

Syllabus: Business Across Cultures, Spring 2010
Gord Sellar, Instructor

Course Overview:

Note: this syllabus is extremely tentative. Among other reasons, this course was given to me at the last minute, and thus I have had limited time to consider what we will cover.

The world of business is one which we often take for granted. Critical, intellectual discussion of business in an academic setting is all too rarely attempted except in passing asides. Yet in a world where business of an international nature plays such an important role in the bigger processes of globalization -- processes by which Korea is affected by other nations and powers, and by which Korea also affects other nations and peoples -- such a critical, analytical discussion is urgently necessary. This course will provide students with a forum, the impetus, focus, and the tools for discussion which goes beyond the usual salutary, blue-skies narrative provided by the mainstream media.

Teaching Method:

This course will be a collaborative effort. That is to say, there will be far more focus on discussion than on lecture; there will be semi-regular homework assignments, especially research assignments. Students are expected to contribute to class discussions, so that non-participation is equal to non-attendance.

Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, students are expected to have:

- developed a deeper awareness of the critical issues in the contemporary business world, and of the impact of business upon the rest of human civilization, especially in terms not just of international and intercultural business, but also in terms of the realities of businesses as a part of the larger process of globalization
- acquired a broader vocabulary and repertory of concepts for the analytical discussion of issues in, and depictions of, business
- produced a reasonably intelligent and well-reasoned paper on a research topic of their own choosing, following formatting and other guidelines provided by the professor

Homework:

Homework for this class falls under several different categories.

- Independent research projects will be assigned several times before and after midterms. Some of the research will require a write-up, while other research will be presented to the class, formally or informally.
- Students will be expected to write a research paper at the end of semester, on a topic of their choice subject to the professor's approval.
- Regular discussions will be scheduled for the longer class sessions (as well as some of the shorter ones), and students will be expected to arrive at class prepared for the assigned discussion. Since this class will focus on discussion, participation is a major part of the course grade. Students are expected to participate actively; aside from being able to communicate on a basic level, students' English level is much less important than the quality of their ideas and reasoning.

(In other words, I care much less about your English grammar than what you have to say... but of course, being able to understand you is a basic necessity. Try to be clear, but also speak with passion and conviction, with curiosity and engagement with the subject.)

Textbook

No textbook will be used in this course. Since it was assigned last minute, I am still working on assembling a list of course materials. For the time being, resources online will be used. A readings package may be provided later on in semester.

Should you wish to explore texts or materials not encompassed in this course, please feel free to ask me for recommendations. I will be more than happy to help you find materials which are suited to your needs and worth exploring.

Assessment

50% -- Classroom Discussion Participation
5% -- Minor Essay (of 2)
10% -- Presentations
10% -- Written Homework
20% -- Major Essay (of 2)
5% -- Dept. Events Participation

As you can see above, course assessment is not heavily focused on examinations. The majority of your grade will be based on what happens during regular classtime -- regular attendance, in-class participation, and the regular presentations that you will prepare weekly and make to the class or to groups within the class. Therefore it is fitting not to think of this course as a course "without a final exam" but rather as a course in which every meeting is a sort of partial exam adding up to a major component of the final grade.

However, a 0% in any of the above marks will result in an incomplete grade. Students must at least attempt all homework/research/discussion assignments in order to complete the course.

Contact Information

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COURSE OUTLINE:

This might change! I will have to see what you want & need from this class.

Week 1: INTRODUCTION
Week 2: GLOBALIZATION AND BUSINESS: POSCO IN ORISSA AS A CASE STUDY.
Week 3: THE CORPORATION (VIEWING)
Week 4: THE CORPORATION (DISCUSSION)
Week 5: HEART OF DARKNESS: BUSINESS AS CULTURE, COLONIES AS BUSINESS
Week 6: "IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID." (OR IS IT A "STUPID ECONOMY"?)
Week 7: HOW OTHERS SEE YOU: A GUIDE FROM OUTSIDE
Week 8: MIDTERM EXAM
Week 9: ETHICAL PROBLEMS 1: HA-JOON CHANG AND FREE TRADE
Week 10: MELVILLE'S "BARTLEBY THE SCRIVENER" (DISCUSSION)

Week 11: ETHICAL PROBLEMS 2: THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
Week 12: WHERE'S THE LINE ON ORGANIZED CRIME?
Week 13: ETHICAL PROBLEMS 3: EXTERNALITIES
Week 14: HOW GREEN IS GREEN?
Week 15: WRAP-UP AND CLOSING DISCUSSION
Week 16: FINAL PAPERS DUE