

REL 298: Globalization: Religious and Environmental Issues
Moravian College
Dr. Pamela K. Brubaker
Spring Semester, 2008
TTH 7:30-8:40

Course description: Globalization raises a number of issues relevant to ultimate questions such as: What is really real? Who are we? How should we live? What is of value? This course will explore our current experience of globalization and examine ways this affects understandings of “the good life,” through an examination of four theories of globalization: neoliberalism, development, earthism, and postcolonial and the values implicit in each. We will discuss religious perspectives on the global economy, reading a volume of papers which hopes to provide “an ethical compass” based on multi-religious insights, and conclude with a discussion of social and environmental issues.

(Counts toward the Multidisciplinary: “Ultimate Questions” requirement.)

The instructor reserves the right to change this syllabus if necessary.

Student Learning Outcomes:

+ Develop ability to compare, contrast, and integrate theoretical frameworks and apply them to contemporary issues;

+ Think and write about “ultimate questions” in ways that demonstrate both an understanding of the questions’ importance to individuals and to society, and the ability to critically evaluate their own and others’ answers.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and participation	5 %
2. Four unannounced quizzes (best of three count)	15 %
3. Two Reflection papers	40 %
4. Debate on Models of Globalization	5 %
5. Hearing and Brief on Religion and Global Warming	15 %
6. Final exam	20 %

Course Texts:

In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization, Peters

Subverting Greed: Religious Perspectives on the Global Economy, Knitter & Muzaffar

Globalization at What Price: Economic Change and Daily Life, Brubaker

“Introduction,” *Global Religions*, Juergensmeyer – (On reserve)

“Principles of Earth Democracy” and “Earth Democracy in Action,” Shiva (On reserve)

Attendance Policy: Attendance is required in this class. More than two unexcused absence will result in a lower grade, as will a pattern of tardiness or leaving early. You are expected to come to class prepared; this means having done the reading and ready to participate in discussion.

Quizzes: There will be four unannounced quizzes, covering assigned readings. The three best grades count toward your grade for the course.

Ultimate Questions Reflection Papers: Each of these **two four-to-five page** papers (double-spaced, type-written) are to reflect on “ultimate questions,” making reference to assigned readings in our text and additional research, as needed. It is crucial that you discuss these questions - Who are we? How should we live? What is of value? - in the context of globalization, with appropriate reference to religious, philosophical, ethical, and socio-economic dimensions of the topic.

Criteria for evaluation: 1) accuracy of factual information, 2) comprehensive and insightful character of reflection, and 3) clarity and appropriateness of references and analysis.

Hearing on Religions and Global Warming: Students will form small-groups to research and present ways specific religious beliefs and practices both contribute to and helpfully address global warming. Each group will prepare a **two-to-three page brief** (single-spaced, type-written) presenting salient aspects of global warming and specific religious resources for addressing it.

Final Examination: This examination will be a take-home examination consisting of essay questions which cover the last two units of the course.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Globalization and Ultimate Questions

(Jan. 14 – Feb. 29)

Reading: *In Search of the Good Life: The Ethics of Globalization*, Peters

1/15: Introduction to course	
1/17: Setting the Stage	Read Peters, 3-33
1/22: Neoliberalism & Globalization	Read Peters, 36-54
1/24: Understanding Globalization as Benevolent	Read Peters, 54-69
1/29: Globalization as Social Development	Read Peters, 70-89
1/31: Development Vision of the Good Life	Read Peters, 89-100
2/5: Earthism and Globalization	Read Peters, 102-23
Reflection Paper One Due	
2/7: Globalization as Localization	Read Peters, 123-38
2/12: Globalization as Neocolonialism	Read Peters, 139-54
2/14: Global Solidarity	Read Peters, 154-70

- 2/19: The Good Life for Whom? Read Peters, 173-91
 2/21: Reimagining Economics and Politics Read Peters, 192-202
- 2/26: Revisioning Civil Society Read Peters, 202-10
 2/28: Debate on Globalization and the Good Life

Reflection Paper Two Due

Religious Issues
 (March 10-April 4)

Reading: *Subverting Greed: Religious Perspectives on the Global Economy* (SG)
Global Religion, Juergensmeyer – Introduction (On reserve)

- 3/11: View God and Global Warming
 3/13: Global Religions and Global Economy Read Juergensmeyer and SG ix-14
- 3/18: African & Eastern Perspectives Read SG 15-57
 3/20: Buddhist and Confucian Perspectives Read SG 58-95
- 3/25: Jewish and Christian Perspectives Read SG 96-136
 3/27: Muslim Perspectives Read SG 137-53
- 4/1: Conclusion Read SG 154-72
 4/3: **Hearing on Religions and Global Warming**

Social and Environmental Issues
 (April 7 - April 26)

Reading: *Globalization at What Price: Economic Change and Daily Life*, Brubaker
 “Principles of Earth Democracy” and “Earth Democracy in Action,” Shiva (On reserve)

- 4/8: Overview of Globalization Read Brubaker 11-49
 4/10: Globalization and Daily Life Read Brubaker 51-74
- 4/15: Strategies for Daily Life Read Brubaker 93-112
 4/17: Strategies for Public Policy Read Brubaker 113-38
- 4/22: “Principles of Earth Democracy” Read Shiva (On reserve)
 4/24: “Earth Democracy in Action” Read Shiva (On reserve)

Take home final examination