Organizations and Global Competitiveness  
Soc. 342D

There is much debate about how societies can develop and become more competitive in today's global economy. A basic premise of this course is that international competitiveness requires an understanding of the organization of markets, which may be viewed as networks of buying and supplying firms organized around the provision of finished and intermediate goods and services. These supply chains of firms are increasingly global, and have complex and shifting governance structures that reflect the power relations among the firms in the chain. This framework reveals surprising facts about who controls global industries, which firms make the most money and why, and how new business capabilities are emerging that will determine the corporate leaders of tomorrow.

Attention in the course will focus on the organizational dynamics of diverse global industries and on the competitive strategies of their leading firms. The geographic spread of these industries encompasses all major regions of the world, both as production sites and markets. This course will expose students to current theories regarding international competitiveness; it will require students to access and analyze the most widely utilized international trade data bases, and learn how to present this information effectively in tables, charts and graphs; and it will provide a team project experience in designing and evaluating research connected to contemporary global issues.

Course Requirements

There will be a mid-term examination, a team project involving the creation of a jobs and economic competitiveness website on an industry of your choosing, and a research paper required for this course. The mid-term exam, the team project, and your paper each count for 30% of the course grade, and class participation for 10%. The Teaching Assistants (TAs) for this course are Sancha Medwinter <sld28@soc.duke.edu> and Emi-Lou Weed <emi.lou.weed@duke.edu> of the Sociology Department.

Mid-Term Exam. There will be a take-home, open-book mid-term examination that will be handed out in class on Monday, March 2\(^{nd}\), and due back on Wednesday, March 4\(^{th}\). Completed exams must be typed, and a page limit will be set. The drop-off procedure for exams will be explained in class.

Course Research Paper. The research paper will require you to compare two or more countries or major companies in a particular global industry, and analyze them in terms of the perspectives and issues covered in class. If you choose countries, you should focus on their development over the past 5-10 years, and indicate the main factors that have promoted or hindered their international competitiveness. If you choose to compare companies, you should highlight their strategies regarding international production and sourcing, and the domestic or offshore distribution of jobs, revenues, and profits. Have these companies been gaining or losing ground in the global industry you have selected, and why? How have the companies handled pressures toward greater corporate social responsibility in the international arena? For both countries and companies, provide specific recommendations for improving their competitiveness during the next three to five years. The papers should be typed, doubled-spaced, and no more than 12-15 pages in length.

Team Project: Global Industry Websites. There is a team project required in this course. Teams comprised of 4 students (in general) will be formed, each focusing on a different global industry. Each
team will be asked to propose a short list of preferred industries. A comprehensive industry list could include the following general categories, which can be broken down into more specific products:

- **Primary products**: Bananas, cocoa, coffee, fruit and vegetables, oil, timber.
- **Consumer nondurable products**: Apparel, footwear, sporting goods, toys, video games.
- **Consumer durable products**: Airplanes, automobiles, computers, mobile telecom devices.
- **Intermediate products**: Computer software, hard disk drives, semiconductors, chemicals.
- **Services**: Banking, tourism, education, logistics, temporary staffing agencies.

Each industry website will be constructed according to a series of key dimensions outlined in a separate memo, and illustrated in class sessions covering a variety of different global industries. Each team will summarize key findings from their Global Industry Websites in class at the end of the semester.

**Friday Discussion Sections.** The discussion section is designed to promote deeper engagement with course readings and assignments in a collaborative small-group setting. Regular attendance is required; if you have an excused absence, you can submit your work in advance. Students’ participation grade (10% of course grade) will be assigned by your TA based on qualitative assessments of verbal contributions as well as students’ weekly one-page reading reflections, which will be turned in prior to the Monday lecture each week. These reflections will also serve as a review of course readings in preparation for the midterm and writing the term paper. Each discussion session will have 1-2 student facilitators, and you will sign up for your slot early in the semester. The assigned discussion facilitator(s) will post three discussion questions on the discussion board in Sakai on the preceding Thursday at 5 pm.

**Class Attendance and Laptops**

Attendance is required in this course. Students are permitted two unexcused absences. If students miss more that this number of classes or discussion sections, their overall course grade can be lowered.

The use of laptops will not be permitted in the class, except during training sessions for UN Comtrade and WordPress.

