Organizations and Global Competitiveness  
Soc. 142

There is much debate about how societies can develop and become more competitive in today's global economy. A basic premise of this course is that international competitiveness requires an understanding of the social structure of markets, which may be viewed as a network of buying and supplying firms organized around the provision of finished goods and services. These organizational chains are increasingly global, and have complex and shifting governance structures that specify the power relations among the organizations in the chain. This framework reveals surprising facts about who controls global industries, which firms make the most money and why, and how new business capabilities are emerging that will determine the corporate leaders of tomorrow.

Attention in the course will focus on the organizational dynamics of diverse global industries (such as apparel, automobiles, banking, bicycles, computer hardware and software, multimedia entertainment, and e-commerce), and on the competitive strategies of their leading firms. The geographic spread of these industries encompasses North America, Europe, East Asia, South Asia, Latin America, and Africa, both as production sites and markets. This course will demonstrate that the economic activities that produce competitive societies are socially embedded in complex organizational contexts that vary considerably across time, geographical regions, and nations.

Course Requirements

There will be a mid-term examination, a group project involving the creation of a Global Industry Website, and a paper required for this course. The paper and the mid-term exam each count for 25% of the course grade, the Global Industry Website will count for 40%, and class participation for 10%. The teaching assistants for this course are: Katherine Flynn (kfynn@soc.duke.edu), Sociology; and Sheikh Jahan (sheikh.jahan@duke.edu), Public Policy Studies.

Mid-Term Exam. This will be a take-home, open-book examination that will be handed out in class on Wednesday, March 6th, and due back in class on Friday, March 8th. Completed exams must be typed, and a page limit will be set. The drop-off procedure for exams will be explained in class.

Global Industry Websites. There is a major team project required in this course. Teams comprised of 5 students will be formed, each focusing on a different industry. Given the anticipated course enrollment of 65 students, there will be about 13 distinct industry teams.

Students will be given a list of industries from which to choose a topic for their website, or they also have the option of adding a new industry to the list. A comprehensive industry list
could include the following general categories, which in many instances would need to be broken down into more specific products:

- **Primary products:** Bananas, chocolate, coffee, fruit and vegetables, oil, timber.
- **Consumer nondurable products:** Apparel, footwear, sporting goods, toys, video games.
- **Consumer durable products:** Airplanes, automobiles, bicycles, computers, weapons.
- **Intermediate products:** Computer software, hard disk drives, semiconductors, specialty chemicals.
- **Services:** Banking, entertainment, tourism.

Each industry website will be constructed according to a series of key dimensions outlined in a separate memo, and illustrated in class sessions covering a variety of different global industries, including: apparel, footwear, autos, computers, hard-disk drives, financial services, and tourism. The student groups that create the top three Industry Websites, as determined by class evaluation, will present their websites in class.

**Research Paper.** The research paper will require you to analyze three of the Global Industry Websites created for this course in terms of questions motivated by the theories covered in our readings. The objective of the paper will be compare and contrast these websites, and supplement them with your own research, in order to address several key questions that will be supplied to you by the instructor. This assignment will allow you to build on and extend the work done by your peers, while gaining a better sense of how to use theory to explain and explore real world cases.

**Blackboard (previously CourseInfo) and Readings**

A wide range of materials related to this course will be available through Blackboard [https://courses.duke.edu/](https://courses.duke.edu/). All students in Soc. 142 will be expected to log into Blackboard on a regular basis for announcements, course documents, supplementary lecture materials, and convenient communication tools such as group pages, student drop boxes, and discussion boards. E-mail will be an important form of communication in this course, so check your e-mail accounts frequently.

The following books will be read for the course. They are available at the Duke University Bookstore.


The articles we will read for the course are all available through E-Reserves at Perkins Library: [http://www.lib.duke.edu/access/reserves/](http://www.lib.duke.edu/access/reserves/). Most of these readings can also be accessed via Blackboard.
## COURSE OUTLINE AND READING LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 9</td>
<td>Introduction to the course.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 16</td>
<td>How much has U.S. business changed its strategy and attitudes toward the global economy between 1980 and 2000?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Discussion sections. [Turn in business article and 1-2 page write-up related to topic of Jan. 16.]</td>
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### Inside Global Business: What Does It Take to Succeed?

