LABST 20: LABOR IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY - Laney College Labor Studies
Room E256 Labor Studies Phone: 510/464-3210
Fall 2007 Semester, Thursday 6-9 pm, Course Code: L-1798 3 Units
Instructor: Michael Eisenscher getorganized@igc.org Office hours: By arrangement (510) 436-6125

Course Description: The global economy has undergone a dramatic transformation over the course of the last half century, driven by new technologies, the breakdown of the global system of colonies and resistance to neo-colonialism, the emergence of formerly under-developed nations as global competitors, the demise of centrally directed socialist economies, and the realignment of geo-political relations between states. These changes have had both direct and indirect impacts on the nature of work, the character of employment and job opportunities, the mobility of capital, trade and global competition, patterns of migration and immigration, erosion of labor rights and trade unionism and a general breakdown of post-World War Two labor relations systems around the world. This course will examine these changes – the environment in which organized labor achieved its peak, suffered serious reversals and has sought to regain its footing during these critical postwar decades. It will consider such issues as the export of jobs, outsourcing, trade, immigration, multinational corporations, industrial and labor relations, international relations, economic development and under-development, and the practice and future of trade unionism. It will help to place the experience of American workers into a global context.

IF THE SYSTEM ISN'T WORKING FOR YOU, LEARN HOW IT WORKS IN ORDER TO CHANGE IT!

Required reading: (available at the Laney College bookstore and from instructor, as noted)

edited by Betsy Rakocy, Alejandro Reuss, Chris Sturr, and the Dollars & Sense Collective;
and instructor handouts and internet resources.

Students are expected to stay current in international economic news that affects workers and unions.

In-class videos and computer generated visuals will be used extensively throughout the course.

Students are requested to provide an email address to enable the instructor to send supplementary materials between classes.

Attendance is required. Students who miss more than three classes will be dropped unless they have made special arrangements with the instructor. Class will start on time; regular attendance is expected. Students will be expected to have completed the assigned reading material in advance of each class.

Grading: will be based on your knowledge of the subject matter demonstrated though class participation, exams and written assignments.

70% of your grade will be based on in-class participation. Each of two written assignments are worth a total of 10 points. The midterm essay is due October 26th; the second essay is due December 6th. You may substitute a book review (other than on the assigned readings) of a text approved in advance by the instructor for one of the assigned papers. Students must individually write their own papers.

Written assignments should be submitted typed, double-spaced in an 11 or 12 point font. Sources should be documented in footnotes or end notes. These assignments may be submitted electronically as an attachment to email in Word, WordPerfect, or another common word processing format. Pages should be numbered.

**Plagiarism** occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. It may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgement. It also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as her or her own. Plagiarism, or cheating on any of the exams will result in a failing grade (F) in the course.
8/23 **Introductions, discussion of course expectations.** Review of the curriculum, assignments and expectations.

Class discussion: What is globalization? Is it beyond social control, like weather, or a product of policies and practices pursued by governments, corporations, unions and other non-governmental organizations and institutions, and by individuals and families? What is international labor solidarity; why care about workers in other countries?


8/30 **Labor, Capital and the Postwar Social Contract**

Reading: *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* by David Harvey, Introduction and Chapters 1-2

“Short History of Neoliberalism” by Susan George, *Real World Globalization* (7th Ed.)

“Free Markets, Commerce and Economic Development” in *Real World Globalization*, Chapters 1 and 6


9/7 **Last day to drop and receive refund**

9/9 **Last day to add a class**

9/6 **Globalization in the Late 20th and early 21st Century**

Reading: *Real World Globalization*, Chapter 1 [Unless specified otherwise, this and all subsequent references to *RWG* will be to the 9th Edition.]


