

GMC 6001 Syllabus

Global Media Cultures, 3 Credits

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:30-4:45 pm, Clough 125



Instructor Information

Instructor

Oswaldo Cleger

Email

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Drop-in Hours & Location

Tues 12-2pm, Swann 214

General Course Information

This is a graduate level seminar course that explores theoretical concepts related to global cultures and global media. Themes to be discussed this semester include globalization, cultural hybridity/imperialism/homogenization, cosmopolitanism, media capitals, media flows, transnational cinema, and more. Students will also explore each new concept through a case study drawn from global media from around the world. Throughout the course, students will also develop a final project (research paper or creative project) that explores class themes and focuses on their own regional area of interest.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Analyze **key theoretical frameworks related to globalization and global media**, including concepts such as cultural imperialism, hybridity, and homogenization;
- Critically evaluate **global media flows and contra-flows**, identifying how media is produced, distributed, and consumed across cultural and national boundaries;

- **Compare and contrast media systems and media capitals** across different regions, examining their roles in shaping global media landscapes;
- **Demonstrate an understanding of transnational cinema**, including critiques and efforts to redefine the concept as a more concrete framework;
- Evaluate how **transnational audiences** emerge and complicate the global consumption of media;
- **Apply theoretical concepts to real-world case studies** of global popular culture, demonstrating an understanding of how global cultural dynamics are reflected in specific media texts or practices.

Course Requirements & Grading

Assignment	Date	Weight (Percentage, points, etc)
Discussion Leader	Varies	15%
Film Presentation	10/16	10%
Annotated Bibliography	10/30	20%
Final Project	11/18	30%
Participation & Attendance	Throughout	25%

Extra Credit Opportunities

If 90% of students complete the CIOS evaluations, all students will receive +1% extra credit on their final grade.

Description of Graded Components

Note: Do not use AI for any of these assignments!

1. Discussion Leader (15%):

Each student will serve as a discussion leader for one assigned article during the semester. As discussion leader, your role is to begin the class by offering a concise (5-7 minute) summary of the article's key arguments, theoretical framework, and any relevant case studies or examples. After the summary, you will facilitate a 20-30-minute class discussion by posing five well-developed, open-ended questions that critically engage with the reading. Your questions should encourage analysis, debate, and connections to broader course themes in global media. Avoid overly simplistic or factual questions. For example, a less generative question might be: "What is a media flow?" This can be answered by simply quoting the text. A stronger question might be, "How does the concept of contra-flow challenge dominant narratives about cultural imperialism, and can you think of a current example that supports or complicates this idea?" Your goal is to generate a rich conversation that helps your classmates think critically and deepen their understanding of the reading.

2. Film Presentation (10%)

Apply theoretical concepts from Higbee and Lim's article "*Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies*" to a film of your choosing. Select a **transnational film**--a film that engages with or reflects cross-border production, cultural exchange, diasporic themes, or global circulation--and watch it before class. Then, prepare a 5-minute in-class presentation that

explains how the film is “transnational,” drawing on the definitions, critiques, and frameworks provided by Higbee and Lim. Offer a critical analysis of the production, distribution, and reception contexts that position the film within transnational cinema. How does the film illustrate or complicate the categories Higbee and Lim discuss—such as media flows, cultural hybridity, or nationalism? A PowerPoint is not required, but you may bring visual aids if they help support your points.

3. Annotated Bibliography (20%)

This assignment is designed to help you build a strong critical foundation for your final project, which may take the form of a traditional research paper or a creative project with a scholarly component. You will begin by compiling a reading list of peer-reviewed academic sources relevant to your proposed topic. This list should include 8-10 high-quality scholarly articles or book chapters and is due September 25 to be reviewed for relevance and academic rigor. Once approved, you will engage deeply with each source and submit an annotated bibliography by October 30. Each annotation (approx. 200-250 words) should include a concise summary of the source’s main arguments and contributions, as well as a brief critical evaluation that addresses the source’s strengths, limitations, and relevance to your developing project. This assignment will help you better understand your field, refine your research questions, and begin to situate your own intervention within the larger scholarly conversation.

