Sociology thru Film: Weekly Assignments

In order to foster “risk free” intellectual exploration, the weekly assignments will be graded simply on the basis of what percentage of the total number of journal assignments you do. (For example, if you do 90-100% of them you’ll earn an “A” for journal assignments; 80-89%, “B”; 70-79%, “C”; 60-69%, “D”; and 59% or less, “F”). So these assignments should be provocative, fun, and risk free!

#1: The Global Fashion Food Chain

Go the the website for the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum of American History, and go to the site for the “Fashion Food Chain.” Read the various parts of the site, then do “The Global Production” game and report the results. Conclude by discussing the “Fashion Food Chain” site and “The Global Production” game in view of the videos “The Bomb under the World” and “Affluenza.”

#2: Global Inequality & Poverty

Find the website for the “People-Centered Development Forum.” Read the essays “Living Economies for a Living Planet” and “The Path of Living Economies.” Consider these essays in view of the videos “The Bomb under the World,” “Affluenza,” and “Roger & Me”; and in view of the assigned readings in Field Guide to the Global Economy and When Corporations Rule the World.

How would the producers of the videos respond to the following assertion?

“A politically unregulated, globalizing economy will bring improved living standards, political freedoms, and ecological improvement to the peoples of poor countries.”

Based on the videos and readings so far, what’s your stand on this issue? To what degree do you see the issue as relatively “yes/no” or else as involving possible ambiguities?

#3: Global Sex Tourism

Do a web search on “global child prostitution” and/or “global sex tourism,” including on global campaigns to police child sex tourism (e.g., the work by the organization World Vision). Discuss what you find from the perspective of Field Guide to the Global Economy. From the perspective of the book, what are the local/global causes of the problem? What are the possibilities as well as limitations for implementing some kind of legislation and other social programs to reduce this problem?

#4 Global Trade in Organ Transplants

Go to the following web site (for the article about the research by anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes on illegal trade in organ transplants): http://www.berkeley.edu/news/magazine/summer_99/feature_darkness_scheper.html Then search for the article by Michael Finkel, “This Little Kidney Went to Market” (NY Times Magazine, May 27, 2001). How do the issues discussed pertain to the articles we’ve read and the videos we’ve watched? What are the local/global causes of illegal trade in organ transplants?
#5: Globalization & Poverty

Go to the following sub-site of the World Bank web site: 
http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/. (Or else, search for PovertyNet on the World Bank website). Go to the section on "Poverty Trends and Voices of the Poor." Listen (read) to the voices of the poor. Then interpret one or more of the issues raised there, from the perspective of Field Guide to the Global Economy and When Corporations Rule the World, and from the perspective of any of the videos we’ve viewed.

#6: Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement

Read the various parts of the web site http://www.mstbrazil.org/index.html. Based on the readings, what are the basic problems of rural Brazil? What people comprise the Landless Workers Movement, and what are its objectives?

#7. Migrant Struggles

Read the reports on the following web sites:
www.azcentral.com/specials/special03/articles/0729terror29.html
www.nmsu.edu/~frontera/feat1.html
http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu:7001/Research/graduate/summer2002/davenport/

What are the current problems concerning migrants who attempt to cross Mexico to reach the U.S.? Based on these web sites and other materials that we’ve considered in the course, what are the roots of the problems?

#8. Globalization & Fair Trade

Read the following web sites about “fair trade”:
http://www.pbs.org/livelyhood/planetwork/surviving/fair.html
www.oxfam.org.uk/fair_trade.html
https://www.transfairusa.org/

What is “fair trade”? How does it pertain to When Corporations Rule the World and Field Guide to the Global Economy? How does it pertain to the movie “El Norte”?

#9. The History of Irish Immigration

Read the following web sites about the history of Irish immigration to the U.S. and return migration to Ireland:
www.gober.net/victorian/reports/irish2.html
www.iicenter.org  (This is an assistance site for today’s Irish immigrants.)
How was the historical situation of the Irish similar to, or different from, that of today’s U.S. immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean?

#10. Neo-fascism & Skinheads

Based on the following web sites (and perhaps others that you find), briefly describe the worldviews of the neo-fascists and the skinheads. In view of the course materials, what do you think are the roots of these movements today? To what degree is there diversity within today’s skinheads, and why?

http://www.americannaziparty.com/

http://www.skullyrecords.com/skinheads.htm

http://www.adl.org/PresRele/NeoSk_82/default.htm

http://www.skinheads.net/