A ubiquitous term within academic and popular usage, globalization remains a much debated and misunderstood process. Often portrayed as merely a post-World War II phenomenon, within this seminar we will take a longer view of the transformations of communities, places, things and subjectivities that globalization entails. We will examine the ways in which the processes labeled globalization have been theorized, and the anthropological methods used to understand them. Through reading ethnographies and engaging Smithsonian Collections and exhibits we will examine the various ways in which people’s everyday lives are impacted by these processes, what does and doesn’t circulate as part of them and how people are engaging globalization along different scales, temporalities and through different practices and things.
Assignments

1. **Class Participation and Attendance – 20%** Students will participate in each seminar discussion. This means speaking in class, saying reasonably well thought-out things that demonstrate that you have done the assigned readings. Non-participation will result in a lower final grade in the course.

2. **Leading Seminar Discussion, Critical Analysis & Questions – 30%** Each student will lead one seminar discussion. This does not mean that you will summarize the readings for the seminar, rather you will prepare a three page critical analysis of the readings (to be e-mailed to the instructor no later than 9 am on the day of the seminar) and a set of discussion questions (to be e-mailed to the entire seminar no later than 9 am on the day of seminar). Your three page critical analysis and questions will provide grounds for the beginning of our discussion. **Please feel free to bring hand-outs and or a power-point to help lead the discussion.**

   *The second seminar (Sept. 6) you will select the week you will lead seminar.*

3. **Paper – 50%** Each of you will do a research paper examining globalization narratives and realities explicitly or implicitly present in NMNH or the wider Smithsonian. For this paper you will choose a display in the museum (i.e., Butterfly Exhibit, IMAX theater), an aspect of a display (i.e., fish tank in the Ocean Hall, the Donor List), particular object (i.e., totem pole, giant squid) or something sold in the store or cafeteria (i.e., geodes, replica jewelry, Smithsonian water), or something I have not even thought of. Having chosen a topic, using the readings for the seminar, as well as other sources, you will research and write a paper that explores the various global dimensions of this ‘object’. Aspects to consider are how globalization is manifest in the making, circulation and use of this ‘object’?; how is this narrative presented or not?; what actors are involved in the creation of this object (i.e., what is the commodity chain of this thing)? Are these actors acknowledged? What values are being created, suggested or ignored by the presence and presentation of this object?

These papers should be 15 pages. On **October 30** at the beginning of class an outline of the final paper is due. This outline is worth 25% of your final grade on the paper. This outline will provide in two pages of text a sketch of the aims, scope and method your intended paper along with a working bibliography of relevant sources. While you can and should draw on the material from this syllabus, I expect that you will have done research as to what exists on the given topic. No late outlines will be accepted. **To have a successful paper I strongly advise you meeting with me to discuss your project as the semester unfolds.**

**General guidelines for written assignments:** Please submit assignments on time. Late work will not be accepted. All written assignments should be typed in standard fonts (12 point Times, Palatino, or Courier are recommended) with 1-inch margins, and 1.5 spacing. Please staple & paginate papers and put your name on each page. Please follow the citation/bibliographic format used in Current Anthropology.

I strongly advise you to read Orwell’s 1946 essay “Politics and the English Language” before you begin this and the other written assignment. Good writing takes time and thought: [https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm](https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/orwell46.htm)

The final paper is due on **December 18**. The final seminars students will present
their paper to the seminar for 20 minutes. We will discuss this presentation in the seminar, but it is a chance for you to share your work and practice presentation skills. While this presentation is not graded, this is a chance for each of you to solicit feedback from the group for your final paper. I encourage you all to use powerpoint in your presentation.

4. Attendance to this seminar is mandatory and absences must be accompanied with a valid excuse (e.g. death in the family, documented illness, natural disaster).

**Other Information**

**Email Policy:** Email is a necessary evil, but it creates a false sense of social relations and allows us to become increasingly alienated from our colleagues and students. Please make every effort to call me or come by my office hours if you have questions about this class, and its assignments.

**Required texts** are available for purchase at GWU bookstore and will be made available in the GWU library. Assigned articles and chapters will be available via e-mail as PDFs. The readings are divided between **required** and **further reading**. **Further readings** are intended to help provide further context for the assigned reading, and should be read by those of you leading a seminar discussion.


**Expectations:** I expect you to come to the seminar having done the readings and ready to actively discuss the topics at hand.

**Week 1 (Aug. 28)  Orientations**

During this initial meeting we will discuss the syllabus and seminar’s goals.

**Week 2 (Sept. 4)  Theoretical Framing I: Global Beginnings**

Reading Mintz’s classic ethnography about the interconnections of place, food and people, we will focus on global interconnections and disconnections made through sugar.


