

Prof. Derber
W: 3-5:30

SOCIOLOGY 375

ECONOMIC CRISIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE
CORPORATE POWER IN AMERICA AND THE WORLD

This course analyzes key topics in social and political economy focusing on the structure of the corporate order in American and the world. It focuses on the interface between corporations and the state, and the way that the corporate regime organizes economic, political and social life. It also proposes changes in the corporate system – both at the national and global levels - that can heal American and world-wise social, economic and environmental problems while ushering in a new system of sustainability and global democracy..

The vast power of rising global corporate empires - from Citigroup to Exxon/Mobil to Microsoft - poses new threats to American democracy and the wellbeing of all citizens. Globalization and American corporations are trumpeted as the best hope for global prosperity and democracy. But the vast size of global markets and firms, their single-minded profit seeking, and *lack of public accountability* create a system of corporate domination, with rising poverty and inequality, a dangerously deteriorating environment and corrupted democracy. Big business increasingly sets the agenda for both political parties in Washington, while Washington itself increasingly dictates economic and social policy to the rest of the world.

This course offers new solutions for these problems, offering a vision of how to maintain prosperity while bringing corporations and unchecked American power under democratic control. It shows that we need new social movements with a global vision of democracy, corporate accountability and global sustainability.

The course offers students literacy in globalization, political economy, the theory of the corporation and corporate responsibility, the practice of business, and the making of social change. It provides a new perspective on world affairs and American society, and should help students interpret the news about the economy and American social problems in a more critical and informed way. It does not require prior background in political economy or economics, and uses texts that are written for the general reader.

Requirements and Basis For Grading: Midterm: Final;
Books (In Book Store and on Library Reserve):

PURCHASE:

Baghawati, In Defense of Globalization

Brecher and Costello, Global Village or Global Pillage

Collins and Yeskel, Economic Apartheid in America

Derber, Corporation Nation

Derber, The Wilding of America

Derber, Hidden Power

Frank, What's the Matter with Kansas

Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree
Korten, The Great Turning
Rifkin, The European Dream
Stiglitz, Making Globalization Work
Wallach and Sforza, The WTO

LIBRARY RESERVES (5 at bookstore)

Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom
McKibben, Deep Economy
Perkins, Confessions of an Economic Hit Man
Hawken, Blessed Unrest
Derber, People Before Profit
Gelbspan, The Heat is On

READINGS

I. Who Runs America; Who Runs the World?

A. Session 1 Introduction

Derber, Hidden Power, Intro, Chaps 1-3 (read over first month of course)
Perkins, Confessions Of an Economic Hit Man (OPTIONAL but highly recommended)
Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, Intro and Chapter 1

B. Globalization 1: Race to the Top or Race to the Bottom?

session 2

Brecher and Costello, Global Village or Global Pillage? Chaps 1-3
Friedman, The Lexus and the Olive Tree, Chaps. 1,6,7,9

C. Globalization 2: Exploitative Empire or Freedom and Prosperity

session 3

Derber, People Before Profit, Chapter 2 (online reserve)
Stiglitz, Making Globalization Work, Chaps. 1,2,3
Baghawati, In Defense of Globalization, Chaps 5-7, 10, 12

D. Corporate World Government:

session 4 The WTO and IMF: Rule-Makers of the World
Derber, Corporation Nation, Chap. 14
Wallach and Sforza, The WTO., pp.13-60
Baghawati, In Defense of Globalization, Chaps 8,9,11

II. The American Dream at Risk: Corporate Rule and The Threat to Democracy

A. New Robber Barons?: Corporate Sovereignty

Session 5

Derber, Corporation Nation

Intro, Chaps 1,2, 5, 6, 8, 9

B. Inequality and Poverty: Corporate Rule, the New Social

Contract and the End of the American Dream

session 6

Collins and Yeskel, Economic Apartheid in America, Chapters 1-3

Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, Chapter 10

C. Social Disintegration: The Ungluing of America

session 7

Derber, The Wilding of America. Chaps. 1,2,4, 5, 6

D. Corporate Fascism in America?

Session 8 Corporations, US Foreign Policy and Fascism

Derber, Hidden Power, Chapters 5,6

E. Corporations, Consumption and The End of Nature

Session 9,

McKibben, Deep Economy, Chapters 1,2

Korten, The Great Turning, Chapter 1

Hawken, Blessed Unrest, pp. 49-69

Gelbspan, The Heat is On, Introduction (online reserves)

MIDTERM EXAM session 10

III. Alternatives to the Corporate Regime: Toward Economic Democracy, SUSTAINABILITY and Collective Security

A. Justice and Prosperity: The Western European Strategy and the European Challenge to American Empire

session 11

Rifkin, The European Dream, Chaps 1-6;9;16

Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, Chaps 2; 11;12

IV AMERICAN ALTERNATIVES: POPULISM, DEMOCRACY, SUSTAINABILITY AND REGIME CHANGE AT HOME

A: Right Wing Populism: How Conservatives Control the Debate
Session 12

Thomas Frank, What's the Matter With Kansas?

B. Postive Populism, Democratizing America, and The Accountable Corporation
session 13

C. Derber, Corporation Nation, Chapters 9-12; 13,14
Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom, pp.133-136

D. Sustainable Global Economics and Global Democracy
Session 14

Korten, The Great Turning, Chapters 18-21

Stiglitz, Making Globalization Work, Chapters 3, 6, 10

McKibben, Deep Economy, Chapters 4,5 (half of students read this; other half
Read Hawken below)

Hawken, Blessed Unrest, "Immunity" and "Restoration" last two chapters

Derber, People Before Profit, Chap. 6