

GONZAGA-IN-FLORENCE SYLLABUS

Course: SOCI 290: **Cultural Globalization: A Euro-American Perspective**

Credits: 3 Credits

Instructor: **Pierluca Birindelli, Ph.D.**



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Office Hours: by appointment (pierluca.birindelli@gmail.com) and/or directly after class

Meeting times: Tuesday: 3:35 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.

Course Description and Objectives

The aim of the course is to provide the student with an understanding of how ongoing globalization processes affect cultural and social change and the construction of individual and collective identities. The re-shaping of Self-identity in a globalized world, and the relation to a “cultural Other”, will be one of the core focuses of the course. In fact, more people in more parts of the world, through symbolic media figures, dream and consider a greater range of ‘possible’ lives than they have ever done before. Attention will be given to the socio-cultural encounters with “Otherness” in a comparative perspective (United States, Europe and Italy). Signs of the possible European’s lack of the internalization of the American Dream – “You can become ‘Another’; You are not determined by country of origin, status, ethnic group, religion, and gender!” – will be discussed and critically examined. In this course we will point out the main social, cultural and political aspects of globalization. One of the most common denominators in the diverse dimensions of globalization is the subversion of the cardinal assumption of the first modernity, namely the ideal that citizens live, act, and think in a self-enclosed space: the national state. The conceptual figure of “Methodological Nationalism” will therefore be critically analyzed and discussed. Hence, we will examine the space and time compression and its effects on social as well as cultural dynamics, both at a collective level (nations, groups) and at an individual level. The possible convergence of global culture – the greater uniformity of lifestyles, cultural symbols and transnational modes of behavior – and the maintenance of the traditional distinction center/periphery (in the flow of images and landscapes carried by the media) will be critically tackled. We will also consider the dissemination of some peculiar technoscapes, mediascapes, ideoscapes and ethnoscapescapes within the globalization process. The cosmopolitan turn and the difference between the multiculturalist paradigm will be pointed out within the globalization processes. The basic concepts and theories adopted – and shared with the students – allow for an interdisciplinary approach, including Sociology, Cultural Studies, Cultural Anthropology, Social Psychology, Political Science, Communication and Media Studies.

Method

The course has a seminar format. Lectures will introduce the main topic, with the support of slides synthesizing concepts, paradigms, theories and examples extracted from the readings. Sometimes students will carry out in-class exercises (individually or in groups) and report on them. Experiential work will be used to elaborate concepts raised throughout the course.

Course requirements, participation and attendance

Course requirements include a midterm exam, and a research paper. The research paper (5-10 pages) is about one of the topics discussed during the course (or linked to them). In this work students are expected to make reference to the interpretative concepts and methods of analysis acquired during the course as well as citing (at least) one newspaper article and one scholar article about the chosen theme. Information, data and conceptual tools for the research paper are available on my blog: <http://pierluca-birindelli.blogspot.com/>. Attendance is mandatory. Unauthorized absences will have negative consequences for your final grade.

Grading: Class participation: 30%; Mid-term exam: 30%; Research paper: 40%.

Textbook

A course pack will be made available at no charge in Florence

Course Outline & Schedule

Week 1

Introduction to ‘globalization’: definitions, approaches and controversies

- BECK, U. (2000) *What is Globalization*. Cambridge: Polity. *Introduction*: 1-21.

Week 2

Self and other recognition in the age of globalization: the experience of travel

- BAUMAN, Z. (2000) *Globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press. *Tourists and Vagabonds*: 77-102.

Week 3

Identity in a G-World

- BAUMAN, Z. (2001) *Identity in the globalizing world*, in “Social Anthropology” 9, 2: 121–129.

Week 4

Anthropos, ethnos and everyone: cosmopolitanism vs. multiculturalism

- RAPPORT, N. and R. STADE (2007) *A Cosmopolitan Turn - or Return?*, in “Social Anthropology”, 15, 2: 223–235.

Week 5

Self-realization in a globalized world

- WILLIG, R. (2009) *Self-Realization Options. Contemporary Marching Order in the Pursuit of Recognition*, in “Acta Sociologica”, 52(4): 350–364.

