

DSSC 8111, Fall 2007

Ways of Knowing: the Colonial, the Global, and the Situated

Wednesdays 12pm – 1:30pm

HH Humphrey Center 25

Prof. Michael Goldman

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Overview

This seminar seeks to present a variety of critical perspectives on disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning, with a substantive focus on the ideas of globalization and global expertise. We are interested in thinking through the process of knowledge production, as well as the authority, privilege, and legitimacy that often accompanies the process of producing expertise, and the responsibilities we inherit as scholars. Who and what is our work for, and what type of scholarship do we choose to produce? How can we appreciate the partiality of our knowledge, and how can we be clear as to what we are claiming, and what and who we are leaving out in our claims? The common idea of globalization and the more implicit realm of global expertise are problematic in that they put the role of the expert – especially the global expert, perhaps us – in an unusually powerful role. What are the histories of such practices, and what are their institutional effects? How can we create a role for ourselves, and how can we conduct robust research that captures the essence of transnational phenomena without reproducing the inequitable and (post)colonial practices implicit in global claims-making?

Our understanding of modernity, science, truth, and our ability to understand the world, is heavily mediated by historical conjuncture and contingencies. Hence, we start with readings from Latin Americanists who argue that we cannot understand contemporary concepts of universal citizenship, governance, and knowledge without an analytical framework steeped in the particular colonial histories of the Americas and Europe. We will read Africanists who question the fuzzy idea of globalization because of its silences on the particularities of African experiences, and South Asianists who redress the historiography of India which only uses data and voices from elites by developing a method for excavating the worlds of silenced subaltern (majority) populations. These scholars consciously eschew universal claims for partial explanations that scrutinize the taken-for-granted methods and theories that we inherit which often reflect the desires, imaginaries, and wants of elite classes and subvert and ignore the complex worlds of the majority.

Although the course will be taught by a sociologist, we are fortunate to have guest scholars from different disciplines presenting a wide variety of critically engaged perspectives and epistemologies on “ways of knowing.”

Course Work

The course is designed for graduate students, taught in seminar style, starting with very short presentations by either the guest or the instructor, followed by extensive discussion and participations by students. To intensify the caliber of our engagement with each other and the materials, the course uses a format that includes email. Students will email one-page comments on the readings by Tuesday 6 pm to everyone in the seminar, and students are expected to read all the email contributions *before* class. Everyone, of course, is welcome to add a response or synthesis of the comments too. Therefore, by the start of class each week, we will have already completed a round-plus of highly engaged discussion on the readings and comments, and we will be ready to engage each other and the texts, films, and presentations even more thoroughly and creatively, building upon each other's ideas.

There will also be a final paper, 10 pages, that takes themes from four of the weeks and have them in conversation with your own work, and specifically uses them to reframe your research question in light of the seminar's quest for interdisciplinary and critical thinking. Your final grade will be based on your weekly class contributions – your weekly essays and your participation in class -- (60%) and your final paper (40%). This syllabus is subject to change and changes will be announced in class in advance.

Course materials

Reading materials will be available through the class WEB-CT site.

Course Schedule

Part One: Different Ways of Knowing: Coloniality, Subalternity, and Postcoloniality

Wed. Sept. 5: Week One - Introduction

Guest Scholar: Prof. Allen Isaacmen, History, Director of ICGC

In advance, read Frederick Cooper, "What Is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective." *African Affairs*, 100 (2001): 189-213

Wed. Sept. 12: Week Two – Latin America and the Coloniality of Power

Guest Scholar: Prof. Ana Paula Ferreira, Chair, Spanish and Portuguese

Read:

1) Dussel, Enrique. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of the Other and the Myth of Modernity*. Trans. Michael Berber. New York: Continuum, 1995. Chapter 1: Eurocentrism; espec. Apendix 1: Diverse Meanings of the Terms Europe, the Occident, Modernity, Late Capitalism; Apendix 2: Appendix 2: Two Paradigms of Modernity
<http://168.96.200.17/ar/libros/dussel/1492in/1492in.html>

2) Quijano, Anibal. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America." *Nepantla: Views from South* 1.3 (2000) 533-580.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/floyd.lib.umn.edu/journals/nepantla/v001/1.3quijano.html>

Wed. Sept. 19: Week Three -- Africa and the Postcolony

Guest Scholar: Prof. Bud Duvall, Chair, Political Science

Watch film, "Blood Diamond"

Read: Mbembe, Achille, "African Modes of Self-Writing," *Public Culture*, 2002, 14(1): 239-273

Wed. Sept. 26: Week Four – South Asia and Subalternity

Guest Scholar: Prof. Ajay Skaria, History and Global Studies

Read: Shahid Amin, "Gandhi as Mahatma" in Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, eds., Selected Subaltern Studies (New York: Oxford UP, 1988).

