

Bringing a Global Perspective to Our Syllabi **Resources and Suggestions**

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These are a few resources and suggestions for engaging issues regarding diversity and inequality from a global perspective, especially a critical one, in courses you are teaching or would like to teach.

(A) Background readings – Just a few suggestions among a host of possibilities; I'm not suggesting that you'd should read everything here but if you do decide to sample a few things, I recommend starting with the ones near the top of each list. I have pdfs of most pieces so if you need any, just let me know.

(1) Promoting a global perspective

- Juergensmeyer, Mark (2011) What Is Global Studies? *Global-e*, Volume 5, May 6, 2011. [Two page summary of the way leading practitioners of Global Studies understand the field.]
- Wolf, Eric R. (1982) *Connections*. In *Europe and the People without History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 3-23. [The introduction to one of the most influential books in the field by a leading historical anthropologist.]
- Steger, Manfred B. and Amentahru Wahlrab (2017) Introduction: Global Studies and the Global Imaginary. In *What is Global Studies?: Theory and Practice*. New York: Routledge, 1-24. [Somewhat prosaic but the book is the best of a still small set of books seeking to outline a global-studies approach.]
- Gunn, Giles (2013) Introduction: Mapping and Remapping the Global. In *Ideas to Die For: The Cosmopolitan Challenge*. New York: Routledge, 1-13; 148-150. [Reflections from a literary perspective by one of the founders of the world's best known Global Studies program, at the University of California, Santa Barbara.]
- Bhabra, Gurinder K. (2013) The Possibilities of, and for, Global Sociology: A Postcolonial Perspective. *Postcolonial Sociology* 24: 295–314. [From a leading proponent of a postcolonial perspective on the sociology of globalization.]
- Darian-Smith, Eve and Philip McCarty (2016) Beyond Interdisciplinarity: Developing a Global Transdisciplinary Framework. *Transcience* 7 (2): 1-26. [A programmatic essay by two leading proponents of a global approach.]

(2) Contemporary globalization and the neoliberal project

- Steger, Manfred B. (2017) *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Fourth Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press. [The most accessible *short* introduction I know.]
- Sparke, Matthew (2013) *Introducing Globalization: Ties, Tensions, and Uneven Integration*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. [The most sophisticated introduction I know; richer but also more complex than Steger's *Globalization*; sample Ch. 1 and last five pages of Ch. 10.]

(3) Globalizing a syllabus – still not much available; these two raise broad issues via a focus on sociology

- Sohoni, Deenesh and Misha Petrovic (2010) Teaching a Global Sociology: Suggestions for Globalizing the U.S. Curriculum. *Teaching Sociology* 38 (4): 287–300.
- Hammer, Ricarda (2018) Bringing the Global Home: Students Research Local Areas through Postcolonial Perspectives. *Teaching Sociology* 46 (2): 135-147.

(4) Diversity and inclusion: constructive critiques of dominant approaches

- Davis, Angela Y. (2012) *The Meaning of Freedom: And Other Difficult Dialogues*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights. [Speeches promoting collective struggle for the social transformation of intersecting structural inequalities.]
- Ahmed, Sara (2014) *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Duke University Press. [Especially Ch. 2, The Language of Diversity.]
- Benn Michaels, Walter (2011) Let Them Eat Diversity. Interview. *Jacobin Magazine*, January 1, 2011. [A class-based critique without enough attention to intersectionality.]
- Hudson, David James (2017) On “Diversity” as Anti-Racism in Library and Information Studies: A Critique. *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies* 1 (1). [Available on line.]
- Park, Julie J. et al (2013) Does Socioeconomic Diversity Make a Difference? Examining the Effects of Racial and Socioeconomic Diversity on the Campus Climate for Diversity. *American Educational Research Journal* 50 (3): 466-496.
- Mitchell, Katharyne (2003) Educating the National Citizen in Neoliberal Times: From the Multicultural Self to the Strategic Cosmopolitan. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 28 (4): 387-403. [Early intervention by a leading radical geographer.]
- Urciuoli, Bonnie (2016) Neoliberalizing Markedness: The Interpellation of “Diverse” College Students. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 6 (3): 201-221. [An ethnographer’s perspective.]

