15-962 Institutions, Society and International Business
Spring 2009, Mondays 4-7 pm, E51-061

Professor Elena Obukhova
E52-563
obukhova@mit.edu

Course description:
This graduate seminar will introduce students to the study of economic globalization. We will examine how changes in the global economy impact national business systems, organization of production, and firm strategies. We will begin by exploring what constitutes economic globalization and how these changes influence the evolution of national institutions. We then will consider emergent cross-border processes through analysis of production geographies, networks and firm.

The seminar has two inter-locking aims. Students who take the seminar will a) gain a deeper appreciation of the empirical phenomena that constitute globalization and b) develop a critical understanding of how one empirically investigates these phenomena.

This seminar is open only to PhD students. If you would like to audit this course, you will need to do all the readings, participate in the discussion and submit ten memos.

Course requirements:
This is a seminar course, so you will be expected to:
1) Take an active part in class discussion
2) Prepare at least 10 memos of the week’s required readings (c. 600 words each)
3) Write a critical review (c. 1200 words) of a book listed in further readings section
4) Write critical responses to essay questions posed by the instructor (c. 2000 words total)
FYI: c. 300 words = 1 double-spaced page

Weekly memos are intended to prepare the ground for good discussion by requiring seminar participants to set out their initial responses to the readings in written form. Memos should not summarize the readings, but should engage with them analytically, e.g. by taking up specific arguments, comparing the positions of different authors, identifying particular strengths and weaknesses in the texts, raising empirical questions, and drawing out theoretical implications. To do this successfully, the memos should engage deeply with at least two separate readings assigned for the week. Memos will be shared among class participants. In order for everyone to have time to read over other’s comments, these are due 5pm on Saturday before the day of class discussion.
The critical book review is an opportunity for engage with a particular topic in more detail. It should review one of the books listed in the further readings sections in the syllabus after each one of three sections or a book of a student’s choosing that has been approved by the instructor. It should be written as if it was intended for publication in a leading journal in the discipline of your choice. It should address the following issues a) What does the author (implicitly or explicitly) regard as incomplete in existing research such that his or her research constitutes a significant contribution?; b) What is the author(s) theoretical arguments and the empirical evidence presented to support them; c) To what extent do you regard the book as making the significant contribution to the literature? How could it have made a bigger contribution? At least half of your review should focus on answering questions under (c). The review is due on the last day of class discussion of the section.

The final exam will involve a short essay answers to questions posed by the instructor. Students will have a choice of which questions to answer and a week to prepare their responses. The main goal is to synthesize ideas/approaches from different scholars.

Course calendar:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>February 9</td>
<td>The End of Diversity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>February 16</td>
<td>Varieties of Capitalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>February 23</td>
<td>Dynamics of the Global Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>March 2</td>
<td>Dynamics of the Global Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Theorizing Institutional Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Regionalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Global Production Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>March 30</td>
<td>High-Skilled Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>April 13</td>
<td>Expanding to New Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>April 20</td>
<td>Upgrading Regional Capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 27</td>
<td>Entrepreneurship and FDI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>May 4</td>
<td>PATRIOT’S DAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>Coordinating Multinationals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May 21</td>
<td>Final Exam Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note on readings:

Most of the readings for the course are available on Stellar or through JSTOR. Most books sections assigned will be available from Yanbo. You will need to purchase Levinson (2006), Babb (2001), and Biao (2007).

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CONTEXT

1. The end of diversity?


2. Varieties of Capitalism


3. Dynamics of the Global Economy


4. Dynamics of Global Society


5. Theorizing Institutional Change


Canales, Rodrigo. TBA.

Herrigel, Gary. 2007. “Rules and Roles: Ambiguity, Experimentation, and New Form of Stakeholderism in Germany.” (STELLAR)


FURTHER READINGS:


McDermott (2002). Embedded Politics: Industrial Networks and Institutional Change in Postcommunism.

Guillen (2003). The Limits of Convergence: Globalization and Organizational Change in Argentina, South Korea, and Spain.
REGIONS, NETWORKS AND FIRMS

6. Regionalization


7. GPC/GPN


8. High-Skilled Migration


Obukhova, Elena. TBA.

9. Expanding to New Regions


10. Upgrading Regional Capabilities


11. Entrepreneurship and FDI


12. Coordinating Multinationals


FURTHER READINGS:


Pietrobelli and Rabellotti, eds. (2005) *Upgrading to Compete: Global Value Chains, Clusters and SMEs in Latin America.*