This interdisciplinary course explores the relationship between the American worker and globalization, defined as the integration of the world’s economic activities through trade, direct foreign investments, technology flows, and immigration. Since the 1980s the United States has become increasingly integrated into the world economy. In particular, the diffusion of new technologies has transformed the American economy and work processes. The outcomes have been mixed for the American worker. Those workers whose skills were scarce but greatly in demand have done well, others have lost ground, and the earnings gap between skilled and unskilled workers widened significantly during the last two decades. This trend toward wage inequalities, if allowed to continue, could undermine the work ethic and destroy the quintessentially American dream of upward social mobility.

The course will draw on the writings of leading sociologists, political scientists, economists, and journalists to examine the causes of the widening pay disparities among American workers, identifying those factors that are attributable to globalization (such as competition from imports, off-shoring of manufacturing and service jobs, and the growing presence of immigrant workers) and others that are results of public policy choices. The students will then explore alternative policy approaches to help reverse the trend toward greater economic disparities, protect the most vulnerable workers and prevent “the race to the bottom.”

**Required Readings**

Students will be asked to purchase the following seven books, all available in paperback


Students will be able to download excerpts from the following works available on the electronic reserve at Georgetown University’s Lauinger Library.


**Course Requirements**

A regular attendance is required and expected. Attendance at the first class meeting is mandatory, and more than one excused absence may result in the withdrawal of the student from the course.
The classes will be conducted on a seminar format focused primarily on student led discussions of assigned reading materials. Each student will make a presentation of class readings at least once, and everyone else is expected to come to class fully prepared and contribute actively to the discussions.

Students will write a book review of Jeffrey Sachs’s *The Price of Civilization* (4-5 pages), and a short commentary on the documentary film “China Blue” (2-3 pages), and put together a 15 - 20 page essay that examines the impact of globalization on American workers’ jobs and wage levels and proposes public policy choices for reversing its most negative repercussions. This final essay should incorporate a synthesis of course materials, student presentations, and class discussions in addition to specific ideas and policy recommendations that the student wishes to introduce. The film commentary is due on February 17, the book review on March 31, and the essay on globalization is to be submitted electronically by April 30.

**Grading**

The grades will be based on class attendance and participation (30 percent), the book review (10 percent), film review (10 percent) and the final essay on globalization and policy options (50 percent).

**Course Schedule, Topics and Readings**

January 13

**Introduction: globalization, the American worker, and growing income disparities**
A discussion on salient features of globalization and their impact on the American worker.

January 20

**Global competition and de-industrialization of the American heartland**
Richard C. Longworth. *Caught in the Middle: America’s Heartland in the Age of Globalism*.

January 27

**Globalization, China, and American consumers**

February 3

**Workers on the other side**
Showing of documentary film, “China Blue.”

February 10

**Capital in search of cheap labor**
February 17  **Offshoring: its impact on American industries and jobs**  
Alan Blinder, “Offshoring: the next industrial revolution.”  
(Electronic Reserve)  
Alan Blinder, “Offshoring: Big Deal or Business as Usual?”  
(Electronic Reserve)

February 24  **Regaining technological edge by bringing back manufacturing**  

March 17  **Educating Americans for the global economy**  
Claudia Goldin & Lawrence Katz, *Race between Education and Technology.*

March 24  **Global cities and fragmentation of urban labor markets**  
Doussard, Peck and Theodore “After Deindustrialization: Uneven Growth and Economic Inequality in ‘Postindustrial’ Chicago.” (Electronic Reserve)

March 31  **Immigrants at work**  
Saskia Sassen. “America’s Immigration ‘Problem’”  
(Electronic Reserve)  
Ivan Light. “Why the Garment Industry Contracted”  
(Electronic Reserve)

April 7  **Collective action in global America**  
Ruth Milkman and Kent Wong. “Organizing Immigrant Workers: Case studies from Southern California.” (Electronic Reserve)  
Michael Yates, “Economic Crisis, the Working Class, and Organized Labor,” in *What’s Class Got to Do With It?*  
Gregory DeFreitas & Niev Duffy. “Young Workers, Economic Inequality and Collective Action” in *What’s Class Got to Do with It?*

April 14  **Paths to a more egalitarian and prosperous society**  
Jeffrey Sachs’s *Price of Civilization* (chapters 6-7, 9-12)  
Michelle M. Tokarczyk. “Promises to keep: working class students and higher education” in *What’s Class Got to Do with It?*

April 21  **Student class evaluation and general discussion**
Honor Code

MALS and DLS students are responsible for upholding the Georgetown University Honor System and adhering to the academic standards included in the Honor Code Pledge stated below:

_In the pursuit of the high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown University Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor; and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together._

Disability Statement

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.