

SOC 562

Nature and Technology from Transnational Perspectives

Instructor: Zsuzsa Gille

gille@illinois.edu

Class: Thursday 03:00PM - 06:20PM

G48 Foreign Languages Building

Office hours: Thursdays 1-3pm or by appointment

Course topic:

In the last twenty years various disciplines (geography, sociology, history, and anthropology) have started contemplating what it would mean for our understanding of social problems and economic-political transformations if we attended to the formative role nonhuman entities play in constituting our social world. This endeavor by now has culminated not only in a formidable scholarship that deserves a regular place in a well-rounded sociological curriculum, but has also readjusted the theoretical terrains on which we understand globalization, transnational social relations and democracy. After an introduction to basic sociological theories of globalization, materiality and practice, we will classify the ways in which human-nonhuman relations stretch not only across national boundaries but also scales and evaluate the differences among such novel concepts as global assemblages, material civilization, transnational material flows, neoliberal governmentality, technological zones, or biopolitics. Students will use these theories and empirical models to formulate their own research projects, which efforts and experiments will serve as the basis of their final papers for this course.

Keywords:

Technology, nature, science, body, biopolitics, globalization, materiality, spatiality, democracy, colonialism, development, globalization, risk

This class fulfills course requirements for the transnational sociology area of concentration.

Prereq's: none, but prior exposure to social theory is highly recommended.

Readings: articles on Compass and the following list of books, which are on reserve at the library:

Latour, Bruno. 1993. *The Pasteurization of France*. Harvard University Press.

Sidney Mintz. 1986. *Sweetness and Power*. Penguin Books.

Rose, Nikolas. 1999. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge University Press.

Timothy Mitchell. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. University of California Press.

Aihwa Ong, Stephen J. Collier (Eds). 2005. *Global Assemblages*. Wiley-Blackwell.
Kahn, H. (Ed.) Framing the Global. Indiana University Press. 2014

Students' responsibilities:

1. Reading all assigned texts
2. Weekly commentary on readings that reflects one's familiarity with the assigned readings (one page-300 words max) to be submitted before class—by 9pm every Wednesday--to the course's webpage. (You may miss one week, no questions asked).
3. Completing in-class writing assignments and occasional smaller projects
4. Thoughtful, focused, and respectful contributions to discussion in class
5. A cumulative final exam (essay of 20 pages)
6. Approaching instructor with questions before problems accumulate
7. Visiting instructor at least once during office hours

Instructor will:

- provide context-setting short lectures
- devise learning tools
- ensure a non-intimidating and democratic environment for discussion
- regularly check on students' understanding of the material
- refer students to auxiliary material if needed
- notify students about emerging problems in time to rectify them before grades are assigned

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:

August 27

Introduction. No reading.

September 3

Globalization

Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Oxford: Blackwell. 121-197, 284-307.

Sassen, Saskia. 1995. "The state and the global city: Notes towards a conception of place-centered governance." *Competition and Change*. 1:31-50.

Sassen S. 2000. Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization. *Public Culture*. 12(1): 215-32

Background: McMichael, Philip. 1996. "Globalization: Myths and realities." *Rural Sociology*. 61(1):25-55.

September 10

Theoretical introduction #1

Beck, Ulrich. 1992. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage. (Ch. 1.)

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. "Structures and the Habitus." *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 72-95.

Theodore Schatzki. 2010. "Materiality and Social Life." *Nature and Culture* 5(2):123–149.

MacKenzie, Donald. 1984. "Marx and the Machine." *Technology and Culture*. 25(3):473-502.

Pickering, Andrew. 2001. "Practice and posthumanism: Social theory and a history of agency." In: Schatzki, Knorr Certina, and Von Savigny (Eds.) *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge. 163-174.

Braudel, Fernand. 1981. *The Structures of Everyday Life: Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th Century. Vol. 1*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers. "Introduction."

Dant, Tim. 2006. "Material civilization: things and society." *The British Journal of Sociology*. Volume 57, Issue 2, pages 289–308.

September 17

Theoretical introduction #2

Rose, Nikolas. 1999. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge University Press.

September 24

Colonialism #1

Latour, Bruno. 1993. *The Pasteurization of France*. Harvard University Press.

October 1

Colonialism #2

Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. University of California Press. Introduction and Ch. 1-3 (1-119.)

Brigit Meyer. 1997. Christian Mind and Wordly Matters: Religion and Materiality in 19th century Gold Coast. *Journal of Material Culture*. 2(3):311-337.

October 8

The Economy

Barry, Andrew & Don Slater. 2002. "Technology, politics and the market: an interview with Michel Callon." *Economy and Society*. 31(2):285-306.

Callon, Michel, Cécile Méadel & Vololona Rabeharisoa. 2002. "The economy of qualities." *Economy and Society*. 31(2):194-217.

