

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Introduction to Global Culture

Course Number and Section:

CGS

1021F 550

Instructor Name(s): Dr. Mark Franke

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

This course involves us in studies of modern globalisation and resistances to forces of globalisation from registers of cultural production and the politics of aesthetics. The course gives fundamental focus to ways in which modern forces of globalisation have been and are facilitated through the production of cultural norms on global scales, particularly in terms of valuing and celebrating specific liberal ideals in the form of freedom. We will study how this globalised culture of freedom has been made possible through: colonial/postcolonial formations of global inequality, particularly in the racialisation of persons and peoples; racist social, economic, and political orderings; the discrimination of persons and peoples through formations of ethnic separations; and attempts to centre a singular human subject position through a culture of universalised reason and liberty. And we will consider the contemporary impacts of this global cultural production, especially in terms of the aesthetics of racism and the challenges we face to counter this culture in anti-racist cultural work.

The latter half of our course examines ways in which social movements and artists critically engaged with contemporary globalisation and the modern culture of freedom recognise the problems in this global cultural movement and seek to confront it publicly. We will examine aesthetically-engaged political movements and activism that work to make evident the violence of contemporary global cultures of freedom, particularly through anti-colonial aesthetics and cultural production that challenge the humanism and economic values of liberalism and neo-liberalism.

Learning Outcomes:

Students in this course will learn to investigate and interpret the foundations of modern globalisation on registers of culture, gaining insights into how contemporary modern global culture rests on the racialisation of humanity and racist politics, along with broad economic discriminations between persons and peoples. In this work, students will gain strong critical understandings of what is valued in the modern global culture of humanist freedom that underlies contemporary globalisation. Students in this course will learn to read and interpret phenomena of globalisation through aesthetic production. As well, they will learn how it is possible to gain critical leverage within these forms of cultural production, bringing about the possibility of aesthetic resistance and political transformation through counter-cultural practices and actions. As a result, students in this course will develop understanding of the grounds under which critical reformulations of global aesthetics may be possible, recognising and challenging modern universalising and colonial forms. Finally, students in this course will gain good practice in close interpretive and critical readings of scholarly writing and cultural and aesthetic production. And they will gain good practice in engaging with these writings and artistic production through their own writing.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Four Books:

- Lisa Lowe. *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke U. Press, 2015). Cost: \$35.65
- Christina Sharpe. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Duke U. Press, 2016). Cost: \$34.65
- Jennifer Ponce de Leon. *Another Aesthetics is Possible: Arts of Rebellion in the Fourth World War* (Duke U. Press, 2021). Cost: \$38.75
- T. J. Demos. *Beyond the World's End: Arts of Living at the Crossings* (Duke U. Press, 2020). Cost: \$37.70

Physical paper copies of each of these five books are available for purchase at the Bookstore at Western University at the prices indicated. As well, free electronic copies of each of these five books are available for loan online through the Huron/Western Library system.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Essay #1	October 17	25%
Essay #2	October 31st	20%
Essay #3	November 28th	25%
Final Examination	December Exam Period	30%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Monday, August 11, 2025