4. Final Project (30%)

For your final assignment, you have the option to complete either a 10-12-page research paper (excluding bibliography and title page) or a creative project such as a short film, podcast, performance, digital exhibit, or other approved format (~10-12 minutes). Your project should engage meaningfully with one or more of the key concepts explored in class—such as globalization, transnational cinema, cultural homogenization, global audiences, media flows, or deterritorialization—and should demonstrate critical engagement with relevant scholarship. You are encouraged to focus on a cultural area or topic of personal or academic interest, especially if it aligns with your broader research goals or could serve as the foundation for your final master’s project. All creative projects must be accompanied by a written critical reflection (3-4 pages) that situates the work in its theoretical and cultural context. There are a few benchmark assignments along the way: Select Topic (9/11), Final Project Outline (10/2), Final Project (11/18).

5. Participation and Attendance (25%)

Because this is a seminar-style course, your active participation and attendance are essential. This class depends on thoughtful discussion, collaborative learning, and the open exchange of ideas—both in response to the readings and in dialogue with your peers. You are expected to come to each class having carefully read the assigned texts and prepared to engage in critical discussion. Participation includes not only speaking in class, but also listening attentively, responding respectfully, and contributing meaningfully to group conversations and peer-led discussions. Repeated absences, tardiness, or lack of preparation will affect your grade. If you must miss a class due to illness or emergency, please notify me in advance when possible.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

Course Materials

All course materials can be found on Canvas.

Course Policies, Expectations, & Guidelines

Academic Integrity

Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. [Review Georgia Tech's Honor Code](#) and the [student Code of Conduct](#).

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, [contact the Office of Disability Services](#) (404-894-2563) as soon as possible to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

Attendance and/or Participation

Because this is a seminar-style course, your active participation and attendance are essential. This class depends on thoughtful discussion, collaborative learning, and the open exchange of idea--both in response to the readings and in dialogue with your peers. You are expected to come to each class having carefully read the assigned texts and prepared to engage in critical discussion. Participation includes not only speaking in class, but also listening attentively, responding respectfully, and contributing meaningfully to group conversations and peer-led discussions. Repeated absences, tardiness, or lack of preparation will affect your grade. If you must miss a class due to illness or emergency, please notify me in advance when possible.

Collaboration, Group Work, and Use of Generative AI

Please feel free to read articles and discuss with your peers, but all assignments should be your own work. In a similar vein, you may not use AI to produce any written work (discussion leader, film presentation, annotated bibliography, final project). AI-generated assignments tend to have a flat, boring "sameness" about them—I want to hear your unique thoughts on the concepts we will be exploring in class!

Extensions, Late Assignments, & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams

Late assignments are allowed only in the case of illness, emergencies, and other institute-approved absences. Please communicate with me if you miss an assignment.

Inclement Weather and Digital Learning Days

If there is inclement weather, we will move to a Zoom class. If the instructor does not have access to Zoom, we will skip class that day.

Student-Faculty Expectations Agreement

At Georgia Tech, we believe that it is important to strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility between faculty members and the student body. [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#) articulate some basic expectations that you can have of me and that I have of you. In the end, simple respect for knowledge, hard work, and cordial interactions will help build the environment we seek. Therefore, I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

Student Use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Please do not use mobile devices in the classroom. It is a small class, so if typing becomes disruptive, I may ask you to take notes by hand instead of using a computer.

Graduate Student Academic and Professional Success Resources:

A list of resources for graduate students is given on the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Education website. Specific information for current graduate students includes

- [Academic Resources](#) such as the Communications Center, Language Institute, Library, Catalog, Registrar, resources for conducting research, Advocacy and Conflict Resolution resources, and how to manage unexpected situations that may impact your academic performance;
- [Student Resources](#) such as Campus Services, Child Care/Family programs, Health & Wellness, Career Services, and the Student Resource Guide; and
- [Professional Development](#) such as the programming from the Career Center and other professional development resources and events”

Student Well-Being:

At Georgia Tech, we are concerned about your overall physical, social, and mental well-being. A [comprehensive list](#) of wellness related resources has been compiled and maintained by the Office of the Vice President for Student Engagement and Well-being ([student-resource-guide \(gatech.edu\)](http://student-resource-guide.gatech.edu))

More resources on supporting student well-being on the syllabus and beyond are available through the [Learning Well Initiative](#).

