the 4-point scale using the following conversion: 95-100=4.0, 90=3.5, 85=3.0, 80=2.5, 75=2.0, 70=1.5, 65=1.0, 60=0.0. A grade of 88 would, for example, correspond to a 3.3. For more information on the UW grading system, see http://www.washington.edu/students/gencat/front/Grading_Sys.html
2. **LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Late work will be docked half a grade point for each day after the due date unless a student has a compelling reason and has consulted with me in advance.
3. **DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS:** Students who believe they have a disability and would like academic accommodations should contact Disability Support Services at 425.352.5307, 425.352.5303 TDD, 425.352.5455 FAX, or at dss@uwb.edu. They will be happy to provide assistance. Students requesting this support will be asked to provide documentation of the disability.
4. **ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Students will normally NOT be allowed to use laptop computers and other electronic equipment in class. If such equipment is needed for taking notes or working an assigned problem, permission must first be obtained from the instructor. To maintain the integrity of the learning environment, students who violate this policy may be dismissed from the classroom.
5. **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** UW students are held to a high standard of academic honesty and integrity. According to UW policy, “academic misconduct includes but is not limited to cheating, facilitation, plagiarism, and fabrication in connection with any exam, research, course assignment, or other academic exercise that contributes, in whole or in part, to the satisfaction of requirements for courses or graduation.” See the following link for definitions and examples of cheating, facilitation, plagiarism, and fabrication, including the process by which such incidences are reported and resolved: http://www.uwb.edu/academic/policies/Academic_Conduct.xhtml
The library has prepared the following reference on plagiarism and strategies for avoiding it: <http://www.uwb.edu/library/guides/research/plagiarism.html>
6. **SUPPORT FOR LEARNING:** The Writing Center provides free consultations to help students develop ideas and communicate them clearly in writing. It is located in UW2-124. Check the website for hours and other details: <http://www.uwb.edu/writingcenter/>
7. **REVISIONS TO THE SYLLABUS:** The syllabus may be amended if circumstances warrant to correct errors or adjust the schedule of readings or of assignments. Should a revision be needed, the new version will be posted to Blackboard along with an announcement.

Schedule of Reading

- Sept 25** Introduction
- Sept 30** *Economic Geography*, chapters 1 and 2 (Conceptual foundations)
- Oct 2** *Economic Geography*, chapter 3 (Why economic growth is so uneven)
[Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, chapter three \(E\)](#)
- Oct 7** *Economic Geography*, chapter 4 (Commodity Chains)
Greg Linden et al, "Who Captures Value in a Global Innovation System? The Case of Apple's iPod," PCIC, UC Irvine, June 2007, available at <http://pcic.merage.uci.edu/papers/2007/AppleiPod.pdf>
- Oct 9** No reading. Turn in portfolio and self assessment. Individual conferences.
- Oct 14** *Economic Geography*, chapter 5 (Technology)
Richard Florida, "Rise of the Creative Class," *Washington Monthly* (May 2002), at <http://www.washingtonmonthly.com/features/2001/0205.florida.html>
- Oct 16** *Economic Geography*, chapter 7 (Government and the State)
- Oct 21** *Economic Geography*, chapter 8 (The Multinational Corporation)
"A Bigger World," *The Economist* (18 Sept 2008) at http://www.economist.com/specialreports/displayStory.cfm?story_id=12080751
- Oct 23** *Economic Geography*, chapter 9 (Workers)
"The China Price," YouTube video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njlXpHp-WNg>
[Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works*, pp. 230-244 \(E\)](#)
- Oct 28** *Economic Geography*, chapter 10 (Consumers)
[Global Insight, "The Economic Impact of Wal-Mart" November 2, 2005 \(E\)](#)
- Oct 30** *Economic Geography*, chapter 11 (Culture and the Firm)
[Jeffrey Liker, *The Toyota Way*, selections \(E\)](#)
- Nov 4** Turn in Annotated Bibliography, Individual Conferences
- Nov 6** *Economic Geography*, chapter 12 (Gender)
[Saskia Sassen, "Women's Burden: Counter-Geographies of Globalization and the Feminization of Survival," *Journal of International Affairs* 53 \(Spring 2000\): 503-524 \(E\)](#)

- Nov 13** *Bridge at the Edge of the World*, Introduction through end of chapter 2
[J.R. McNeill, "Prologue: Peculiarities of a Prodigal Century," *Something New Under the Sun*, pp. 3-17 \(E\)](#)
- Nov 18** *Bridge at the Edge of the World*, chapters 3-6
- Nov 20** *Bridge at the Edge of the World*, chapters 7-9
- Nov 25** *Bridge at the Edge of the World*, chapters 10-12
- Dec 2** Presentations
- Dec 4** Presentations