**Sakai and Readings**

A wide range of materials related to this course will be available through Sakai. All students in Soc. 342D will be expected to log into Sakai on a regular basis for announcements, course documents, supplementary lecture materials, and convenient communication tools such as group pages, student drop boxes, and discussion boards. E-mail will be an important form of communication in this course, so check your e-mail accounts frequently.

The remainder of the readings assigned for the course can be accessed via Sakai.

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST (Spring 2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 7</td>
<td>Introduction to the course</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 9</td>
<td>Discussion sections – Come to class with one example of how globalization favors U.S. competitiveness and one example of how it hinders U.S. competitiveness. Be prepared to discuss.</td>
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The Global Context: Crisis and Opportunity

January 12  U.S. Perspectives on Global Business, Pre-1990


January 16  Discussion sections

January 19  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday

What’s the Role of Manufacturing in Restoring U.S. Competitiveness?


January 23  Discussion sections

The Insourcing Boom


Analyzing International Trade Data

Computer Labs for UN Comtrade assignment – These will meet in in Bostock 023, located on the lower level of Bostock Library (across from the Link) on Thursday, Jan. 29th at 2:30-4:30 pm and Monday, Feb. 2nd at 3-5 pm. Students will be asked to indicate in advance which session they can attend. Gary Thompson will provide tips related to your assignment.

January 30  Discussion sections
Global Value Chains: A Framework to Integrate Governance and Upgrading Outcomes for Both Countries and Firms

February 2  


February 4  


February 6  
Discussion sections

*UN Comtrade “product” assignment* – Create 3 tables that look at shifts in national, regional, or global export and import patterns for a single product over at least a 15-year time span.

February 9  
**Globalization and Economic Competitiveness**

Presentation on Duke’s library and web resources for research on global industries (Mark Thomas, Perkins Library). For a link Perkins’ resource guide, see [http://guides.library.duke.edu/organizations_and_global_competitiveness](http://guides.library.duke.edu/organizations_and_global_competitiveness).

February 11  

February 13  
Discussion sections

*Submit 1-page proposal for course research paper.*

*Global Industry Website teams announced.*

Playing Catch Up in the Global Economy -- Can the United States Come Back?

February 16  


Challenges from the Emerging Economies

February 18  Bloomberg, “Move over BRICs, here come the MISTS.” Aug. 8, 2012.
Gary Gereffi, “Development models and industrial upgrading in China and Mexico.”

February 20  Discussion sections

The New iPhone Economy – Changing U.S. and Global Production Networks and Labor Markets


February 27  Discussion sections

March 2  Question & Answer, and review session.
[Hand out take-home mid-term exam at the end of class.]

March 4  Mid-Term exam due: Returned to Rm. 276 Soc/Psych Bldg. (or electronically).
There will be no class held on this date.


March 9-13  SPRING RECESS

March 16  Global Industry Websites
Introduction to team projects (with memo from instructor).

March 20  Discussion sections: Teams will discuss internal management protocols and timelines for their projects, and review sample industry websites from prior semesters in Soc. 142 [http://sites.duke.edu/blog/category/examples/] for several Global Industry Websites from a previous semester.

Submit rank-ordered list of 3-5 preferred industries.

Release on-line evaluation questions for group website projects and for peer and self-assessment form.

The Future of Manufacturing


Submit 2-page team outline for global industry project.

March 27  Discussion sections: Defining and combining economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Course research paper due

Economic and Social Upgrading, and the Role of Policies

March 30  Linking Economic and Social Upgrading


April 3  Discussion sections

April 6  Discussion of any queries about all dimensions of Global Industry Websites.

How Wal-Mart Shapes Global Industries

April 8  Film: “Is Wal-Mart good for America?” Public Broadcasting System (PBS) Frontline, narrated by Hedrick Smith, Nov. 2004. Also consult website for this Frontline show.
April 10  Discussion sections

*Global Industry Websites: completion date.*

April 13  Global Industry Websites – Teams 1-5 will present in class.

April 15  Global Industry Websites – Teams 6-10 will present in class.

April 17  Discussion sections: Evaluation of team projects.

*Online Peer and Team Member / Self Evaluations for Global Industry Websites due.*

April 20  Global Industry Websites – Teams 11-15 will present in class.

April 22  Individual research papers will be returned – highlights in class.

Last revised: Jan. 22, 2015