“Globalization Threatens Workers, Thrills Investors”, Businessweek, 04/24/2000, [http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_17/b36780001.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/2000/00_17/b36780001.htm)


“The Ideology of Globalization as that of Capitalism Writ Large and, Necessarily, Write Always Larger” by Douglas Dowd, April 10, 2003; www.dougdowd.org/NewFiles/articles/ideogloblo.html


“Another Nail in the US Dollar’s Coffin” by Jephraim P. Gundsik, ICHblog.eu, February 6, 2007; www.ichblog.eu/content/view/392/2/

“The Great Dollar Crash of ’07” by Mike Whitney, ICHblog.eu, February 6, 2007; www.ichblog.eu/content/view/405/2/

Video: Uprooted: Refugees of the Global Economy

Video: What I’ve Learned About U.S. Foreign Policy – The War Against the Third World

9/13 Globalization in the Late 20th and early 21st Century (continued)

9/16 Last Day to Drop Full-Term Credit Classes without "W" Appearing on Transcript

9/20 Corporations and Corporate Power in the Global Economy

Real World Globalization, Chapter 2


“Are Bad Jobs Good for Poor People?” by Anmal Chaddha, Race, Poverty & the Environment, Spring 2007


Video: Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price


9/27 Trade, Investment and Debt [SELECT FIRST ESSAY TOPIC]

Real World Globalization, Chapters 3-4

“Plunder and Profit” by David Moberg, In These Times, March 29, 2004

“Fast Track to Disaster for the World’s Poor” by Thomas Ambrogi, in Social Policy, Spring 2002

“Will a Social Clause in Trade Agreements Advance International Solidarity?” by David Bacon

“Know-Nothings and Know-It-Alls: What’s Wrong with the Hype about Globalization?” by Jessica Collins and John Miller, in Real World Globalization (7th Ed.)


“Workers Rights Offers a Litmus Test on Trade” by Alan Beattie and Eoin Callan, Financial Times, March 6, 2007; www.ft.com/cms/s/a5d73c66-cc13-11db-a661-000b5df10621.s01=1.html

“What's Free about Free Trade?”

“The Big Lie About Free Trade” by Bernie Sanders, Chicago Tribune, December 31, 2002; www.chicagotribune.com

“Who Gains from Trade” by Mehrene Larudee, Real World Globalization (7th Ed.)

“The IMF and World Bank’s Cosmetic Makeover” by Sarah Anderson, Real World Globalization (7th Ed.)

“Nafta’s Lessons: from Economic Mythology to Current Realities” by James Cypher, April 10, 2003; www.dougdowd.org/NewFiles/articles/cypherlo.html

“Kicking Away the Ladder: The ‘Real’ History of Free Trade” by Ha-Joon Chang, Foreign Policy in Focus; www.fpif.org

“More Free Trade is Good and More Protectionism is Bad – NOT!” by Robin Hahnel, ZNet, June 1, 2000; www.zmaq.org/ZSustainers/ZDaily/2000-06/01hahnel.htm

“Stiglitz: Time to Snuff the IMF?” in Left Business Observer, #102


“World Financial Volatility” by Patrick Bond, ZNet, Dec. 27, 2004

“Dear Dr. Dollar”, Dollars & Sense, July/August 2007

“Wolfowitz and the World Bank” by Larry Peterson, Dollars & Sense, July/August 2007


“Supply, Demand and Tortillas” by Chris Tilly and Marie Kennedy, Dollars & Sense, Spring 2007

“International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank ‘Debt Relief’ for Poor and Indebted Countries Is a Sham” by 50 Years Is Enough, December 2004; www.50years.org/action/s26/factsheet.html

“How International Monetary Fund (IMF)/World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs Have Increased Poverty Around the World” by 50 Years Is Enough, December 2004; www.50years.org/actions/s26/factsheet2.html

10/4 **Trade, Investment and Debt (continued)**

10/11 **Labor in the International Economy**

*Real World Globalization*, Chapter 5

*Child Labor is Back*, National Labor Committee

“Globalization and Wages: The Down Escalator” by Richard DuBoff, *Real World Globalization* (7th Ed.)

