Organizations and Global Competitiveness  
Soc. 342

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 goods and services. These supply chains of firms are increasingly global, and have complex and shifting governance structures that specify 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 a U.S. state 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 for this course are Sancha Medwinter <sld28@soc.duke.edu> and Collin Mueller <collin.mueller@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 3rd, and due back on Wednesday, March 5th. 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 10-15 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 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 3-4 students will be formed, each focusing on a different global industry. Students will be
given a list of industries from which to choose, or they also have the option of adding a new industry to the list. A comprehensive industry list could include the following general categories, which may need to 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.

**Class Attendance and Laptops**

Attendance is required in this course. Students are permitted two unexcused absences. If students miss more than 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. 342 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 2014)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 8</td>
<td>Introduction to class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 10</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**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td><strong>U.S. Perspectives on Global Business, Pre-1990</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Guest Lecturer: Andrew Guinn, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill</td>
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January 17  Discussion sections – Bring to class an article that appeared in the last 3 months that illustrates an important issue for U.S. competitiveness. Be prepared to summarize and discuss it.

January 20  Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday

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


January 24  Discussion sections

**The Insourcing Boom**


James Fallows, “*Mr. China comes to America.*” *The Atlantic Magazine*, December 2012.

Alan Tonelson, “*The Insourcing Boom That Isn’t.*” *The Atlantic Magazine*, December 2012.

**Analyzing International Trade Data**

January 29  Introduction to UN Comtrade – Gary Thompson, Social Science Research Institute


January 31  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) during the normal discussion group times. Members of each discussion section should show up promptly at the beginning of your section (10:20 am and 12 noon), since Gary Thompson will provide tips related to your assignment.

**Global Supply Chains**


February 5  How to display and organize trade information.

Demonstrate how to build up from raw WTA data to purposeful tables, graphs, and charts; emphasis on effective “visual display of data.”

February 7  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.

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


February 14  Discussion sections

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


**Challenges from the Emerging Economies**


Bloomberg, “Move over BRICs, here come the MISTS.” Aug. 8, 2012.


February 21  Discussion sections

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


February 28 Discussion sections

March 3 Question & Answer, and review session.

[Hand out take-home mid-term exam at the end of class.]

March 5 Mid-Term exam due: Returned to Rm. 268 Soc/Psych Bldg. (or electronically). There will be no class held on this date.


March 10-14 SPRING RECESS

March 17 Global Industry Websites

Introduction to team projects (with memo from instructor).

March 19 Globalization and Economic Competitiveness

Presentation on Duke’s library and web resources for research on global industries (Carson Holloway, Perkins Library). For a link Perkins’ resource guide, see http://library.duke.edu/research/subject/guides/globalization/index.html.

March 21 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://www.markets.duke.edu/student_it/soc142_selected/ for six Global Industry Websites from a previous semester]

Submit 2-page team outline for global industry project.

The Future of Global Manufacturing


March 26 WordPress training session -- Dagbedji Fagnisse and Christine Vucinich, OIT Training, Duke University.

March 28 Discussion sections: Defining and combining economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Course research paper due

Economic and Social Upgrading, and the Role of Policies

March 31 Linking Economic and Social Upgrading


April 4 Discussion sections

April 7 Discussion of global value chain and international trade dimensions of Global Industry Websites.

How Wal-Mart Shapes Global Industries

April 9 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 11 Discussion sections

Global Industry Websites: completion date.

April 14 Global Industry Websites – Teams 1-3 will present in class.

April 16 Global Industry Websites – Teams 4-7 will present in class.

April 18 Discussion sections: Evaluation of team projects.

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

April 21 Global Industry Websites – Teams 8-11 will present in class.

April 23 Individual research papers will be returned – highlights in class.

Last revised: January 8, 2014