

Sociology 236: Global Social Problems Fall 2018

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Social Science 8112a
Office hours: Tuesday 1:15-3:15
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This class will explore global social issues, with an emphasis on challenges facing developing regions. In working through some contemporary debates – from how to deal with urban poverty, to the drivers of global immigration, to explanations for the recent ebola epidemic -- we will explore some of the larger dynamics shaping our world today, from interactions between the changing global economy, historical legacies, and the structure of international institutions, to policy debates about public health, environmental challenges and social inequality.

Readings will be available electronically through Learn@UW. Grades will be based on three short response essays (15 percent each); participation including an in-class presentation (15 percent), and a 5-8 page research paper (40 percent).

I September 5

Introduction

C. Wright Mills, “The Sociological Imagination” (1959), 1-5

II. September 10, 12

Changing communities

Amy Goldstein, *Janesville: An American Story* (2017), 1-6, 24-35, 58-61, 75-84, 103-114, 261-274, 291-297

Jeffrey Rothstein, *When Good Jobs Go Bad: Globalization...in the North American Auto Industry* (2016), Chapter 1

III. September 17, 19

Living in a global economy

Jeffrey Rothstein, *When Good Jobs Go Bad: Globalization...in the North American Auto Industry* (2016), Chapters 4, 5, 6

Swanson and Tankersley, “Potential auto tariffs prompt warnings from industry and allies”, NYT May 24, 2018

IV. September 24, 26

An integrated world

Kathleen Schwartzmann, *The Chicken Trail* (2011), chapters tba

Rob Davies and Larry Eliot, “Giant shipload of soya circles off China, victim of trade war with US”. *The Guardian*, August 8, 2018

**first response paper due*

V. October 1, 3

Crossing borders

Lauren Markham, *The Far Away Brothers* (2017), 1-68, 69-112

VI. October 8, 10

Seeking haven

Lauren Markham, *The Far Away Brothers* (2017), 113-204, 205-286

Lauren Markham, "A warming world creates desperate people", NYT June 29, 2018

**second response paper due*

VII. October 15, 17

Tensions in the Sahel

AP, "Hundreds of migrants storm fences to enter Spanish enclave in Africa," NYT July 26, 2018

Joe Penny, "Europe benefits by bankrolling an anti-migrant effort. Niger pays a price." NYT August 25, 2018.

International Crisis Group, "Central Mali: An uprising in the making?" July 2016

International Crisis Group, "The Politics of Islam in Mali: Separating Myth from Reality" July, 2017.

Timbuktu (film, fiction)

VIII. October 22, 24

**Monday October 22: Library session, details tba.*

Global Health: The ebola crisis

Allen Howard (2017), "Ebola and Regional History: Connections and Common Experiences"

Alpha Amadou Bano Barry (2017), "Interpreting the health, social and political dimensions of the ebola crisis in Guinea"

Meredith Turshu and Teferu Gezmu (2017), "The World Health Organization and the ebola epidemic"

Amy Yee, "In a corner of Senegal, a victory over malaria", NYT, May 1, 2018

**research topic due*

IX. October 29, 31

Resources and development

John Campbell and Matthew Page (2018) *Nigeria: What everyone needs to know*, 1-8, 46-68, 122-142

X. November 5, 7

Distrusting the state

Alexis Okeowo, *A Moonless, Starless Sky* (2017), 65-100, 184-207

Tracy McVeigh, "Nigeria battles to beat polio and Boko Haram", *The Guardian*, May 6, 2017

Emmanuel Akinwoto, "Deadly lack of security plagues Nigeria" NYT August 15, 2018

**third response paper due*

XI. November 12, 14

Resource curse?

Big Men (documentary)

Steve Coll, *Private Empire: Exxon Mobile and American Power* (2012), 451-477, 508-533

William Neuman and Clifford Krauss, "Workers flee and thieves loot Venezuela's reeling oil giant", NYT June 14, 2018

XII. November 19, 21

Confronting Climate Change

Manoj Roy, Joseph Hanlon, David Hulme, *Bangladesh Confronts Climate Change: Keeping our heads above water* (2016), chapters 1 and 12

Somini Sengupta and Henry Fountain, "The biggest refugee camp braces for rain: This is going to be a catastrophe", NYT March 14, 2018

**bibliography due*

XIII. November 26, 28

Climate change: Urban adaptation

Nicola Banks (2016) "Urban livelihoods in an era of climate change: Household adaptations and their limitations in Dhaka, Bangladesh"

Somini Sengupta, "The city of my birth in India is becoming a climate casualty. It didn't have to be". NYT, July 31, 2018

XIV. December 3, 5

Presentations

In-class presentations

XV. December 10, 12

Presentations

**Final paper due*

Accommodations. Please send the instructor an email by the end of the second week of the course if you are eligible for special arrangements or accommodations for testing, assignments, or other aspects of the course. This may be the case if English is your second language or you experience a physical or psychological condition that makes it difficult for you to complete assignments and/or exams without some modification of those tasks. Accommodations are provided for students who qualify for disability services through the McBurney Center <<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>> . Their website has detailed instructions about how to qualify: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>. Provide a copy of your accommodations request (VISA) to the instructor by the end of the second week of class. We try to reserve rooms and proctors by the third week in class, so we must know of all accommodations by then.

If you wish to request a scheduling accommodation for religious observances, send an email by the end of the second week of the course stating the specific date(s) for which you request accommodation; campus policy requires that religious observances be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term. See the university's web page <<https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>> for details: <https://kb.wisc.edu/page.php?id=21698>

Academic honesty. As with all courses at the University of Wisconsin, you are expected to follow the University's rules and regulations pertaining to academic honesty and integrity. The standards are outlined by the Office of the Dean of Students <<http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>> at <http://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/>

Beyond the specific substantive and methodological content covered in this course, this course seeks to achieve the following instructional objectives designated as priorities by the Department of sociology:

* Critically Evaluate Published Research. Sociology graduates will be able to read and evaluate published research as it appears in academic journals and popular or policy publications.

* Communicate Skillfully: Sociology majors write papers and make oral presentations that build arguments and assess evidence in a clear and effective manner.

* Critical Thinking about Society and Social Processes: Sociology graduates can look beyond the surface of issues to discover the "why" and "how" of social order and structure and consider the underlying social mechanisms that may be creating a situation, identify evidence that may adjudicate between alternate explanations for phenomena, and develop proposed policies or action plans in light of theory and data.

* See Things from a Global Perspective: Sociologists learn about different cultures, groups, and societies across both time and place. They are aware of the diversity of backgrounds and experiences among residents of the United States. They understand the ways events and processes in one country are linked to those in other countries.

* Prepare for Graduate School and the Job Market: Students use their social research skills to identify opportunities for

employment or further study, assess their qualifications for these opportunities, and identify strategies for gaining the necessary knowledge and experience to improve their qualifications. Students are encouraged to develop and maintain portfolios of their written work and educational experiences to aid them in preparing applications and to learn how to present their work.

Credits:

This class meets for two 75-minute class periods each week over the semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, problem sets, studying, etc) for about 3 hours out of classroom for every class period.