

Proposal for Connections: Local to Global

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1. What course does the department plan to offer in Connections?

SOCL 240: Global Social Problems

Which subcategory are you proposing for this course?

Local to Global

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory?

a. Analyze issues on local and global scales.

This course provides a survey of inequality in the contemporary globalized world. Even though the US is used as a point of departure (the local), the main focus of this course is global. More specifically, the course examines inequality as it manifests itself through poverty around the world. This is done with the understanding that inequality is both a local and a global phenomenon and must, therefore, be considered within a global framework. The course begins by examining selected theories or explanations of local/global inequality. In doing so, it examines relationships that lead to inequality within and between nations (e.g. between the rich and poor countries). In examining these explanations, the course critically analyzes and interrogates different theoretical approaches to understanding poverty and assess the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of local and global efforts to deal with it.

b. Examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues.

“Think globally, act locally,” is a call for empirical examination and critical reflection on varied social problems. Issues such as poverty, population growth, diseases, environmental degradation, organized crime, immigration and more, affect local communities and everyday life in various ways that are sometimes difficult to comprehend. This course is designed to expose students to the local/global dimensions of these issues in more comprehensible way with a view that students will be better informed and equipped as a “local” citizen with a stake in a “global” world. Most people, more so in rich countries, see poverty as an “Other” problem. However, this perception fails to recognize that the “othering” of poverty leads to problems like terrorism, marine piracy, communicable diseases that have both local and global consequences. This course challenges students to comprehend local/global poverty/inequality (as the root of most social problems) beyond the “other-ness” by requiring students to see how poverty is construed, created, sustained and tackled at both local and global levels.

c. Evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales.

The course will explore the following:

- a. The roots of local and global inequality/poverty
- b. How local conditions interact with global forces to perpetuate inequality/poverty
- c. Challenges in dealing with inequality/poverty

d. Global and local solutions to inequality/poverty

3. Why should this course be in Colonnade?

There is a quote that I will paraphrase to demonstrate why Global Social Problems should be included in the Colonnade. Students who learn about “global issues feel more empowered to tackle them, rather than be overwhelmed by the extent of the problems”. This quote captures the tenor of the course. It is not that students don’t want to be involved with issues that only affect “Others”; they will not be involved if they don’t know about them. This course will not only illuminate these problems and challenge students to examine how they are socially constructed, but also demonstrate how much of their own privileges are intertwined with the “others” poverty. Allowing students to interrogate global social problems critically will help develop analytical skills that they can use to generate realistic and long-term solutions to both local and global problems.

4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course.

The prerequisite for the course is SOCL 100 (a course already accepted in the explorations column of the colonnade program) or consent of instructor.

1. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for this course.

By the end of this course, students’ should be able to

1. Explain how sociologists approach the study of global social problems (i.e. Understand the difference between the objectivist and social constructionist perspective.
2. Identify how social problems in our society (and others) are connected to larger global issues.
3. Apply sociological theories that vary in how they define the source of the underlying problem, including the structural functionalist perspective and the conflict perspective.
4. Critically evaluate current interventions and proposed solutions to specific global social problems and assess the consequences for various actors at the local and global levels.

6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.

The final project of the course is a “global poverty country research paper”. The paper will consist of 5-8 pages on the causes, consequences, and solutions to poverty in a particular developing country. The research paper will use United States as a baseline. Students are required to use a minimum of 8 quality sources (i.e., sources that are academically rigorous). Students will be expected to use the knowledge and information learned in the course to write the paper. The outline of the paper will follow the format provided at the end of the syllabus. The final project will be evaluated on the strengths it reflects the local/global dimension of poverty. For example is the poverty in Nigeria solely a local problem or does it have global causes?

Each year, the departmental assessment committee will randomly select a sample of global poverty country research papers to assess the following learning objectives:

- Does the paper analyze issues on both a local and global scale?

- Does the paper examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues?
- Does the paper evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales?

7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

This course relies heavily on class discussion of the readings and use of real life examples from around the world. As a consequence, students are able to develop skills in argumentation and use of evidence in understanding global inequality/poverty. Tests are also designed to reflect argumentation skills and use of evidence not to mention the term paper that requires students to conduct library research on poverty.

8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

One section every Spring semester

9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course.

SOCL 240: GLOBAL SOCIAL PROBLEMS

INSTRUCTOR: John Musalia

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Just how rich are the richest people in the world? And how poor are the poorest? More than ever before, these questions are being asked at the international level. With improvements in communication, transportation, and information technology, the world is constantly getting smaller and increasingly interdependent. Today, more people are “thinking globally” in terms of business, education, leisure, and culture, while at the same time they are “acting locally” to protect identity and lifestyles.

