Junior Seminar II  
Social Thought and Political Economy 392H  
Tu/Th: 11.00-12.45  
Fall 2011  
Machmer, W21

Sreela Sarkar  
Email: ssarkar@comm.umass.edu

Office Hours: Th 3.00-5.00 or by appointment  
E-36, Machmer Hall.

Course Description and Objectives

This course is the second seminar in the year long STEPC Junior Seminar sequence. In Junior I, we focused on reading and discussion of key foundational Eurocentric texts and some postcolonial non-Western contemporaries from the 16th century onwards to explore the driving forces behind the production of modernity as a Western episteme (the way we organize and learn the world today). In Junior II, we will turn to understanding in more detail the complex ways in which the political, social, and cultural practices and philosophies of the 20th century relate to the contradictions and pitfalls of modernity. In particular, we will critically try to study modernization, economic liberalism, corporate governance, the culture industry, cultural hybridity, the development industry and new social movements especially in the context of globalization. As this is an interdisciplinary class, we will be bringing tools from various disciplines (i.e. economy, sociology, anthropology, political science, history and cultural studies), always paying special attention to the construction and reception of ideas in specific context differentiated by class, race, gender, religion, geopolitics, and local politics allegiance.

The objectives of this course are to prepare students:

1. To read primary texts while fostering a broad critical understanding of historical grounded texts and their persistence in contemporary case studies;

2. To know the main authors, intellectual and cultural lineages, and the relation of theory to historical contexts as both causal and consequential;

3. To relate learned abstract concepts to governmental policies, and their reformulations in resistant social actions;

4. To develop an awareness of key social theories and movements, and critically identify them in your personal experiences, memories, epistemologies, politics;
5. And to incorporate reflection and research on these topics to your independent learning.

The readings in this course will provide an important background to understand our societies today and will empower students with enough critical tools to break down thought as it was rooted in historical contexts and their implications in society today, hoping to enable students to contest Eurocentric theories while learning alternative models. Importantly, we will always try to understand the relevance of "theory" to praxis and the contested worlds that we all form a part.

I expect you to keep up with the assigned readings, assignments and importantly, to engage in depth and meaningfully with the material that we read. This course is an advance university course; it requires much reading, but also intelligent and productive discussion and analysis.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Readings and Syllabus

All readings and a copy of this syllabus are updated in SPARK. We will follow the syllabus but may collectively decide to modify some readings as we progress during the semester. It is very important that you are able to use SPARK to access required course readings. If you are unsure about how to use SPARK or are encountering problems, please visit the SPARK help section on the OIT webpage http://www.oit.umass.edu/spark/students/index.html. If you are still unable to use SPARK please contact me immediately.

Attendance

Attendance will affect your participation both in lectures and discussion sections. This is not an online course, and therefore your presence and punctuality are required. I will accept only THREE (3) unexcused absences. Every absence after that will lower your final grade by a third of a letter. Also, every THREE (3) late presents will count as ONE (1) unexcused absence. All excused absences MUST be accompanied by proper documentation (doctor's note, obituary, athletic department letters, etc).

Late Assignments

It is difficult for the Instructor to coordinate grading, ensure fairness or return papers in a timely manner when assignments are not handed in on time. Each day an analytical paper is late; it will receive a 5% reduction in grade. Analytical assignments will not be expected more than one (1) week after the assignment was originally due unless there are extenuating circumstances (such as illness that can be documented), in which case the instructor and the student will come to an agreement. Please note that final papers will not be accepted at all after the due date to prevent confusion in giving final grades at the end of the semester.
Communication with the instructor

You are encouraged to meet with the instructor during office hours to chart your individual learning and progress in this class. All emails will be answered within twenty-four hours other than weekends. You are required to have at least one individual meeting with the instructor during the semester especially as you progress with readings and assignments in class. Additionally, we will try to hold discussion sessions to talk about our learning collectively as a class.

Electronic Devices

All electronic devices should be in the off or silent positions and out of sight during class sessions. Laptops should be used only to take notes or to access material directly relevant to class discussions.

Academic Honesty

Please remember that plagiarism is a serious academic offense. You should review the University's policies on academic honesty at

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acdhonesty/

Please be aware that you will get an F for the class if plagiarism occurs.