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<tr>
<td>Jan. 21</td>
<td>NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>Discussion sections.</td>
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### The Competitiveness Debate

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<tr>
<td>Jan. 28</td>
<td>Introduction to <em>World Trade Analyzer</em> – Mark Thomas, Perkins Library. An international trade database to study global supply chains. [Consult the WTA user’s guide at <a href="http://docs.lib.duke.edu/maps/guides/WTA.html">http://docs.lib.duke.edu/maps/guides/WTA.html</a>.]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 30</td>
<td>How to display and organize trade information. [Demonstrate how we build up from raw WTA data to purposeful tables, graphs, and charts; emphasis on effective “visual display of data.”]</td>
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<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>Discussion sections. [WTA “product” assignment – look at shifts in national, regional, or global export and import patterns for a single product over at least a 10-year time span.]</td>
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### Analyzing International Trade Data

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<tr>
<td>Feb. 4</td>
<td>The globalization of a designer dress. Film: Robert Reich (host), &quot;Made in America? -- Winners and Losers.&quot;</td>
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</table>
Feb. 6 What are global supply chains, and why are they important?

Feb. 8 Discussion sections.

Feb. 11 **Global Industry Websites:** Introduction to team projects (instructor) and Duke’s Library Resources for research on industries (Eric Smith, Perkins Library).

Feb. 13 Bridging levels of analysis in the competitiveness arena: Transnational (corporate strategies), national (government policies), and local (job skills).
[Student teams – assigned by instructors.]

Feb. 15 Introduction to **Dreamweaver:** Randy Riddle, Duke Center for Instructional Technology. Elementary tools for designing webpages.

**Industry Clockspeeds**

Feb. 18 Competition in an age of temporary advantage.

Feb. 20 The double helix model: how industries evolve.
Fine, *Clockspeed*, chs. 4-5.

Feb. 22 Discussion sections.
**Individual Webpage assignment: submit electronically by 10 am.**

**The Globalization of Services**

Feb. 25 Guest lecturer: Mark Mizruchi, University of Michigan Business School.
“Social Networks and Deal Making in a Global Commercial Bank”

Feb. 27 Guest lecturer: Monica Biradavolu, Duke University, Sociology Department.
“Finding a Niche: India’s Position in the Global Software Industry”

March 1 Discussion sections.

March 4 How clockspeed laws affect supply chains.
Fine, *Clockspeed*, chs. 6-7.
**Global Industry Websites** (team outlines due).

March 6 Question & Answer, and review session.
[Hand out **take-home mid-term exam** at the end of class.]

March 8 Film: Robert Reich (host), "Made in America? Who’s the Enemy?"

**Mid-Term exam:** Returned in class (or electronically prior to class).

**SPRING RECESS (March 11, 13, 15)**
**The Commercial Aircraft Industry**

March 18  

March 20  
Guest lecturer: Harm-Jan Steenhuis, Global Aircraft Production.

March 22  
Discussion sections.

**How Technological Change Affects Global Supply Chains**

March 25  

March 27  
Christensen, *The Innovator’s Dilemma*, ch. 4.

March 29  
Discussion sections. [Review of peer and instructor evaluation criteria used for Industry Websites.]

**Managing Disruptive Technological Change**

April 1  
Innovation, resource dependence, and discovering new markets. Christensen, *The Innovator’s Dilemma*, chs. 5-7.  
**Global Industry Websites: completion date.**

April 3  

April 5  
Discussion sections. [Assignment related to evaluating three Global Industry Websites for final paper.]  
**Peer evaluations of Global Industry Websites due.**

**E-Business: The Case of Digitization at General Electric**

April 8  

April 10  
Antonello and Mizelle (cont’d)—Case Study: e-Sell at GE Mortgage Insurance (B2B and B2C)

April 12  
Review of final paper and main course themes.

April 15  
**Top 3 Global Industry Websites presented in class.**

**Accountability in Global Industries: Social and Environmental Certification**

April 17  
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>Discussion sections.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>Current debates in the global economy: NAFTA, sweatshops, and the digital divide.</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>Summing Up.  <strong>Final Paper: due in class.</strong></td>
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Last updated: 9 April 2002