This course provides a survey of inequality in the contemporary world. Even though the US is used as a point of departure, the main focus of this course is not the US. Instead, the US is considered as one of the many societies and cultures that this course will examine. More specifically, this course examines inequality as it manifests itself through poverty around the world. Because poverty is a global problem, it has to be understood using a global lens.

The course begins by examining selected theories of global inequality. In doing so we examine relationships that lead to inequality within and between nations (e.g. between the Industrialized countries and poor countries). In examining these explanations, we critically analyze different theoretical approaches to understand poverty and assess the effectiveness (or ineffectiveness) of global efforts to combat poverty.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course you should:

1. Explain how sociologists approach the study of global social problems.

2. Identify how social problems in our society (and others) are connected to larger global issues.
3. Apply sociological theories that vary in how they define the source of the underlying problem, including the structural functionalist perspective and the conflict perspective.
4. Critically evaluate current interventions and proposed solutions to specific global social problems and assess the consequences for various actors at the local and global levels.

More specifically you should:

- 1) Understand the various definitions of poverty
- 2) Use different theoretical frameworks as tools to understand and interpret local/global poverty.
- 3) Understand the magnitude, consequences and solutions to local/global poverty

In a nutshell, we will address the following questions:

- a) Is poverty inevitable? Can rich countries help poor countries? Should they?
- b) Why are some countries rich and others poor?
- c) Are rich industrialized countries the root cause of poor countries problems?
- d) What are causes and consequences of living in poverty?
- e) What are the solutions to global poverty?

REQUIRED READINGS:

This class has no required book instead we shall use various reading materials that will be accessed through Blackboard.

(<https://blackboard.wku.edu>)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Course requirements include class attendance, class participation, group activities, assigned readings, and exams.

Examination.

(i) You will be expected to take a total of two in-class exams during the course of the semester. The mid-term exams will take the form of short-answer and essay questions, while the final exam will take the form of multiple choice questions. The exams will account for 40% of your grade.

ii) You will also be required to turn in four one-two page brief summaries of the readings from any of the topic areas we will be covering. The summaries will earn you a total of 20% of your course grade. Each summary is due by email to me by 8pm the day before the class when we do the readings in question.

Global Poverty Country Research Paper.

Each student will complete an 8 to 10 page research paper on the Causes, Consequences, and Cures of Poverty in a particular developing country that they will present to the class during the

last two weeks of class. Each presentation should last no more than 15 minutes. All country choices must be approved by the instructor. The student is expected to apply all knowledge and information learned in this class and readings to the development of the paper. A separate handout is attached explaining the requirements of this paper. This paper is worth 30% of your grade.

Class Participation.

You will also be expected to actively participate in the learning process by asking questions, answering questions, and making any meaningful contribution to the learning of the subject matter under discussion. Class participation will carry a maximum of 10%.

Late assignments:

Ordinarily, I DO NOT accept late assignments. Should any emergency arise that will prevent you from handing in your assignment in time you must contact me regarding this NOT LESS THAN 24 HOURS before the assignment is due. Documentary evidence will be required to support your absence.

Final Grade:

Your final grade will be computed based on the percentage weightings indicated. In the event of a borderline grade, I may use my discretion in adjusting grades based on course participation and effort. Incompletes will not be given, except in unusual circumstance.

Your letter grades will be assigned as follows:

A = 90.00 – 100.00% C = 70.00 – 79.99%
B = 80.00 – 89.99% D = 60.00 – 69.99%
F = < 60%

COURSE GUIDELINES

I am generally a friendly person, but take class matters rather seriously. Because of this, I have guidelines for the class that need to be considered carefully. Your continued attendance of this class after reading these guidelines will be considered as an agreement to abide by the guidelines.

Be on time. I start and finish my classes on time. Moreover, I take roll only once - at the beginning of class. Getting to the class after the roll has been taken will NOT be considered as an attendance for purposes of this course.

2. I do not give make-up exams except on extreme and documented emergencies. Besides, the dates for the exams are FIXED and cannot change, save for under very severe and extreme circumstances.
3. This course is designed to be informative and the assignments and exams

will be used to find out if this goal is being achieved. If for any reasons you are encountering any difficulties regarding this course or its requirements, see me immediately.

All assigned readings for each class should be completed BEFORE the day's class.

5. In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services in DUC A-200 of the Student Success Center in Downing University Center. Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from me without a letter of accommodation from the Office for Student Disability Services.

Disclaimer:

This syllabus is subject to change by the course instructor any time during the course of the semester should such changes be necessary to facilitate the pedagogical objectives of this course.

NOTE: Keep copies of all your course work including reflection papers, exams, and essay until you get your final grade.

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