Junior Seminar II
Social Thought and Political Economy 392H
Tu/Th: 1-2.15 Draper Hall, 124
Friday: 1.25-2.15
Fall 2010

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Office Hours: Th 3.00-5.00 or by appointment
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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 a lot from you and you should expect a lot from yourselves. This course is an advance university course; it requires much reading, but mainly thinking and analysis. The reading of the material is necessary for any real discussion. Discussions are necessary for any real significant learning.

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.

Friday Discussion Sections

We will use Fridays to talk about ideas from the week's readings that we may not have had time for during lectures, to preview next week's readings and to bring in additional learning material such as
interesting films, books and media reports. I may call upon students to facilitate Fridays so that these sessions are a fluid, learning space for all of us and you should feel free to take charge of these sessions in creative and relevant ways. Please see attendance requirements for Fridays in the above section titled Attendance.

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/acadhonesty/

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 21) so we can make appropriate arrangements.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION

You will be evaluated in the course based on the quality and care 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. 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 five-ten 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. In addition, 2 students will be collectively in-charge of each Friday’s discussion.

Analytical papers

Write four (4) 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 10/05, 10/28, 11/16 and 12/02. 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. The final paper is due on 12/16.

Grading Criteria

Attendance and Participation 10%, Co-facilitating 2 class sessions 10%, Analytical papers 10% each (total 40%), Final Paper 40%

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

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READING SCHEDULE

Tu. 9/7: Introduction

Rethinking Modernization


Tu. 9/14: Frantz Fanon (1965). The Pitfalls of National Consciousness”. The Wretched of the Earth. New York: Grove Press, 148-205


Understanding Capital and Corporate Governance


Global Compact Critics - http://globalcompacteritcs.blogspot.com/

Imperialism and the Culture Industry


World System Analysis

Tu. 10/05: Film Screening

Paper 1 Due

The Subaltern School

Tu 10/12: No Class. Monday class schedule is followed.


Cultural Hybridity


Th. 10/28: Film Screening – Hybridity

Paper 2 Due

Discussions on the American Left


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


New Social Movements


Paper 3 Due

**Globalization and Unequal Allies**


**Thanksgiving Break!!!**


**Identity Politics and Radical Democracy**


**Paper 4 Due**


Th. 12/09: Course Wrap-up

**Final Paper due December 16**