(B) Suggestions for syllabus design

Effective ways of engaging issues regarding diversity and inequality from a (critical) global perspective vary enormously according to factors such as the subject matter of the course, the specific mix of students in the course, and personal teaching styles. I therefore focus here on moves that have helped me in the hope that using, reworking, and/or critiquing them will be of help to you.

(1) General considerations

- (a) Distinguish between a national/international and a transnational/global one.
- (b) Use the latter throughout rather than simply using a section or one or two classes to supplement a U.S. or western focus. This doesn’t preclude paying attention to what national governments do or have done or comparing situations in different countries, but it emphasizes situating them first in relation to the processes that connect and divide people around the world and the dominant ways of organizing these processes (e.g. tributary vs. capitalist, and different kinds of capitalism, including the transnational/neoliberal kind that has become increasingly globally dominant since the late 1970s onwards and has been experiencing deepening social and ecological crises since the late 2000s. For elaborations on these terms, see later parts of Wolf’s book, plu, Steger, Sparke, Mitchell, and Urciuoli above).
- (c) Relate diversity to structural inequalities; relate race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality to class dynamics.
- (d) Encourage students to examine their “common-sense” assumptions -- e.g. national and imperial imaginaries.
- (e) Teach the debates -- about diversity, inequalities, globalization, and relations among them.

(2) Particular techniques – vary enormously by subject and discipline but these are a few I’ve found particularly helpful in teaching introductory and more advanced courses in Global Studies.

(a) Focus on *specific “objects” or issues* that

- are directly relevant to students’ lives or interests
- can only be understood by reference to transnational, global, or globalizing processes
- ideally link the countries that students are from and/or students’ varied class trajectories
- thus create space for international students and/or students from poorer backgrounds to bring their knowledge and perspectives to the discussion
- e.g.
 - many of the *commodities* students buy
 - *works* that address transnational processes (in the present or the past) or can be seen in new ways by exploring them – e.g. novels, plays, philosophical writings
 - *places* where these processes intersect – i.e. a global perspective doesn’t preclude focusing on a particular locality or country or world region; it simply emphasizes situating any place in the sets of processes that connect the people living there to, and often divide them from, people living elsewhere in the world; almost invariably, these processes will lead beyond the limits of any more or less bounded location
 - *controversial issues* that may seem local but are enmeshed in transnational processes – e.g. struggles over migration, health, and access to housing, water, and food

(b) Use examples that help students learn how to *zoom out and back in again* -- at a given moment and over time – e.g. between

- top they’re wearing
- commodity chain for clothes sold in U.S. today
- changes in chain since the 1970s (e.g. who assembles clothes, where, under what conditions)
- broader shift to neoliberal capitalism
- reactions to these changes, including growing challenges, often organized transnationally

(c) Use examples that encourage attention to *multiple perspectives* – associated with

- varied *positions along spectrum of views* concerning the dominant way of organizing processes of connection and division
- varied *parts of the world* -- e.g. via writings, visual works by scholars, activists outside U.S./global north
- varied *positions in interrelated hierarchies of class, race, gender, sexuality*
 - not just via self-authored writings and visual works (which subordinated people are often unable to produce or distribute easily)
 - but also via sources such as ethnographic texts, works of social history “from below,” and video documentaries that let us learn about them and, ideally, hear from them, at least in mediated form

(d) Critically engage the *“situated” and thus “partial” ways in which knowledge is and has been produced and distributed* in your field, and the politics of these processes. This often means raising questions about Euro- and/or U.S.-centrism and the problems of imperial and national myopia if not hubris but it can also mean raising related issues concerning class-, gender-, and race-centrism.