Part Two: Rethinking Environmental Policy

Wed. Oct. 3: Week Five – "Behind the scenes" of environmental policy

Guest Scholar: Olivia LeDee, Fisheries Wildlife and Conservation Biology

Read: 1) Hardin, G. 1968. "Tragedy of the Commons." *Science*, 162(3859): 1243-1248.

2) Lele, S. and Norgaard, R. 1996. "Sustainability and the Scientist's Burden." *Conservation Biology*. 10(2): 354-365.

3) Loreau et al. 2006. "Diversity without representation." *Science*, 440(20): 245-246.

Wed. Oct. 10: Week Six – Struggling over Global Environmental Policy

Guest Scholar: Prof. Anne Kapuscinski, Fisheries Wildlife and Conservation Biology

Read: Brister, D. and Kapuscinski, A. "A life cycle framework to identify effects of aquaculture on environmental, economic, and social sustainability goals: a tool for organic and other eco-labeling systems." There is also an excel worksheet titled "Brister_Sustainability_Matrix."

Wed. Oct. 17: Week Seven -- Knowledge and Power at the World Bank

Read Michael Goldman, Imperial Nature, "The Birth of a Discipline: Producing Environmental Knowledge for the World," Yale U Press, 2005; and Goldman, "How Water for All!: Policy Became Hegemonic: The Power of the World Bank and its Transnational Policy Networks," Geoforum 38(2007):786-800..

Wed. Oct. 24: Week Eight -- Contradictions of Conservation and Indigenous Rights

Guest Scholar: Prof. Libby Lunstrum York University, Geography, and alumna of the MacArthur Program

Li, T. 2001. "Boundary work: community, market, and state reconsidered," in A.

Agarwal and C. Gibson (eds.), *Communities and the environment: ethnicity, gender, and the state in community-based conservation*. New Brunswick, NJ:

Rutgers University Press, 157-79. (photocopy in ICGC office)

Part Four: Studying/ Transforming Global Processes

Wed. Oct 31: Week Nine – Orality and Literacy

Guest Scholar, Prof. Charlie Sugnet, English

Watch Film, “La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil”

Read: Charles Sugnet, “Wolof Orality, Senghorian Literacy, and the Status of Cinema in Djibril Diop Mambety’s *La Petite Vendeuse de Soleil*,” French Review 79:6, May 2006.

Wed. Nov. 7: Week Ten – Race, Nationalism, and Citizenship in Tanzania

Guest Scholar: Prof. Ron Aminzade, Sociology

Read: Aminzade, R. Race, Nationalism, And Citizenship In 20th Century Tanzania. Chapter 1, “Nationalism and Its Others: Processes of Inclusion and Exclusion”

Wed. Nov. 14: Week Eleven - Transnational Video-Ethnography

Guest Scholar:

Reading: Sujatha Fernande, *Cuba Represent* (2006). "Fear of a Black Nation: Local Rappers, Transnational Crossings, and State Power."

Wed. Nov 21: Thanksgiving Holiday!

Wed. Nov 28: Week Thirteen – Studying transnational movements

Guest Scholar: Prof. Rachel Schurman, Sociology and Global Studies

Read: Rachel Schurman and William Munro, “Fighting Frankenfoods: Industry Structures and the Efficacy of the Anti-Biotech Movement in Western Europe.” 2004. *Social Problems*, 51(2): 243-268.

Wed., Dec. 5: Week Fourteen – The Arts of Resistance

Guest Scholar/Performer: Ananya Chatterjea

Read: Ananya Chatterjea, *Butting Out*, Chapter 3: “The Body Mobile, Mobilized, Mobilizing...Or, Regarding Legacies”

Wed. Dec. 12: Week Fifteen – Concluding Discussion

Final Papers due, Monday Dec. 17, 3pm in my office, 952 Social Sciences Bldg, or in the Sociology department office (909).