Course Schedule

Note: The course Canvas page will always be the most up-to-date version of this schedule.

Date	Topic	Reading	HW Due
Unit 1: Culture and Globalization			
Day 1	Introduction Syllabus		
Day 2	Defining “Global Culture”	Smith, Anthony D. “Towards a Global Culture?” <i>Theory, Culture & Society</i> 7.2-3 (1990): 171-191. <i>Optional further reading:</i> Featherstone, Mike. “Global Culture: An Introduction.” <i>Theory, Culture & Society</i> 7.2-3 (1990): 1-14.	
Day 3	Cultural Globalization	Tomlinson, John. “Cultural Globalization.” <i>The Blackwell Companion to Globalization</i> (2007): 352-366. <i>Optional reading:</i> Crane, Diana. “Introduction.” <i>Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy, and Globalization</i> . Routledge, 2016.	
Day 4	Case Study: Hello Kitty	Yano, Christine R. “Global Kitty: Here, There, Nearly Everywhere.” <i>Pink Globalization: Hello Kitty’s Trek across the Pacific</i> . Duke University Press, 2013.	
Unit 2: Cultural Imperialism and Cultural Hybridity			

Date	Topic	Reading	HW Due
Day 6	Cultural Imperialism	Morley, David. "Globalization and Cultural Imperialism Reconsidered." <i>Media and Cultural Theory</i> (2005): 30-43.	
Day 7	Case Study: Americanization in France	Kuisel, Richard. "Debating Americanization: The Case of France." <i>Global America</i> (2003): 95-113. Optional further reading: Yoshimi, Shunya. "Consuming 'America': From Symbol to System." <i>Consumption in Asia</i> . Routledge, 2002. 218-240.	
Day 8	Hybridity	Kraidy, Marwan M. "Hybridity in Cultural Globalization." <i>Communication Theory</i> 12.3 (2002): 316-339. Optional further reading: Bhabha, Homi K. <i>The Location of Culture</i> . Routledge, 2012.	
Day 9	Case Study: Nollywood	Onuzulike, Uchenna. "Nollywood: Nigerian Videofilms as a Cultural and Technological Hybridity." <i>Intercultural Communication Studies</i> 18.1 (2009): 176.	Select Final Project Topic
Unit 3: Flows and Contra-flows			
Day 10	Global Flows	Appadurai, Arjun. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." <i>Postcolonialism</i> . Routledge, 2023. 1801-1823.	
Day 11	Case Study: Korean Wave	Jin, Dal Yong. "Transnationalism, Cultural Flows, and the Rise of the Korean Wave Around the Globe." <i>International Communication Gazette</i> 81.2 (2019): 117-120.	
Day 12	Contra-Flows	Thussu, Daya Kishan. "Mapping Global Media Flow and Contra-flow." <i>Media on the move: Global Flow and Contra-Flow</i> . Routledge, 2006. Optional further reading: Iwabuchi, Koichi. "Contra-flows or the Cultural Logic of Uneven Globalization?." <i>Media on the Move: Global Flow and contra-flow</i> (2006): 67-83.	
Day 13	Case Study: Al Jazeera	Samuel-Azran, Tal, and Tsahi Hayat. "Counter-hegemonic Contra-flow and the Al Jazeera America Fiasco: A Social Network Analysis of Al Jazeera America's Twitter users." <i>Global Media and Communication</i> 13.3 (2017): 267-282.	Submit Reading List
Unit 4: Global Media Industries			
Day 14	Media Capitals	Curtin, Michael. "Media Capital: Towards the Study of Spatial Flows." <i>International Journal of Cultural Studies</i> 6.2 (2003): 202-228.	