“The Impact of Capital Mobility on Workers’ Rights” by Leo Gerard, Pres., United Steelworkers Union; [www.ourfuture.org/onmessage/other_contributors/03_07_03.cfm](http://www.ourfuture.org/onmessage/other_contributors/03_07_03.cfm)

“Australia’s Workchoices: Exploitation and Suppressing Strikes” by Chris White, March 2007


“U.S. Immigration History: a handout” by National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights; [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org)


“Braceros or Amnesty?” by David Bacon, *Real World Globalization* (7th Ed.)

“Coming to America” by Felicia Mello, *The Nation*, 06/25/07

“Illegal Immigrants: Uncle Sam Wants You” by Deborah Davis, *In These Times*, August 2007


“Legalizing Human Trafficking” by Basav Sen, *Dollars & Sense*, May/June 2006

“Organizing Labor in Rural Colombia” by James J. Brittain, *Dollars & Sense*, Nov/Dec 2006


Video: The Global Assemblyline

Video: The Hidden Face of Globalization: What Corporations Don’t Want You to Know

Video: The Outsourcing Report

10/18 Labor in the International Economy (continued)

10/25 Economic Development  [FIRST ESSAY IS DUE]

Real World Globalization, Chapter 6

“Plunder and Profit” by David Moberg, In These Times, March 2004


“Milton Friedman’s Chilean Miracle” by Alejandro Reuss, Dollars & Sense, January/February 2007

“The World Bank Brings Market Fundamentalism to Iraq” by Kathy Hoang, 50 Years Is Enough; www.50years.org/cms/ejn/story/169


11/1 Economic Development (continued)  [SELECT 2ND ESSAY TOPIC]

11/8 The Rise and Fall of the American Labor Movement

“Is the Secret to Labor’s Future in Its Past?” by Michael Eisenscher

“Labor: Turning the Corner? It Will Take More Than Mobilization” by Michael Eisenscher

AFL-CIO Foreign Policy Leaders Help Develop Bush’s Foreign Policy” by Kim Scipes


11/15 Political Economy of War and Imperialism

*Real World Globalization*, Chapter 8


“Ruling the Empire” by Alejandro Reuss, *Dollars & Sense*, January/February 2003


“Empire and the Capitalists” by Immanuel Wallerstein, TomDispatch.com, May 15, 2003; www.nationinstitute.org/tomdispatch/index.mhtml?emx=x&pid=676

11/22 Thanksgiving Day – NO CLASS

11/29 Natural Resources, Health and the Environment

*Real World Globalization*, Chapter 7


12/6 Resistance to Globalization  [2ND ESSAY IS DUE]

*Real World Globalization*, Chapter 9

“People Vs. Empire” by Arundhati Roy, *In These Times*, January 3, 2005

“Globalization and Parecon” by Robin Hahnel

“Globalized Resistance-At the G-8 summit, activists refine their tactics” by Linda Pinkow, *Dollars & Sense*, July/August 2007

“Confronting Empire” by Arundhati Roy, Porto Alegre, Brazil, January 27, 2003

“Red States and Blue Collars” by Chrystia Freeland, Financial Times, 08/03/07, http://www.ft.com/cms/s/4c475166-414f-11dc-8f37-0000779fd2ac,s01=1.html

“Worker Run Cooperatives in Buenos Aires” by Benjamin Dangl, *ZMag*, April 2005


“Liberating Pachamama – Corporate Greed, Bolivia and Peasant Resistance” by Daphne Eviator, *Dissent*, Spring 2006
“Blood on the Palms – Afro-Colombians fight new plantations” by David Bacon, *Dollars & Sense*, July/August 2007


“Rethink Urged on Global Economy” by Frances Williams, *Financial Times*, February 24, 2004

Video: *Golden Lands, Working Hands: Worker Owned Companies*

Video: *The Take*

Video: *Argentina’s Occupied Factories*

Video: *Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution*

12/13 **Resistance to Globalization (continued)**

12/20 **Alternatives to Capital-Driven Globalization – TBA**