

Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives
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Lecture 1
Introduction to The Course

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**Globalization: Theoretical
Perspectives**

Introduction to the course



Welcome to this course titled Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives. I am Santosh, faculty in the Department of Humanities and Social sciences at IIT Madras, I teach sociology. Once again very heartily welcome all of you to this course. I know that there are students in this group, there are teachers, there are people who are preparing for competitive examinations, there are also quite a lot of people, the general public who have enrolled in this course in order to expand your knowledge about the subject matter this particular course has to offer.

So, I know that your expectations are varied, your objectives are varied, and the reasons you have enrolled for this particular course could be exceptionally very different interests. I may not be able to fulfil all of your objectives or cater to all of your needs, but I will try my level best to present a balanced course so that all of you will find something interesting in this particular course.

So, I have titled this as 'Globalization: Theoretical Perspectives.' I thought about the title for an extended period. I wondered whether I should use the term 'Sociology in this particular title. Later I decided against that because most of the theories that we will discuss are from Sociology. Some of the fascinating theories on globalization are formulated by sociologists, and it is not only that I am a sociologist, or I come from a Sociology background. Globalization theory is mostly sociologically influenced, or you will find many influential sociological theories in the study of globalization.

So, this is the very first class. I want to give you a comprehensive overview of the course in this particular class. I want to talk about the nature of the course, the different chapters, the essential themes and speakers or scholars we will discuss. Also, I want to introduce you to some of the important textbooks and reference books we will be using. So, this is a short session, and I want to invite you again personally and give you a broad overview of the course.

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Teaching Globalization: The Challenges

- A multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary field
- Lack of consensus on key areas
- Emerging scholarship, nascent fields
- Politically and ideologically charged scholarship



So, the title teaching globalization the challenges -I have framed it in that way. So I want to communicate, or instead tell you, that teaching this theme on globalization is not a very easy thing. It has quite a lot of challenges. Why do I want to say that a course on globalization theories is challenging for you and me? It is pretty different from other kinds of conventional topics.

For example, I had another course titled Classical Sociological Theories. I could handle that course with much more easiness or with far more levels of comfort in comparison with a theme like globalization because there is already a substantial body of knowledge that exists about Classical Sociological Theory. It is a considerable amount of literature already written. There is some concrete shape that has already got to that particular subject matter. I only need to follow those established syllabus or established methods adopted in most universities.

However, globalization is a more recent phenomenon. Let us look at the fundamental reasons I say the kind of difficulties associated with this particular course. I am saying this not to dissuade you or frighten you or tell you that it is a challenging course, but what we are going to discuss is slightly at an advanced stage of Social Science theories. So I would expect some familiarity, some brief familiarity on some of the basic concepts of Sociology and Social Theory.

This is not an introductory level or a basic level course. It is a slightly higher level course. First and foremost, globalization as a phenomenon or a process is a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary field. We are talking about a very complex, highly complex process. You will see that there is hardly any consensus about it among the scholars, even in the whole idea of definition. How can we define globalization? There is hardly any consensus. There is hardly any definition of whether this globalization is quite different from that of the previous times? Do we see something very different? Are we experiencing something quite novel? Are we experiencing something quite unprecedented?

Again, there is not much of a consensus about these issues. So we are looking at a theme. Globalization is such a fraught topic. It is such a complicated topic. It is such a complex process, a complex topic involving complex processes, ideas, and visualizations, complex conceptualizations come from a kind of multi-dimensionality. Globalization is not something that can be captured from only a kind of a sociological perspective.

Economists will not be able to give you a complete picture of globalization. Political scientists will fail, or scholars of International Relations will fail, Philosophers will fail to give you a comprehensive picture of globalization.

So, it is a multi-dimensional process. We are talking about a multi-dimensional phenomenon, a process that leaves nothing untouched. In almost every aspect of human life, personal life, social life, social institutions, ideas, and exposure, there is nothing untouched by the process of globalization.

So, it adds to the complexity of this whole process, which is why it is a multi-dimensional process. It is also a multi-disciplinary field with knowledge. The scholarship that is produced about globalization has been produced by scholars from so many different fields, starting from

anthropologists to philosophers to sociologists to political scientists to cultural studies scholars to feminist scholars.

