

2024 Spring Semester

Socio-Economic & Socio-Cultural Shifts in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities

Section 1

Instructor	Grace Gonzalez, Ph.D.
Office/Building	Honkan, 709
Office Hours	TBD

【Course Outline / Description】

This course examines the complexities associated with current and near-future (macro/micro) socio-economic and socio-cultural phenomena, processes, and shifts worldwide. To this end, the course explores foundational and up-to-date inter-disciplinary (theoretical and empirical) literatures relating to systemic risks, compounding crises, and individual/collective identities in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Key topics include: Millennial capitalism, gig economy, automation and artificial intelligence (A.I.), big data and privacy, and carbon neutral lifestyle(s) in the 21st Century.

Section 2

【Course Objectives/Goals/Learning Outcomes】

The course will provide students with critical and analytical skills. Upon completion of the course students will be acquainted with general concepts, debates, and theoretical perspectives in contemporary social theory. Likewise, students will be able to critically assess pivotal (worldwide) socio-economic and socio-cultural challenges and opportunities in the foreseeable future.

Section 3

【Class Schedule/Class Environment, Literature and Materials】

	Schedule of Instruction	Work outside of Classroom Activities
Lesson 1	Course Introduction	Reading assignment: Course syllabus and referencing guidelines
Lesson 2	Mapping out major socio-economic/socio-cultural shifts in the 21 st century I	Reading assignment: Miller (2001). 21st Century Transitions: Opportunities, Risks and Strategies for Governments and Schools. Paris: OECD.
Lesson 3	Mapping out major socio-economic/socio-cultural shifts in the 21 st century II	Reading assignment: OECD (2003). Emerging Risks in the 21st Century. Paris: OECD.
Lesson 4	Millennials and Gen Zers	Reading assignment: Burke (2017). An Uncertain Future. IMF: Finance & Development, pp. 1-7.
Lesson 5	Class exercise	Reading assignment: Markovitz (2021). We asked young people what changes they want for the future. Here's what they said. World Economic Forum, pp.1-9.

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Lesson 6	Value and values in the 21 st century	Reading assignment: Klamer (2017). Doing the Right Thing: A Value Based Economy, Ch. 5.
Lesson 7	Class exercise	Reading assignment: Biesheuvel (2019). The problem with diamonds is they keep getting cheaper. Bloomberg.
Lesson 8	Millennial capitalism: Production and consumption	Reading assignment: Fraser and Jaeggi (2018). Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory. Medford, MA: Polity, Ch. 2
Lesson 9	Class exercise	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 10	The Gig Economy	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 11	Class exercise	Reading assignment: Gibbons (2022). 3 Reasons Businesses Are Tapping into the Gig Economy. Forbes, pp. 1-5.
Lesson 12	Capitalism and the Covid-19 pandemic	Reading assignment: Scott (2017). 'Hipster Capitalism' in the Age of Austerity? Cultural Sociology, 11(1): 60–76
Lesson 13	Technology and innovation in the 21 st century	Reading assignment: Smith et al (2017). International Political Economy in the 21 st Century. London and NY: Routledge, Ch, 10.
Lesson 14	Class exercise	No scheduled readings
Lesson 15	Automation and A.I. systems (I)	Reading assignment: Tegmark (2018). Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence,. NY: Penguin, Ch. 7.
Lesson 16	Automation and A.I. systems (II)	Reading assignment: Robertson (2017). Robo sapiens japonicus: Robots, Gender, Family, and the Japanese Nation. Oakland: University of California Press, Ch. 5.
Lesson 17	Class exercise	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 18	Open contents proposals (individual work)	Class presentation & written submission
Lesson 19	Big data and privacy in the 21 st century	Reading assignment: Zwitter(2014). Big Data ethics. Big Data & Society, 2014: 1-6.
Lesson 20	UBI or Guaranteed income	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 21	Cashless-based societies	Reading assignment: Mancini-Griffoli (2021). Dear Mom, Forget the Cash. Finance & Development, IMF:44-45.
Lesson 22	Blockchain applications	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 23	Trend forecasting & diffusion research	Reading assignment: Gladwell (1997). The Coolhunt. The New Yorker, March 17 Issue,

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		https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1997/03/17/the-coolhunt
Lesson 24	Class exercise	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 25	Post-Pandemic context(s): Conflict & institutional trust	Reading assignment TBD
Lesson 26	Open contents lesson (winning proposal)	Reading assignment: TBD
Lesson 27	A climate-resilient world	Reading assignment: Reading assignment: Dartnell (June 30, 2020). The Covid-19 changes that could last long-term. The Guardian.
Lesson 28	Low-carbon/carbon-neutral lifestyles	Reading assignment: Storm (2017). Packaging Food With Food to Reduce Waste. The New York Times, https://nyti.ms/2rkn5CL
Lesson 29	Individual presentations	No scheduled readings
Lesson 30	Individual presentations and course conclusions	No scheduled readings

Course Structure

Teaching is delivered using a combination of lectures and group discussions. The inclusion of roundtable, think-pair-share, and role-playing exercises throughout the course will be contingent upon the number of students registered (see in-class exercises below).

Course Guidelines

Students are expected to complete all reading assignments and coursework. In addition, students are expected to read international leading newspapers and specialized magazines on a regular basis.

The course requires reading approximately fifteen pages per lesson. The course materials reflect a) specialized vocabulary and theoretical/analytical underpinnings, and b) up-to-date international journalistic content. A minimum of 1.5 hours of student work (out of class) is required per lesson.

Assignments/Coursework

Attitude and Participation:

Students are expected to actively discuss and critically evaluate the assigned readings. Students will be marked on both overall attitude and quality of participation.

Quizzes/Exams:

A minimum of 3 pop quizzes will be administered during the course. Pop quizzes include multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The questions for these will be drawn from reading assignments and topics covered in class.

Open Contents Proposal:

A lesson of the syllabus is open for students to create its topic/contents. Each student will submit a proposal (via Blackboard, lesson 18) inclusive of rationale, approach, and proposed

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academic reading assignment (200 words in length). Likewise, students will present their proposals (approx. 5 min each) during lesson 18. The final decision on the winning proposal will be made by consensus.

*The winner of the OCP will lead the class discussion on lesson 26.

Individual Presentations:

Each student will prepare a 10-minute presentation for the class using software such as Keynote or Power Point or Prezi. The presentations will focus on a contemporary case study of socio-cultural change, chosen by each presenter. The contents of the presentation ought to draw on a minimum of seven sources of literature. Presentations will take place during lessons 29-30. Usual conditions of citations and bibliography will apply for both presentation report and slides.

All written papers must be typed in Times New Roman 12-point font, double-spaced, and formatted with 2.5-cm margins. Usual conditions of citations and bibliography will apply. The submission of written assignments is via Blackboard (PDF attachments only).

【Textbooks/Reading Materials】

No textbook will be used. All readings will be provided in advance (see Blackboard - Assignments).

Section 4

【Learning Assessments/Grading Rubric】

Attitude & participation	20%	
Open Contents Proposal	25%	
Pop quizzes		30%
Final Presentation	25%	

Section 5

【Additional Information】