Review

Week 6: Midterm exam

Homogeneity vs. hybridization

- CRANE, D. (2002) *Culture and globalization*, in *Global Culture. Media, arts, policy and globalization*. London: Routledge: 1-19.
- TOMLINSON, J. (1996) *Cultural Globalization: Placing and Displacing the West*, in “European Journal of Development Research”, 8, 2: 22-35.

Week 7

The place of Europe and America in late modernity

- BAUMAN, Z. (2004) *Europe: an unfinished adventure*. Cambridge: Polity Press, *Excerpts*.
- RIFKIN, J. (2004) *The European Dream*. Cambridge: Polity, *Excerpts*.

Week 8

Glocality and communication: sense of place, sense of time

- MEYROWITZ, J. (2005) *The rise of glocality. New senses of place and identity in the global village*. in K. Nyiri (Ed.) *A sense of place: The global and the local in mobile communication*. Vienna: Passagen: 21-30.

Final research paper topic submission

Week 9

Power and citizenship in the global age

- BECK, U. (2005) *Reframing Power in the Globalized World*, in “Organization Studies”, 29, 5:793–804.

Week 10

Secularization, de-secularization and ontological security: Europe and United States

- KARNER, C. and A. Aldridge (2004) *Theorizing Religion in a Globalizing World*, in “International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society”, 18, 1: 5-32.
- KOPSTEIN, J. and S. STEINMO (eds., 2008) *Growing apart. America and Europe in the Twenty-First Century*. Cambridge: University Press, *Excerpts*.

Week 11

Violence and justice in the global age

– HELD, D. (2002) *Violence, Law and Justice in a Global Age*, in “Constellations”, 9, 1: 74-88.

Week 12

Risk society

– BECK, U. (2008) *Risk Society's 'Cosmopolitan Moment'*, Lecture at Harvard University, November 12th, 2008: 1-12.

Final review

Week 13

Final research paper and presentation

Basic reference

- BAUMAN, Z. (2000) *Globalization*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- BAUMAN, Z. (2001) *Identity in the globalizing world*, in "Social Anthropology" 9, 2: 121–129.
- BAUMAN, Z. (2004) *Europe: an unfinished adventure*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- BECK, U. (2000) *What is Globalization*. Cambridge: Polity.
- BECK, U. (2005) *Reframing Power in the Globalized World*, in "Organization Studies", 29, 5:793–804.
- BECK, U. (2008) *Risk Society's 'Cosmopolitan Moment'*, Lecture at Harvard University, November 12th, 2008: 1-12.
- CRANE, D. (2002) *Culture and globalization*, in *Global Culture. Media, arts, policy and globalization*. London: Routledge: 1-19.
- HELD, D. (2002) *Violence, Law and Justice in a Global Age*, in "Constellations", 9, 1: 74-88.
- KARNER, C. and A. Aldridge (2004) *Theorizing Religion in a Globalizing World*, in "International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society", 18, 1: 5-32.
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- RAPPORT, N. and R. STADE (2007) *A Cosmopolitan Turn - or Return?*, in "Social Anthropology", 15, 2: 223–235.
- RIFKIN, J. (2004) *The European Dream*. Cambridge: Polity.
- TOMLINSON, J. (1996) *Cultural Globalization: Placing and Displacing the West*, in "European Journal of Development Research", 8, 2: 22-35.
- WILLIG, R. (2009) *Self-Realization Options. Contemporary Marching Order in the Pursuit of Recognition*, in "Acta Sociologica", 52(4): 350–364.

Further readings

- ANDERSON, B. (1991) *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
- APPADURAI, A. (1996) *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- APPADURAI, A. (ed. 2000) *Globalization*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- APPIAH, K. (2007) *Cosmopolitanism*. New York: Norton.
- CASTELLS, M. (1996-2000) *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- FEATHERSTONE, M. (ed. 1993) *Global culture*. London: Sage.
- GRISWOLD, W. (1994) *Cultures and Societies in a Changing World*. London: Sage.
- HELD, D. and A., MCGREW (Eds. 2007) *Globalization theory: approaches and controversies*. Cambridge: Polity.
- MEYROWITZ, J. (1985) *No Sense of Place*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- ROBERTSON, R. (1995) *Glocalization: time-space and homogeneity-heterogeneity*, in M. Featherstone, S. Lasch and R. Robertson (eds.) *Global Modernities*. London: Sage.