Syllabus: GMU Honors 131 013; CRN 78921; Fall 2018 Semester; (August 27 – Dec 19 2018; Globalization and Its Impact on Institutions, Society, and The Individual: Progress, Problems, and Challenges

Professor Phil Thomas

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Office: 2nd floor Buchanan Hall

Office Hours:

Mon & Weds: 1:30 – 2:30 pm

2nd Floor Buchanan Hall

Course Description:

Background: Globalization is a dynamic process that has brought the world’s diverse population closer together since the beginning of civilization through the exchange of goods, products, information, jobs, knowledge and culture. Contemporary globalization in the beginning of the Twenty-First Century is the result of dramatic advancements in technology, communications, science, transport and industry. The current global population of 7.5 billion people has become increasingly interdependent. The economic, cultural and political implications of globalization are matters of great controversy and debate. A fundamental question remains unanswered. **Will a smaller technologically enhanced interdependent world produce an environmentally sustainable, safer and more just world?** As we progress toward the year 2050 with the prospect of the global population projected to reach 9.8 billion people, many challenges exist confronting the viability and stability of the global community.

Objectives: In this class we will identify and examine the many issues and challenges affecting globalization in the Twenty-First Century. This course will address a variety of critical issues including:

- The many ramifications of globalization: the individual, the state, and the world.
- A new definition of communication: social media. Is the media the message?
- Population growth, the decline of rural society, and the ascendance of urban sprawl: a major demographic challenge.
- Environmental issues and climate change: What is the planet’s future?
• Biotechnology and its impact on global society: uncertainty and disagreement.
• Power elites, democracy and governance: Can democracy survive and flourish?
• Racism, inequality, hunger, poverty, human security and rights: a daunting agenda.
• Conflict and the quest for peace in the new millennium: a post-conflict world?
• The growing crisis of guest workers, displaced persons, refugees, and immigration: no easy answers.
• Religion, the private sector, civil society, the nation state, and international community: conflict, complementarity, and partnerships.
• The changing profile of art, literature, music, and culture in global society: A dynamic new age?
• The role of the individual in the 21st century: freedom and responsibility in an increasingly complex and changing world.

This is a multi-dimensional cross-cutting course designed to provide a comprehensive integrated perspective on globalization as a major challenge to the international community. We will assess why globalization issues are so difficult to resolve despite the multitude of resources available to society. We will attempt to develop constructive solutions responsive to the many challenges presented by globalization in the areas of economic stability and growth, social and cultural change, and relationships involving the individual, private sector, civil society, and governmental institutions. Emphasis will be placed on rigorous and objective evidence based research and analysis. This course emphasizes non-traditional approaches to resolving emerging global problems. **Critical independent thinking and analysis will be stressed.**

**Required Texts**


**Recommended (Optional) Readings (Many reading materials are available online.)**

- “The World Is Flat:3.0: A Brief History of The Twenty-First Century”; by Thomas L. Friedman; Picador; 2007
- “Collapse: How Societies Choose To Fail or Succeed”; Viking; Jared Diamond; Viking; 2005
- “Age of Greed: The Triumph of Finance and Decline of America, 1970 to Present”; Jeff Madrick; Knopf, 2011
• “Globalization And Its Discontents: Anti-Globalization In The Era of Trump” *(Revisited)* 2018; Joseph E. Stiglitz, Winner of the Nobel Prize in Economics
• “Climate Change 2015: Synthesis Report Summary for Policy Makers”; United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC); 2015
• “Conflict Prevention Strategies In the 21st Century”; United States Institute For Peace; Washington, D.C.; August 2015.
• “A New Climate For Peace: Taking Action on Climate and Fragility Risks”, 2015; An Independent Report Commissioned by the G7 Members
• “Winning The Peace: Hunger and Instability”, 2017; Dr. Chase Sova, United Nations World Food Program USA
• Mass Starvation: The History and Future of Famine”, 2018; Alex de Waal
• “Advancing Global Food Security In The Face of a Changing Climate”; The Chicago Council on Global Affairs; May 2014.

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

1. Attendance, Readings and Discussion (35%). Students are expected to attend all class meetings. I recommend that students attempt to complete each week’s reading in its entirety before the first meeting of that week. In addition to the reading from the required texts, students will be provided electronic and/or hard copy articles throughout the semester to read, analyze, and discuss. Students should come to class prepared to engage in a lively discussion of key globalization issues and readings assigned for the week. Throughout the semester students will be expected to actively participate in a variety of in-class projects involving role playing, debating, and other forms of creative interaction addressing a variety of critical globalization issues.

2. Midterm (20%) A short take-home mid-term will cover material from the first half of the course.
3. Research Paper (35%): Each Student will submit a ten-page research paper addressing a 21st Century key globalization issue of his or her choice. The research paper will be an objective evidence-based analysis which includes findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

4. Final Examination (10%) In lieu of a traditional final examination, we will meet to allow each student to orally summarize their research paper’s issue, findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the class.