So, you will find that scholars from every field have written extensively about globalization. So, it becomes a challenge for me or any teacher to be judicious in picking up what is essential for a course and keeping in mind the overall orientation of the course and the kind of students that one gets to teach.

So, this subject matter, unlike many other subject matter, which is much more strictly defined or much more clearly defined, globalization is much broader. It is more amorphous. It is a nebulous kind of concept and lacks consensus on critical areas. That is what I mentioned earlier, starting with the definition of whether it is something new or what is the the impact of globalization? Is globalization coming to an end? Are we going back? Or what would be the nature of the globe after some 20 or 30 years? What are the implications of globalization? Is it good for the national economy, Is it good for the poor, Is it suitable for women?

So, there are a host of issues where there is hardly any consensus. It again adds complexity to the whole thing. How do I strike a balance between so many competing kinds of claims? What scholars do I accept, incorporate in the syllabus, and who are the scholars I need to leave out. Again it is a complicated scenario. Moreover, it is an emerging nascent field, emerging scholarship, maybe the most substantive body of knowledge about globalization is only some two, three decades old, not more than that. Maximum three decades and three decades is not a substantive period when you look into the history of disciplines.

Furthermore, a host of new nascent fields are emerging within this larger framework of globalization. For example, what is the most recent development in terms of globalization? Are we witnessing a deglobalization? Is globalization leading towards a crisis? that is the kind of indication that we are getting.

So, scholarly works are being produced every day, trying to theorize, make sense of, and improvise the previous scholars. So it is a lively, vibrant intellectual field spread across every field. You will have globalization and religion, globalization and education, globalization and

sports, you name it any field you will find literature connecting with globalization to any substantive field that you are interested in.

So, it is a huge platform, a vast landscape that we are supposed to deal with, so that is because of that very reason we will have to be very judicious about what to include and what not to include. The final point is a politically and ideologically charged scholarship. Most of the Social Science literature they do not claim to be neutral, or they do not claim to be completely objective. They do not pretend to be as if they do not have any ideological or political leanings.

They do that because they know that all such claims are pretentious. You cannot have a scholarship or a scholarly position without being influenced by ideological or political inclinations, and there is nothing wrong with that. We are not talking about when social scientists claim that what they are presenting is the truth. We are not talking about when social scientists claim that what they are saying is objective; they went by the term objectivity.

Now, the term objectivity is heavily criticized. Because of this very reason, what is your approach towards globalization? Are you a supporter of globalization? Or are you a critic of globalization? What kind of ideological platform that you use? What are your ideological inclinations? All these things muddle this particular field. That is why it becomes even more difficult for us to balance this competing ideological and political claims and affinities towards this particular subject matter?

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Now, as I mentioned, we will have this course from a sociological perspective. When I am talking about the sociological perspective, I am using it in the most broader sense of the word. Because we know that you cannot have a globalization theory strictly within the confines of Sociology, it is impossible because the subject matter is supposed to give a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary explanation. Thus you cannot have a very narrow definition of Sociology.

So, the kind of sociological approach that I am adopting is a much broader term. I will talk about the political themes that are usually, conventionally discussed by political scientists. I will

have to talk about economic scenarios, and I will have to talk about International Relations. I will have to talk about a host of philosophical transformations.

So, even though I am talking about this complicated scenario, my standpoint will be that of a sociologist. Because I am trained in Sociology, I want this course to be rooted in the discipline of Sociology. So, we will be discussing globalization from a sociological theory perspective or a theoretical perspective from the discipline of Sociology. So, what does it mean in a vast sense? What could be the kind of a standpoint? What is the kind of an entry point for Sociology to understand globalization? One of the most defining features of a sociological inquiry into globalization is that it is concerned with the transformations of social relations. Those who have studied Sociology know that one of the fundamental definitions of Sociology is that Sociology is the study of social relations.

It is a very simple definition. Sociology is the study of social relationships. Now it looks elementary, but when you try to locate it when you try to place this particular word 'social relationship' in different contexts, it assumes an entirely different picture. Because we know that social relationships in an elementary society, in a tribal society, it will be completely different from the social relationship in an advanced capitalist industrial society.