Date	Topic	Reading	HW Due
		Optional further reading: Curtin, Michael. "Comparing Media Capitals: Hong Kong and Mumbai." <i>Global Media and Communication</i> 6.3 (2010): 263-270.	
Day 15	Case Study: Chinese Cinema	Wang, Yiman. "Made in China, Sold in the United States, and Vice Versa—Transnational 'Chinese' Cinema between Media Capitals." <i>Journal of Chinese Cinemas</i> 3.2 (2009): 163-176.	Final Project Outline
No Class (Fall Recess)			
Day 16	Network Cities Case Study: Telenovelas	Piñón, Juan. "Reglobalization and the Rise of the Network Cities Media System in Producing Telenovelas for Hemispheric Audiences." <i>International Journal of Cultural Studies</i> 17.6 (2014): 655-671.	
Unit 5: Transnational Cinemas			
Day 17	Transnational Cinemas	Higbee, Will, and Song Hwee Lim. "Concepts of Transnational Cinema: Towards a Critical Transnationalism in Film Studies." <i>Transnational Cinemas</i> 1.1 (2010): 7-21.	
Day 18	Case Study: Your Choice	Present your film in class	Film Presentation
Unit 6: Homogenization vs Glocalization			
Day 19	Glocalization	Robertson, Roland. "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity." <i>Global Modernities</i> 2.1 (1995): 25-44.	
Day 20	Cultural Homogenization Case study: Social Media	Balogun, Shyngle K., and Ezekiel Aruoture. "Cultural Homogenization vs. Cultural Diversity: Social Media's Double-edged Sword in the Age of Globalization." <i>African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences</i> 14.4 (2024).	
Day 21	Case Study: <i>Dark</i> (German TV on Netflix)	Orich, Annika. "Staying Local, Going Global: Sustaining German Culture in 'Dark' Times." <i>German Politics and Society</i> 39.4 (2021): 51-73. Optional further reading: Min, Wonjung. "Receiving Unfamiliar Culture in Post-Colonial Latin America in the Digital Age: Interpretations of Anime, Manga, and K-pop by Chilean Fans." <i>The Routledge Handbook of Digital Media and Globalization</i> . Routledge, 2021. 222-229.	
Unit 6: Global Streaming Platforms			

Date	Topic	Reading	HW Due
Day 22	Digital Streaming	Lobato, Ramon. <i>Netflix Nations: The Geography of Digital Distribution</i> . New York University Press, 2019.	Annotated Bibliography
Day 23	Case Study: Netflix in Turkey	Ildir, Asli, and İpek A. Celik Rappas. "Netflix in Turkey: Localization and Audience Expectations from Video on Demand." <i>Convergence</i> 28.1 (2022): 255-271.	
Unit 7: Global Audiences			
Day 24	Audience Preferences	Straubhaar, Joseph. "Cultural Proximity." <i>The Routledge Handbook of Digital Media and Globalization</i> . Routledge, 2021. 24-33.	
Day 25	Transnational Audiences	Athique, Adrian. <i>Transnational Audiences: Media Reception on a Global Scale</i> . John Wiley & Sons, 2017.	
Day 26	Case Study: Online Political Discourse in Kenya	Mukhongo, Lynete Lusike. "Participatory media cultures: virality, humour, and online political contestations in Kenya." <i>Africa Spectrum</i> 55.2 (2020): 148-169. Optional further reading: Saraswati, Listya Ayu. "BTS ARMY's # BTSLOVEYOURSELF: A Worldwide K-Pop Fandom Participatory Culture on Twitter." <i>KnE Social Sciences</i> (2020): 423-432.	
Unit 8: Final Presentations			
Day 27	Project Presentations		Final Project Due
Day 28	Project Presentations		
Day 29	Project Presentations		
No Class (Holiday)			
Day 30	Last Class		

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor to accommodate instructional and/or student needs.