

POLS 3144-TR2 (16805): Politics of New York: Global City (Spring 2021)

Zoom Meetings: Tues./Thurs. 2:15PM – 3:30PM

Zoom Meeting ID: 553 977 3741

Department of Political Science
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Office Hours (via Zoom): Thurs. 1:00pm-2:00PM, and by appointment

Course Description

We will begin by thoroughly exploring Saskia Sassen's original concept of the 'Global City' and how it specifically applies to New York. Then, following Sassen's lead, we will turn towards more thoroughly exploring the conditions of workers in New York City. We will consider how workers, materials, and money all move through NYC in elaborate international networks. In particular, we will focus on attempts by workers to organize and fight back against the deep inequality that structures the global city. From there, we begin to consider the role of globalization in the explosive growth of the New York City Police Department during the same decades that New York became a 'global city'. We will explore the interconnections between increasing inequality, increasing policing, and increasing global integration. Next we will consider the interrelations between the global city of New York and the US as a nation, a relationship which has been increasingly strained in recent years. Here we will explore how the global economy impacts the rest of the nation as well as New York, and what sort of political dynamics those interrelations have created. Finally, in the last couple of weeks of the course we will explore recent developments in New York's global economy during the Covid-era. Amazon workers, Uber drivers, food delivery apps, and other recent developments around the emerging 'gig economy' will be particularly considered.

Course Goals

- To gain a deeper understanding of globalization, and how New York City relates to it
- To thoroughly define and understand the concept of a 'global city'
- To explore contemporary workers' movements in NYC
- To examine the interrelations between domestic policing and the US's global history
- To consider the relations between global cities and postindustrial nationalism
- To assemble a more thorough and nuanced understanding of global New York

Required Texts

All readings will be distributed via Blackboard, either in the form of downloadable .pdfs or in the form of links. I recommend printing out readings: you can read them closely, mark them up, and save them for later. All listed readings are required.

Grades

Participation: 20%

First Essay (Defining the Global City): 15%

Presentation (New Labor in the New City): 15%

Second Essay (Policing the Global City): 20%

Final Research Essay (Global Cities Today): 30%

COURSE POLICIES AND EVALUATIONS

Attendance and Participation (20%)

You are expected to attend regularly scheduled Zoom meetings with your video feed switched on. You should arrive on time, as two significantly late arrivals will count as one absence. If you have more than two absences, you will be losing points. **If you have more than three absences from Conferences, you are in danger of ending up with a 'W' final grade and should contact me.**

You should do the assigned readings prior to class meetings, have those readings with you, pay attention while in a video class session, and above all you should contribute to online discussions. **You can participate in Online Discussions either through speaking during a video session, posting in the Discussions thread for that week, or making a text comment during video class sessions.**

Participation is required and it accounts for a significant portion of your grade.

First Essay: Defining the Global City (15%)

Based on a thorough consideration of Sassen's text, what is a 'global city'? This three-page essay will ask you to closely examine this book to arrive at a thorough understanding of this concept. What makes the global city different from international cities? Or from globally connected cities of past centuries? What impact does global integration have on the economy have of the city? On labor and inequality in the city?

Presentation: New Labor in the New City (15%)

We will consider several different readings that explore contemporary workers in NYC and their attempts to organize themselves. At the end of this unit, you will present about these readings in small groups (2–4 students each). Each group will choose two or more readings to compare in detail. In addition to returning to the readings themselves, your

group will formulate new ideas about what a broader comparison can teach us about the situation of labor organizing in NYC today.

Second Essay: Policing the Global City (20%)

In this four-page essay, you will thoroughly consider Schrader's text on the global origins of American policing practices. Beyond exploring Schrader's text, you should work to further develop/specify your thesis around the NYPD as you know it today.

Final Research Essay (30%)

An open-ended Research project will be due at the end of the semester. This longer essay will give you an opportunity to do some further research into a topic of your choice, as it relates to NYC as a global city. Since Sassen's text is at least twenty years old, you are encouraged in particular to focus on updating the concept of 'global city' for 2021 and the current conditions of NYC today.

COLLEGE WIDE POLICIES

The University's Policy on Academic Integrity

The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member **MUST** report the violation. In the online environment, it is particularly easy to catch and prove instances of cheating/plagiarism – please do not sabotage yourself with this simple mistake.