So, the social relationship, which looks very simple in a simple society, assumes so much complexity in a late modern industrial society, but our focus is precisely on the same. We are trying to understand how people interact with each other? How do they form a relationship? What kind of pattern forms of relationships? Moreover, how transformation is taking place?. So we are trying to understand what kind of transformations of social relationships are brought in by globalization. It looks like a very simple question, but it is a very profound question.

Most of the theorizations on globalization revolve around this particular question, what kind of transformations of social relations or what kind of transformations in social relations are brought in by this whole process of globalization. We are then concerned with the question of time and space. Time and space are fundamental concepts in Physics. They are also extremely important concepts in Sociology because we talk about social relationships in a given time in a given space. We will have a fascinating discussion about space, place, flow, all these things.

So, we are trying to understand how this notion of space and time are undergoing rapid transformations in the era of globalization. And how that impacts the subject matter of Sociology, that is, social relationships. Then another significant overarching theme that I want to put forward is this extensive debate on modernity and late modernity.

I do not know how many of you are familiar with these debates. I will try to introduce some of these concepts later down the line. Modernity is the kind of framework that we use to talk about the larger transformations that happened initially in the west, especially in Western Europe and later spread across the rest of the societies mainly through colonization. For example, Sociology is modern science; we consider Sociology as modern Social Science.

There are significant arguments that this particular modernity or some of the fundamental features of modernity has come to an end. Then we have moved into another realm, another phase, another situation, and there is no consensus on what to call it. Some people call it post-modernity. Post-modern means you have gone past that of the period of modernity. Moreover, it does not say anything that exactly is there. It is a compelling argument of post-modernity you must have heard quite a lot of post-modern literature and other things.

In Sociology, there are not many important sociologists who agree with this argument of a complete post-modernity. Instead, they prefer to use late modernity, high modernity, liquid modernity, reflexive modernity and a host of other terms. We will rather elaborate on these theoretical concerns why, for example, scholars like Anthony Giddens say Ulrich Beck is talking about late modernity rather than post-modernity.

So, this more significant theoretical debate on modernity and late modernity will figure prominently in the course. Of course, a host of other vital concerns like identity, culture transformation, consumption, religion, and other things will be discussed. When you talk about the globalization of society, globalization of social relationships, then these are the substantive themes. I will have to make a very judicious selection about the themes we are discussing, so I will discuss them maybe towards the end of the course.



Globalization from a sociological perspective

- Concerns with the transformations of social relations
- Concerns with questions of space and time
- Larger debates on modernity and late-modernity
- Questions of identity and cultural transformations



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Week	Lessons/Topics
1	Introduction to globalization debates and social theory
2	Cultural globalization: Culture and Globalization, Samuel Huntington, George Ritzer and McDonalidization
3	Cultural globalization: Arjun Appadurai and Ulrich Beck on Cosmopolitanism
4	Globalization and modernity debates: Anthony Giddens, David Harvey and Ulrich Beck
5	Globalization and modernity debates: Anthony Giddens, David Harvey and Ulrich Beck
6	Globalization, spatiality and networks: Manuel Castells, Saskia Sassen etc
7	Globalization, spatiality and networks: Manuel Castells, Saskia Sassen etc
8	Globalization, risk societies and changing forms of nation state: Ulrich Beck
9	Anti-globalization theorization: The Empire and alternate imaginations, Challenges to Globalization
10	Globalization: Substantive themes and illustrations
11	Globalization and Indian society: Substantive themes and illustrations
12	Conclusion and summing up of the course



This is a very general introduction to the course and let us see what is the kind the course structure is . This is a theoretically loaded course, it is a theoretically heavy course, I would spend a lot of time discussing theories. Because I believe that it is essential that students understand the theorizations on globalization. I could have freely framed a syllabus with less theory but with more illustrations, examples, and easy readings.

However, I felt that that might not be an excellent approach. Because once you understand the theories of globalization, it becomes effortless for you to understand the illustrations. Once you

understand the theories, it becomes much easier for you to understand how globalization occurs or how it manifests itself in different fields. That is why I devoted a large part of the syllabus to discussing some important theoretical arguments. And, I hope that you will find it interesting and helpful. I hope that you will not find it very difficult and rather it might be engaging.