Students with Disabilities and Special Needs

Every student learns in a different way. Non-mainstream ways of learning may be labeled as “disabilities”. If you require any accommodations that can be provided in partnership with Disability Services, and/or if you have a physical, psychological, emotional, or learning disability that makes it difficult for you to participate in class or carry out the work as outlined for this course, please contact me via email during the first two weeks of the course (no later than Tuesday, September 20) so we can make appropriate arrangements.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

You will be evaluated in the course based on the quality of your written work combined with your attendance and participation. Your grades will not be based on your beliefs or whether you agree with the perspectives presented in class but on your knowledge of the material, rigor in analysis and writing skills. Below is a general guide of the assignments.

Discussion Questions, Concept Notes and Participation

Talking about what you think will NOT pass you! The reading of the material is necessary for any real discussion. Critical discussions are necessary for any real significant learning. Each class students must prepare at least 3 discussion questions and 3 fleshed-out definitions of the major concepts from the readings for each class. I will collect these from time to time and may call upon you to share your discussion questions and concept definitions in class. Additionally, you are expected to take charge of the class space and participate in class discussions regularly. Please note that participation counts for 10% of your total grade in the class.
Co-facilitation of a class session

As part of our commitment to a participatory classroom each student is expected to co-facilitate part of one (1) class session. A sign-up sheet will be passed around the first week of the semester so that everyone can sign-up. This is not a formal lecture. The student should prepare to present for 10-15 minutes and lead the rest of the class time in meaningful discussion on the session topic. Creativity and interactive presentations are encouraged and additional resources can be used as necessary. On the day of your presentation please arrive early to write your questions/quotes on the board or come prepared with handouts etc.

Analytical papers

Write three (3) analytical papers. You are also expected to bring 7 paper copies to share in class. The analytical paper should be 4-6 pages long, critical pieces containing your reactions to issues raised from a series of readings. These papers are due on 10/04, 10/27 and 11/15. I may also give you a series of questions to choose from while writing these papers. The purpose of these short analytical papers is to help you understand the main argument of the texts and different authors in conversation. I will give out hand-outs with more details about expectations from analytical papers.

Final Paper

You will write a longer final paper that is 12-15 pages long that shows your ability to analyze texts, support your arguments textually, and make broader connections with other texts of the course centered on a theme of your choice that is relevant to the course and class readings. Before writing a final paper, you are required to hand in a paper synopsis and bibliography. You are encouraged to use sources from outside the class. More details about the final paper will be made available in a hand-out. Your annotated bibliography and summary are due on 12/01. The final paper is due on 12/15.

Class Exercises

In addition to your presentations and participation in class discussions, we will do other exercises in class along with assigned readings. These may include presenting each other’s work, political biographies and media analysis exercises. These will form a part of your participation grade.

Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation 10%, Co-facilitating class sessions 10%, Analytical papers 15% each (total 45%), Final Paper 35%

A 94-100 points, A- 93-90 points, B+ 87-89 points, B 84-86 points, B- 80-83 points, C+ 77-79 points, C 74-76 points, C- 68-73 points, D+ D 64-67 points, 60-63 points, and F below 60 points
READING SCHEDULE

Tu.9/6: Introduction to STPEC Junior Seminar II

Rethinking Modernization


Understanding Capital and Corporate Governance


Global Compact Critics - [http://globalcompactcritics.blogspot.com/](http://globalcompactcritics.blogspot.com/)

Imperialism and the Culture Industry


World- Systems Analysis

Tu. 10/04: Film Screening

Paper 1 Due

**Ethnography from the Margins**

Tu 10/11: No Class. Monday class schedule is followed.

Th. 10/13: TBA


**Cultural Hybridity**


Th. 10/27: Film Screening

**Paper 2 Due**

**Discussions on the American Left**


**The “Third World” and the “Fourth World” and the Development Industry**


**Environment and Social Movements**

Tu. 11/15: TBA

**Paper 3 Due**

Th. 11/17: TBA
Globalization and Unequal Allies


Thanksgiving Break!!!


Identity Politics and Radical Democracy


Annotated Bibliography and Final Paper Summary Due


Th. 12/08: Course Wrap-up. Annotated Bibliographies returned with feedback.

Final Paper due December 15, Thursday