

**IL52– Culture and Political Economy—Spring 2011**  
**Dr. David Crawford**  
**Tuesdays and Fridays, 8 – 9:15 in Donnarumma 348**  
<http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu/dcrawford/>

## **Goals and Objectives**

This course examines the ways in which global political economic dynamics interact with local cultures. Students will look to societies in the Global South for an intimate, ethnographic appreciation of our global era. By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Intelligently discuss the origins of Western thinking about “globalization.”  
Draw from the work of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber to examine the history of Western thinking about the operation and expansion of capitalism and the nature of contemporary society.
2. Explain the main contemporary arguments for and against different aspects of extra-local intervention in local societies.  
Students will show how classic arguments in social theory are manifest in contemporary debates over policy, including economic development and humanitarian intervention by corporations, non-governmental organizations, and various types of states.
3. Draw upon case studies in different regions to support informed opinions about the human costs and benefits of articulation with the global economy.  
Students will use case studies to show how theory is used in social analysis, and how decisions made at the regional, state, and international level affect the livelihoods of the world’s poor.

## **Evaluation and Grades**

Students will submit seven reading **summaries**. Each counts 3% towards the final grade, for a total of 21%. Students will write four short papers (four to six pages) connecting the social theories we have studied to the ethnographic accounts of particular societies. Each counts for 10% towards the final grade, for a total of 40%. We will also have a **midterm exam** worth 25%, and a final portfolio worth 20%. The potential points add up to 106%, so students can miss any combination of work that equals 6% and still have a perfect score in the class. ***However, late work will not be accepted and there are no alternate exam times. Please do not ask.*** All assignments are due at the beginning of the specified class, and must be submitted in person. No excuses for absences are required or desired.

## **Course Readings**

Crawford, David (2008) Moroccan Households in the World Economy. Baton Rouge: LSU Press  
Knauff, Bruce (2009) Gebusi: Lives Transformed in a Rainforest World (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). New York: McGraw Hill.  
Lee, Richard B. (1993) The Dobe Ju/'hoansi. New York: Harcourt Brace.  
Zhang, Li (2001) Strangers in the City. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

These books will be supplemented with articles and book chapters available online.

## Assignments

### **Week 1: Introduction to the course: What is political economy? What is culture? What is theory? Why does it matter?**

No reading assignment. We will discuss the broad outline of Western thought concerning the production of society and the distribution of wealth, the origins of thinking about cultural difference, and the contemporary relevance of understanding the underpinnings of both popular and scholarly thought on these issues.

**(1/18, 1/21) Nothing due.**

### **Week 2: The Nature of Social Knowledge (the North African view): What is a Theory?**

Read: “[Cultural Anthropology and the Social Sciences](#)” by H. Russ Bernard. You should also begin to look over this [glossary of terms](#) assembled by Ken Morrison. It may be useful to you over the next four weeks in particular.

We will discuss the rise of scientific thinking and the ideas of Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), especially his understanding of the division of labor, the dynamics of civilization, and his theory of human nature. We will use this as a springboard to asking:

What is a theory?

What counts as evidence?

How do differences in scale (of time and space) affect theories of social change?

How do social contexts influence social theories?

Are there patterns to historical change and how do we detect them?

**(1/25 Bernard summary due; 1/28 nothing due)**

### **Week 3: Morality and The Production of Wealth: Adam Smith and the Scottish Enlightenment**

Read selections from [An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations](#) by Adam Smith (pgs. 8-30, 227-232, 393-436). For background you might want to read [A Select Society: Adam Smith and his Friends](#) by Arthur Herman, but it is not required.

We will discuss Smith’s writings on the division of labor in society, its social benefits and human costs. Additionally, because Smith was concerned with *national* wealth, we will consider the concept of the nation and the implications of Smith’s ideas in a world economy.

**(2/1 summary of Adam Smith’s ideas due; 2/4 nothing due)**

### **Week 4: Conflict, Exploitation, Capitalism: Karl Marx and the Production of Social Life**

Read: Selections from [The German Ideology](#), [The Communist Manifesto](#), and the first volume of [Capital](#) by Karl Marx. If you find this difficult, you might want to begin with a chapter from [Marx’s Revenge: The Resurgence of Capitalism and the Death of State Socialism](#) by Meghnad Desai.

How can we disentangle Marx’s ideas from the parties and pundits who have claimed him as their prophet? What is a “materialist perspective” of social order, and what role does human labor and creativity play in it? How does Marx see “globalization?” What is the role of the state in an ideal economy? What is Marx’s theory of human nature, and how does this fit with his concern with exploitation and alienation? How is Marx different from or similar to the other theorists we have read?

**(2/8 summary of Marx due; 2/11 nothing due.)**

**Week 5: Status, Meaning, and the Human Sciences: Max Weber**

Read: [The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism](#) by Max Weber, and Chapter 11 from [Capitalism and Modern Social Theory](#) by Anthony Giddens

How do values and sentiments operate in society? What are the distinctions between status and class, meaning and function? What is the difference between the human and natural sciences? What does an expanding bureaucracy mean for society? What is the proper role of the state in the contemporary world? How does religion play a role in society? How to forms of authority shift with forms of society?