Richard Swedberg. 2008. "The Centrality of Materiality. Theorizing the Economy from Xenophon to Home Economics and Beyond." *Sociologica*. 1:1-32.

Mitchell, Timothy. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. University of California Press. Chs. 7-9.

Sassen, Saskia. 2013. "Land Grabs Today: Feeding the Disassembling of National Territory." *Globalizations*. Vol. 10, No. 1, 25–46.

_____. 2012. Interactions of the Technical and the Social. *Information, Communication & Society*. 2012, pp. 1–24.

October 15

Natural resources and the environment

Mitchell, Timothy. 2009. "Carbon democracy." *Economy and Society*. 38(3):399-432.

Appel, Hannah. 2012. Offshore work: Oil, modularity, and the how of capitalism in Equatorial Guinea." *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 39, No. 4, pp. 692–709.

Murray Li, Tania. 2007. "Practices of assemblage and community forest management." *Economy and Society*. 36 (2):263-293.

Gille, Zsuzsa. 2010. "Reassembling the Macrosocial: Modes of Production, Actor Networks and Waste Regimes." *Environment and Planning A*. 1049-1064.

October 22

Race and Migration

- Brubaker, Roger and Frederick Cooper. 2000. Beyond Identity. *Theory and Society*. 29: 1-47.
- Braun et al. 2007. "Racial Categories in Medical Practice: How Useful Are They?" *PLoS Medicine*. 4(9) .e271.
- M'Charek, Amade. 2013. "Beyond fact or fiction: on the materiality of race in practice." *Cultural Anthropology*. 28(3):420-442.
- Dzenovska, Dace. 2013. "The Great Departure: Rethinking National(ist) Common Sense." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 39(2):201-218.
- Ho, Elaine Lynn-Ee and Madeleine E. Hatfield. 2011. "Migration and Everyday Matters: Sociality and Materiality." *Population, Space and Place*. 17, 707-713.

October 29

Gender

- Connell, R. W. and James W. Messerschmidt. 2005. "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept." *Gender and Society*. 19(6): 829-859.
- Poggio, Barbara. 2006. "Editorial: Outline of a Theory of Gender Practices." *Gender, Work and Organization*. 13(3):225-233.
- Martin, Patricia Yancey. 2006. "Practising Gender at Work: Further Thoughts on Reflexivity." *Gender, Work and Organization*. 13(3):254-276.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2012. "Not Your Grandma's Genetics: Some Theoretical Notes." *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. 36(4) 411-418.
- Coole, Diana and Samantha Frost. 2010. "Introducing the New Materialisms." In: Diana Coole and Samantha Frost. (Eds.) *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. 1-43.

November 5

State and Power as Assemblage

- Mukerji, Chandra. 2010. "The Territorial State as a Figured World of Power: Strategies, Logistics, and Impersonal Rule." *Sociological Theory*. 28(4): 402-424.
- Aihwa Ong, Stephen J. Collier (Eds). 2005. *Global Assemblages*. Wiley-Blackwell. Chs. 1, 12, 15, 18, 21.

Gille, Zsuzsa. 2016. *Paprika, Foie Gras, and Red Mud: The Politics of Materiality in the European Union*. Indiana University Press. Chs. 5-6.

November 12

Food

Mintz, Sidney. 1986. *Sweetness and Power*. Penguin Books.

Pollan, Michael. 2006. "Industrial corn." In *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin Press. 15-64.

Gille, Zsuzsa. 2016. *Paprika, Foie Gras, and Red Mud: The Politics of Materiality in the European Union*. Indiana University Press. Chs. 1-2.

November 19

Ethics, Morality and the Sociology of Standards

Lakoff, A. and S. Collier. "Regimes of Living." in Aihwa Ong, Stephen J. Collier (Eds). 2005. *Global Assemblages*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Timmermans, Stefan and Steven Epstein. 2010. "A World of Standards but not a Standard World: Toward a Sociology of Standards and Standardization." *Annual Review of Sociology*. 36:69-89.

Dunn, Elizabeth. 2005. "Standards and Person-Making in East Central Europe." In *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems*. Edited by Aihwa Ong and Stephen J. Collier. 173-94. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Gille, Zsuzsa. 2011. "The Hungarian Foie Gras Boycott: Struggles for Moral Sovereignty in Postsocialist Europe." *Eastern European Politics and Societies*. 25:114-128.

Halvorson, Britt. 2012. "Woven Worlds: Material Things, Bureaucratization, and Dilemmas of Caregiving in Lutheran Humanitarianism." *American Ethnologist*. 39(1):122-137.

December 3

Epistemology, Methods, Research Design

Hilary Kahn (Ed.) *Framing the Global*. Indiana University Press. Chs. TBA.

December 10 (Reading Day: Participation is optional or we may reschedule this class.)

Summary and Discussion of Projects

Final paper due December 14th midnight on Compass.