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<td>Aug 27 – 31</td>
<td>Intro &amp; Overview of a New Age</td>
<td>Friedman: pp 1-16</td>
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**Week 2**

(No Classes Monday September 3, Labor Day)

- Sep 3 - 7 | Accelerating: What The Hell’s Happened | Friedman: pp 19-84 |

**Week 3**

- Sep 10 - 14 | Supernova, The Market, Mother Nature | Friedman: pp 85-184  
  (In class role-playing exercise)

**Week 4**

- Sep 17 – 21 | Innovating: Speed, AI, Control vs. Chaos | Friedman: pp 187-297 |

**Week 5**

(RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSALS DUE IN CLASS SEPT 26)

- Sep 24-28 | Mother Nature, Politics, & Religion | Friedman: pp 298-357 |

**Week 6**

- Oct 1-5 | You Can’t Go Home Again & Anchoring | Friedman: pp 358-453 |

**Week 7**

(No class Monday, Oct 8; Class meets Tuesday, October 9)

- Oct 9 – 12 | Implications of Growing Interdependence | Recommended Readings
  (In Class debate: Pros/Cons)

**Week 8**

**Week 9**  
(TAKE-HOME MID-TERM DUE October 22)

Oct 22–26  
Social Media: A critical Introduction  
(Is The Media The Message?)  
Fuchs: pp 1-30

**Week 10**

Oct 29 – Nov 2  
Social Media, Participatory Culture  
Fuchs: pp 31-84

**Week 11**

Nov 5 - 9  
The Power & Political Economy of Social Media  
(Google, Facebook, Twitter & Democracy)  
Fuchs: pp 85-182

**Week 12**

Nov 12-16  
WikiLeaks, Transparency, & Twitter  
Impressions and Alternatives (in class debate)  
Fuchs: pp 183-250

**Week 13**  
(RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19)

(Thanksgiving Recess: Wed Nov 21 thru Sunday Nov 25)

Nov 19  
Fuchs: pp 251-282

**Week 14**

Nov 26 - 30  
Wikipedia: A New Dem Form of Collaboration  
Fuchs: pp 283-356

**Week 15**

Dec 3 -7  
(Review of Key Globalization Issues)

**Week 16**

Dec 12 – 14  
(ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF RESEARCH IN LIEU OF FINAL EXAM; Nov 14 – Dec 14)

**INSTRUCTOR**

Phil Thomas is currently a Research Fellow and Adjunct Faculty Member at George Mason University’s Schar School of Policy and Government where he leads a Global Food Security Project addressing the causes and effects of global hunger. He has also attended the major annual World Food Prize conference in Des Moines, Iowa as a representative of GMU over the
past five years. In this capacity, he has organized and managed annual GMU sponsored Global Food Security Summits over the past four years. He has also authored a June 2014 GMU World Health and Medical Journal article on the challenges of the global food security problem. He led a major GMU grant funded review of U.S. International and Food Aid Programs in 2015. This report was used extensively by Executive Branch and Congressional officials in developing new guidance on U.S. global food aid programs. He is currently participating in a GMU grant funded interdisciplinary analysis of Food Security and Indigenous Foods in Kenya. Phil is also an adjunct Professor at George Mason University’s Honors College where he has taught classes on global food security and globalization since January 2015. He is a member of several Washington, D.C. International food security working groups focusing on the elimination of global hunger.

Phil served as an international affairs specialist and Assistant Director with the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of Congress, from 1972 until his retirement in 2013, where he directed numerous reviews of U.S. International Food Assistance and Global Food Security Programs, and United Nations operations. His congressionally mandated reviews and investigations which resulted in significant management reforms focused on the national security implications of global food aid and food security issues in Africa, Iraq, Afghanistan, North Korea, Central America, and the Former Soviet Union. He travelled extensively in Europe, Africa, and Central America representing GAO as a Senior Management Official. He also served as a senior member of the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee Task Force on the UN Iraq Oil for Food Program Sanctions Scandal in 2004 and 2005. The investigation resulted in the elimination of the program and a series of proposed management reforms for the operation of future United Nations Sanctions Programs.

Phil was elected to the Falls Church, Virginia City Council in 1990 and served through 1994. He was Vice Mayor from 1992-1994, and served on a variety of local government social service and economic development committees. Phil did undergraduate work at the University of Virginia and has two year M.A. specializing in International Development Issues and B.A. in International Affairs from California State University in Sacramento. His Master’s Thesis addressed the challenges of Apartheid in South Africa. As a graduate student, he served as an investigative reporter intern with the California Journal of Government and Politics where he authored several articles on critical California state government issues. He is also a Navy Veteran serving from 1963 to 1966 as a Chaplain’s Assistant in San Diego, Annapolis, Norfolk, the Caribbean, and Naples, Italy.