The Center for Student Disability Services

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations students must first be registered with the Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS). Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to set up an appointment with the Director of the Center for Student Disability Services, Ms. Valerie Stewart-Lovell at 718-951-5538. If you have already registered with the CSDS please provide your professor with the course accommodation form and discuss your specific accommodation with him/her as soon as possible and at an appropriate time.

COURSE CALENDAR:

Complete each reading *before* the class meeting for which it is assigned.

Tu 2/2: Course Introduction: Globalization, NYC, and the 'Global City'

Tr 2/4: Introducing Sassen's Global City

Sassen – *Preface / Overview*

*Discuss First Essay Assignment

Tu 2/9: Employment and Earnings in the Global City

Sassen – *Chapter 8*

Tr 2/11: Looking Deeper Into the Global City

Sassen – *Finish Chapter 8, Start Chapter 9*

Tu 2/16: Class and Space in the Global City

Sassen – *Chapter 9*

Tr 2/18: The New World Order?

Sassen – *Chapter 10 & Epilogue*

Tu 2/23: Atlantic Yards, Hudson Yards, and NYC Today

Sassen – *Who Owns Our Cities?*

Additional News articles about the Yards

Tr 2/25: Introduction to New Labor in New York

Milkman – *Introduction*

Ness – *The Political Economy of Transnational Labor in New York City*

*Discuss Group Presentation Assignment

***First Essay Assignment due by Friday, 2/26**

Tu 3/2: Retail Workers in a Global Supply Chain

Continue with Milkman/Ness Introductions

Becker – Taking Aim at Target

Tr 3/4: Immigrant Greengrocers and Class Formation in Manhattan

Ness – Mexican Immigrants, Class Formation, and Union Organizing

Tu 3/9: Immigrant Grocery Store Workers in Brooklyn

Shapiro – Organizing Immigrant Supermarket Workers

Tr 3/11: Street Vendors in the Global City

Dunn – Street Vendors In and Against the Global City

Tu 3/16: Grocery Delivery Workers in Global Context

Ness – Francophone West African Supermarket Delivery Workers Autonomous Union Organizing

Tr 3/18: Presentations, Day I

First 2-3 groups give Presentations on New Labor

Tu 3/23: Presentations, Day II

Second 2-3 groups give Presentations on New Labor

Tr 3/25: Badges Without Borders

Schrader – Introduction

**Discuss Second Essay Assignment*

Tu 3/30: Spring Break

Tr 4/1: Spring Break

Tu 4/6: Overseas Imperialism, Race, and American Policing

Schrader - *Rethinking Race and Policing in Imperial Perspective*

Tr 4/8: The History of 911

Schrader - *Bringing Police Assistance Home*

Tu 4/13: Suppressing People's Protests: Abroad and at Home

Schrader – *Riot School*

Tr 4/15: Police in the Global City

Schrader - *Conclusion*

Tu 4/20: Gentrification and Policing in Global New York

Laniyonu – *Coffee Shops and Street Stops: Policing Practices in Gentrifying Neighborhoods*

*Discuss Final Research Essay Assignment

Tr 4/22: Occupy Wall Street and the Battle for Public Space

Sassen – *The Global Street Comes to Wall Street*

Sassen – *Occupying is Not the Same as Demonstrating*

***Second Essay Assignment due by Friday, 4/23**

Tu 4/27: Precarity: the Effect of Global Cities on U.S. Employment

Greenstein – *The Precariat Class Structure*

Tr 4/29: Resentment and Nationalism in Postindustrial America

MacGillis – *The Original Underclass*

Gest – *After the Fall*

Tu 5/4: Covid, Black Lives Matter, and Precarious Workers in 2020

Yates - *Covid 19, Economic Depression, and the Black Lives Matter Movement*

Tashjian – *What Luxury Brands Can Learn From Looting*

Tr 5/6: New York Worker Organizing in 2020

Nolan – *New York City Drivers Collective*

Lennard – *Amazon Workers are Organizing a Global Struggle*

Aponte & Velasquez – *NYC Food Delivery Workers Band to Demand Better Treatment*

Tu 5/11: Gig Workers and the Pandemic

AP – *Gig Workers Face Competition in Pandemic*

Athreya – *A Pandemic is No Time for Precarious Work*

Tr 5/13: Individual Conferences about Final Essay

*Final Essay Project Individual Interviews (via Zoom during classtime)

***Friday May 21st: Final Essay due!**