**(2/15: Summary of Weber's ideas due; 2/18 nothing due)**

**Week 6: Chaos, Religion, and Solidarity: Emile Durkheim**

Read: The introduction to [The Elementary forms of Religious Life](#) as well as selections from [De la Méthode dans les sciences](#) and [The Division of Labor in Society](#), by Emile Durkheim. You may also want to refer to the [Morrison glossary of terms](#).

What is the significance of religion in society? How does Durkheim use "primitive" society to make his point about the nature of human understanding? How does Durkheim define the science of "sociology?" What does Durkheim mean by "division of labor" and how is his view different from Ibn Khaldun and Adam Smith? What is the difference between "organic" and "mechanical" solidarity? What holds society together? What are the causes of, and solutions for, social unrest?

**(2/22 go to your MONDAY classes; summary of Durkheim's ideas due in my office by noon; 2/25 nothing due)**

**Week 7: Summing Up: What is "classic" about classic social theory? What are the key points and the main disagreements? How do each of the major theorists understand "human nature," the role of science in understanding society, and the dynamics of social change?**

**(3/1 Read pages 1-12 of [Browne](#) to review for the exam; 3/4 Summary of key points in classic social theory due)**

**Week 8: Anthropology and Political Economy I.**

How do anthropologists grapple with the global economy? What specific vantages and advantages do we have?

**(3/8 MIDTERM EXAM; 3/11 film "Poto Mitán")**

**Week 9: Anthropology and Political Economy II.**

Read: [Geertz](#) (for 3/15) then for 3/18 read [Kevin Dwyer](#) and Eric Wolf's [Europe and the People without History](#).

How does theory help you make sense of the world? How does anthropology draw on classic social theory? What assumptions does it commonly make? What are the main fissures of anthropological debate and how do they stem from classic social theory?

**(3/15 nothing due; 3/18 summary of Geertz, Dwyer and Wolf due)**

**Week 10: Spring Break**

**Week 11: Putting it all Together 1: Indigenous Society and Global Forces**

Read: The Dobe Ju/hoansi by Richard Lee. (For contrast you may read The Bushman Myth by Rob Gordon and Stuart Sholto Douglas ([Chapter 1](#) and [Chapters 3 & 4](#)).

How do our assumptions about human nature shape our understanding of society? How does “theory” frame the questions we ask and the answers we get?

**(3/29 Nothing due; 4/1 Paper 1 due)**

**Week 12 : Putting it all Together 2: Globalization and Retrenchment**

Read: The Gebusi by Bruce Knaft

How does this society “progress?” Which body of social theory is supported by the ethnographic portrayal of the Gebusi? Which is not?

**(4/5: Nothing due; 4/8 Paper 2 due)**

**Week 13: Putting it All Together 3: Production and Reproduction in a Global Economy**

Read: Moroccan Households in the World Economy by David Crawford.

How are production and reproduction linked in the global economy? How do local level inequalities articulate with broader economic dynamics?

**(4/12: Preface, Introduction, Chap 1 and Conclusion; 4/15 Read chapters 2-6.**

**Week 14: Easter Week**

Read: Moroccan Households in the World Economy

**(4/19 Paper 3 due; 4/22 Easter Break)**

**Week 15: Putting it All Together 4: Alternative Globalization: China**

Read: Strangers in the City by Li Zhang. How does China’s emergence as an industrial world power confound European social theory?

**(4/26: Nothing due; 4/29 Paper 4 due)**

**Week 15: Summary discussion and final evaluation of the course**

**(5/3: What have we been doing all semester?)**

**Final portfolios are due on or before 5/10 at 1:30 p.m.**

**Grading Scale**

A	93- and up
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D	60-69

***If you have a disability*** or that will impact your performance in class or need special accommodations, please see:

Academic & Disability Support Services  
Aloysius P. Kelley, S.J. Center  
(203) 254-4000 ext. 2615

Just so you know...

“**Plagiarism** is the appropriation of ideas, data, work, or language of others and submitting them as one’s own to satisfy the requirements of a course. Plagiarism constitutes theft and deceit. Students are often confused by just what constitutes plagiarism. When the ideas or writings of others are presented in assignments, these ideas or writing should be attributed to that source. Special care should be taken, when cutting and pasting materials or when paraphrasing, to cite sources correctly and to use quotation marks around exact words from source materials. Actions that result in plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Consequently, students must understand the concept of plagiarism. When reading, processing, or using materials from any source, appropriate documentation is always essential. Resources such as the library (ext. 2178) and the Writing Center ([http://www.fairfield.edu/eng\\_writingcenter.html](http://www.fairfield.edu/eng_writingcenter.html)) are available on campus to assist you in your academic endeavors. You are encouraged to take advantage of these resources.”