**Further readings:**
Week 3 (Sept. 11)  Theoretical Framing II: Centers of Calculation – Reassembling the world through museums

Within this seminar we will consider the museum as a site for the reassembly and representation of the world. Doing so we will consider the role museums in the formation of global knowledge of others whether through natural history or anthropology.


Further Reading:

Week 4 (Sept. 18)  Theoretical Framing III: Some Scales and Effects of Global Capitalism

This week we will consider some of the larger processes and connections that inform the present political and social states that define globalization, as well as the methods for understanding them.

Week 5  (Sept. 25)  In The Wake of Global Connections
Reading Gordillo’s ethnography we will examine how the processes of globalization have affected communities in the Gran Chaco, and how these legacies are understood to play out in the present. Doing so we will reflect on issues of memory, history and ruin.


Further Reading

Week 6  (Oct. 2)  Traveling Technologies and Infrastructures
Within this seminar we will consider the effects, interpretations and uses of technology and infrastructure as it travels around the world and is locally understood. What desires and realities do these intersections create, destroy and remake?


Further Readings

Week 7  (Oct. 9)  Value, People and Motion I: Global Finance and Nigeria’s Pharmaceutical Markets
Focusing on Peterson’s ethnography of Nigeria’s pharmaceutical markets we will think about the impacts of global finance on local markets, property regimes, health and thus people’s lives. What are the various effects and costs of structural adjustment, and how do people and thus markets respond to these conditions of inequality?


Further Reading
Week 8  (Oct. 16)  Value, People and Motion II: Transnational Destinations
Through reading Chu’s ethnography of Fuzhounese desires to migrate, we will think
through the transformations caused by transnational longings and circulations. What is
the value of mobility, and how is mobility dreamed of and actualized in practice?

• Chu, J. Y. 2010. Cosmologies of Credit: Transnational Mobility and the Politics of

Further Reading
• Keane, W. 2003. “Semiotics and the social analysis of material things.” Language and
  Communication 23:409-25.

Week 9  (Oct. 23)  Forms of Knowledge and their Global Transformations
Through a variety of case studies we will think about what forms knowledge takes, how
these forms circulate, get translated and are used by various parties to different ends.
Doing so we will think talk about indigenous knowledge, creativity, property rights,
heritage, and what it means to call things “knowledge.”

• Marchand, T.H.J. 2009. “Negotiating License and Limits: expertise and innovation in
• Cruikshank, J. 2012. “Are Glaciers ‘Good to Think With’? Recognising Indigenous
• Leach, J. 2012. “Leaving the Magic Out: Knowledge and Effect in Different Places.”

Further Reading
• Leach, J. and Davis, R. 2012. “Recognising and Translating Knowledge: Navigating
  the Political, Epistemological, Legal and Ontological.” Anthropological Forum

Week 10  (Oct. 30)  Value, People and Motion III: Migration and Transformations of Value
Reading Pedersen’s ethnographic account of the movement of people, things and
money between the El Salvadoran town of Intipucá and Washington DC, we will think
through the issues involved in migration and the transformations of value it helps enact.

• Pedersen, D. 2013. American Value: Migrants, Money and Meaning in El Salvador and

Further Reading

**** Research Paper Outlines Due****
Week 11 (Nov. 6)  Global Icon, Intimate Device – The Mobile Phone

With 6.5 billion cellphones estimated to be in use around the world, mobiles are one of the most diffuse and transforming technologies of our time. In this seminar we will think about how mobiles are iconic of globalization through the various stages of their making, what they enable us to do, and where they go.

- Hockenberry, M. Under Review “Material Epistemologies of the (Mobile) Telephone.” *Anthropological Quaterly* submitted as part of a special issue on the Materiality of Mobile Phones, Bell, Kuipers, Kobak and Kemble (eds).
- Bell, J.A. et. al. Under Review “‘We’re Almost Like Therapists for People with Electronics”: Fetishization, Cell Phones and Repair.” *Anthropological Quaterly* submitted as part of a special issue on the Materiality of Mobile Phones, Bell, Kuipers, Kobak and Kemble (eds).

Further Reading

Week 12 (Nov. 13)  Value, People and Motion IV – Global Africa Connections

Through Smith and Mwadime’s book we will discuss the nature of transnational friendship in the globalized twenty-first century, and reflect on the nature of local and global transformation and ethnography.


Further Reading

Week 13 (Nov. 20)  New Assemblages and Beings

Within this seminar we will consider some of the various ways in which new assemblages of persons, animals, places and things are being created and imagined through the interconnections of globalization, and what anxieties they are creating as well as hopes.


Further Reading


Week 14 (Nov. 29) Thanksgiving – No Seminar

Week 15 (Dec. 4) Final Class - Presentations

Week 17 (Dec. 18) Final Papers Due