So, let us go have a quick look at the kind of content in the syllabus. So, in the first week, we will have an introduction to globalization debates and social theory. This will be an introductory week where I talk about globalization and some important debates within globalization, a host of essential themes, important players. This first week will be more or less kind of providing a broad introduction to the whole field of sociological literature on globalization as a kind of a window into the disciplinary debates.

And, second and third weeks are devoted to looking at cultural globalization and the kind of transformation happening in the realm of culture concerning globalization. This is again a fascinating theme because we mostly understand globalization as globalization taking place in the realm of culture. You must have heard that your parents or elders say that people are entirely influenced by Western culture in this new generation. We have lost our traditional culture, or India is losing our Indian culture. Everybody is becoming westernized, so western values are sweeping across the country.

How do we understand the impact of globalization in the field of culture? I am devoting two weeks to that. In the first week, I will give some introductory lectures on the concept of Culture and Culture and Globalization and maybe one class on a powerful and controversial culturalist argument on this 'Clash of Civilizations'.

I hope at least some of you are familiar with that. I will also discuss important scholar George Ritzer and his theorizations on McDonaldization, a general term that caught the attention of sociologists during 2000. We will have that discussion on that. In the second week, I will discuss this scholar extensively by the name Arjun Appadurai, and I again hope that some of you must have heard of his name. A very prominent Indian anthropologist. I could say that maybe the most famous Indian anthropologist in the world, Arjun Appadurai, basically from Tamil Nadu,

was born and brought up in Mumbai now, he is in the US. He was with several universities but prominently mainly with the New York University and Ulrich Beck on Cosmopolitanism. It is also an exciting theme.

Then the fourth and fifth weeks, we will discuss this globalization and modernity debate, the one I just mentioned about modernity or late modernity, what kind of modernity we are talking about in the era of globalization. For example, Giddens talks about radical modernity. He talks about a runaway world. So what are we talking about under this debate between modernity, postmodernity and late modern. And we will have discussions by Anthony Giddens extensively, David Harvey and Ulrich Beck. Moreover, I think those discussions might require two weeks, so I have kept two weeks discussing these more prominent theoretical themes and these important scholars.

And then weeks 6 and 7 are again devoted to another set of essential scholars concerned with the whole question of Spatiality and Networks, the entire cost of space. I am talking about Manuel Castells and Saskia Sassen, notable names in Sociology and Urban Sociology, mainly to discuss them extensively. Manuel Castells, more particularly, his idea about this network society is very, very famous. So, Saskia Sassen is on the global city and global street to discuss these two scholars.

In the eighth week, we will again discuss Ulrich Beck, a significant German scholar and his idea of a risk society. It is a fascinating argument that he has about this late modern world. He calls it a risk society, and his name has emerged very prominently in recent times when the whole world has to face a COVID-19 pandemic. Because Ulrich Beck specifically spoke about such a scenario, the whole world faces risk and how that makes its shape.

Then the ninth week is devoted to a discussion on anti-globalization theorization. We will discuss this empire thesis by two important scholars Negri and Hardt, and the globalization challenges. Maybe I will try to include some of the very recent scholarships on globalization's perceived decline or perceived crisis.

Furthermore, week ten will have a kind of substantive themes and illustrations. I think I will be ending this discussion on theories with the ninth week. Weeks 10 and 11, 11 will focus more on the Indian scenario. However, week ten and maybe a couple or more lectures in week 12 will give you some exciting illustrations of globalization taking place in particular areas.

For example, globalization and music, globalization and dance, globalization and tourism, globalization and sports, globalization and religion, globalization and leisure, globalization and consumption, globalization and terrorism, globalization and health, globalization and equality or inequality, for that matter. So, there are numerous fascinating areas that you need to get an idea about the kind of globalization literature on these areas, so we are spending two weeks at least to discuss these themes.

And in the final week of the course, we try to conclude the course by summing up the course and then providing a broad summary and overview. So this is the overall course structure. I have been teaching this course at IIT Madras for the past several years. I firmly believe that this represents some of the most prominent theoretical debates and concerns about globalization literature.

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Text Books



- Ritzer, George. 2007. *The Blackwell Companion to Globalization*. New York: Blackwell Publication.
- Lechner, Frank J and John Boli. 2014. *The Globalization Reader*. London. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Stager, Manfred. 2013. *Globalization: Greatest Hits*. London. Oxford University Press.
- Johns, Andrew. 2010. *Globalization: Key Thinkers*. London. Polity Press.

Besides these books a host of original articles will be discussed.



And what are the essential textbooks?, I will be following at least two, three important textbooks one is an edited work by George Ritzer published in 2007, 'The Blackwell Companion to Globalization', and this is a significant work at least for the initial chapters. I would recommend you to have a look at this. It is an edited one written by some of the best names in the field. The second one is Lechner Frank L and John Boli, published in 2014 again 'The Globalization Reader'. This again is a compilation of original essays by different scholars, again a very important source.

Then another book that I am using is written by Manfred Stager, published in 2013. It is titled 'Globalization: Greatest Hits'. This is an exciting book where he has taken up important essays by important scholars in the field and then compiled them. It is a compilation, not his writing.

So, for example, there are essays by Saskia Sassen by Anthony Giddens by Arjun Appadurai and a host of people. This too will be a very important source for you. Yet another work would be by Andrew Johns titled 'Globalization: Key Thinkers', and this book introduce you to a host of important key thinkers in the field of globalization. It is a very useful book because it introduces a thinker, talks about their initial periods, ideological influences, and important contributions. It also has a critical evaluation of their contributions.

And besides, these textbooks I will be using a host of original articles. I will be using PowerPoint presentations most often. But on several occasions, I will also use original articles. I will display this article I will scroll through the article so that you will be able to see the original articles and discuss a particular paper or a particular article by a scholar. I hope that it is an important exercise. I will also try to circulate these materials to the students who are enrolled. I think it is important that you develop this habit to read these materials and maybe with the help of my lecture and explanation and then try to understand that.

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Reference Books

- Castells, Manuel. 2010 *The Power of Identity*. Sussex. Blackwell Publishing.
- Coleman William D and Alina Sajed. 2013. *Fifty Key Thinkers on Globalization*. London. Routledge Publication.
- Giddens, Anthony. 2003. *The Consequences of Modernity*. London. Polity Press.
- Harvey, David. 1992. *The Conditions of Postmodernity*. London. Blackwell Publication.
- Mooney, Annabelle and Betsy Evans. 2007. *Globalization: Key Concepts*. New York. Routledge Publication.



And these are the reference books. Maybe a couple of them are original works but important texts that we will have precise references to in this section. There is Manual Castells ‘The Power of Identity’, Coleman William D and Alina Sajed’s ‘ Fifty Key Thinkers on Globalization’, Anthony Giddens ‘The Consequences of Modernity”, David Harvey The Conditions of Postmodernity’ and Mooney Annabelle and Betsy Evans ‘Globalization: Key Concepts’ these are all kind of reference textbooks. However, as I mentioned, I will be extensively using original essays, and I hope you also learn to adapt to that kind of teaching style.

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Reading-based discussions with the help of PPTs and original articles

Use of film-clips, discussions etc.



So, Pedagogy it will be a reading-based discussion with the help of PPTs and original articles. So, you know, while PowerPoint presentations are pretty helpful and handy to summarize many things, PPTs may not be a very appropriate tool for several other areas. For example, if you want to discuss some very dense theoretical essay, PPTs may not be very appropriate.

So, I will be using a combination of both PPTs and the original essays, primarily PDF documents. I would have marked it in yellow so that you know which are the important sections, and I will be scrolling through those pages on the screen so that you will also be able to read through that when I explain. And I will also use a couple of film clips and then, if possible, a discussion with some subject experts. I cannot commit to that because of much uncertainty associated with these particular times that we live in.

So, that is all I have to talk to you about this particular course. I hope you got some idea about the general nature, scope, and kind, of the course you have enrolled in. I very sincerely believe that it will interest you. I hope that you will find this course valuable and exciting. It will encourage you to read more and then collect material and develop some intellectual and scholarly interest in this particular field very fascinating field on globalization.

So, with this word, let me conclude and once again, a heartily welcome to the course. I welcome all of you, and you are always welcome to communicate with my teaching assistants or with me

or with the NPTEL officials. So make it as interactive as possible, and I wish all of you good luck with the course and let us see for the next class. Thank you.