Course Description
This course is intended as an exploration of language as vehicle for processes of globalization. What role did language play in the changes wrought by early capitalist transformations and the colonial expansion? Conversely, how have these global changes affected localized communities and the languages that identify them? And why should we care? To answer these questions we will examine how the colonial experience has given rise to value laden linguistic practices that mirror and sustain the racializing of privilege; and how the experience of language loss encountered by voluntary and involuntary migrants can attack the integrity of the self. While ultimately concerned with language, our discussions will have a wide scope ranging from issues of political economy to collective consciousness and individual psychology.

Course Objectives/Learning Goals
Our overriding objective will be to understand how supra-linguistic forces—such as economic change, and political restructuring—have impinged on the sense of self and on the very shape of groups [stressing some connections and silencing others] and, therefore, on the lived experiences of individuals, notably, their communication patterns.
To achieve this objective, our course is divided into four parts, each with a different goal.
Part I—We will paint in wide brushstrokes the connections between language and identity and globalization and identity and begin to identify some of the underlying themes that will guide our discussions.
Part II—We will examine some major economic transformations and trace their repercussions. In particular, we will follow an anthropological survey of early world-wide connections with the goal of understanding more clearly what gave rise to the system we have come to know as Capitalism and its consequences in today’s world.
Part III—We will examine some major language transformations [such as the formation of national languages] and trace their historical repercussions. In particular we will look at the role of language in the framing of national consciousness and the role of both language and silence in the exercise of power.
Part IV—We will look at how all of the above has affected individuals in a globalized environment through direct testimonials from different regions: a novel from Africa and two autobiographies, one from Euro-America, one from Latin North America.
**Required Texts**
Eric Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*
Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities*
Achino-Loeb, *Silence: The Currency of Power* [also on reserve at Bobst]
Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*
Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
Richard Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory*

All available at **Bluestockings Books** – a bookstore run by volunteers at 172 Allen St [1 block South of Houston & First Ave.] [www.bluestockings.com](http://www.bluestockings.com)

**Also**
Jameson & Miyoshi *The Cultures of Globalization*
Edward Sapir, *Culture, Language, and Personality*

On reserve at **Bobst Library** [lower floor]

**And**
Selected articles from newspapers of record.

**Required Assignments**
1. Weekly Response to the Readings. This will consist of short answers to questions I will point out.
   Length: 1 to 2 pages, for most assignments. Some assignments –such as Wolf-- will require more pages.
   The object here will be to demonstrate that you have done the reading. The syllabus includes a list of questions under each topic that will provide you with guidelines for directing the focus of your reading.

2. Midterm Paper [due March 6]: A response to an essay prompt I will distribute. I will also distribute a Guide on essay-writing style.
   Length: 5 to 6 pages

3. Final Paper [due May 8]: Either a response to an essay prompt I will distribute OR you may write on a topic of your choice, following an accepted proposal, and making sure that you include at least 4 sources from our course. I will distribute Guidelines for writing the proposal.
   Length: 6 to 8 pages

**Other Requirements**
In-class Presence and Participation will be essential. As this is a seminar class, it requires everyone’s voice, opinion, analysis, challenge. I will try and find ways to facilitate participation from all of us –I realize it’s not always easy. But presence is a must. So, unjustified absences and habitual lateness will be reflected in a lower participation grade.

Similarly, late papers will be accepted only if the delay is cleared with me.

Use of computers: Not permitted during class discussions. You may use your computer during class breaks. Should this be a particularly hardship for any of you, come to see me to explain the difficulty.
Occasionally, you will be asked to identify articles from mass media dealing with issues raised by our readings and share them in class.

**Attendance Policy**
See above.

**Grading**
Your Final Grade will consist of the sum of all your grades in the following proportions:
-- In-class presence, participation, and compliance with course requirements [10%].
-- Weekly “response to the readings” [20%]
The main factors for this grade will be: turning in the responses on time and demonstrating you’ve done the reading. You will receive an aggregate grade, but you will know each week if your work is fine or if you need to read more carefully.
-- Midterm Paper [30%]
-- Final Paper [40%]
For both these papers the grade will be based on a) thoughtfulness and clarity of argument, b) appropriate use of evidence. I will be available to discuss --- in person during office hours or via e-mail --- any aspect of your paper prior to and during the writing process.

**Academic Integrity**
Following is the statement on academic integrity distributed by Gallatin:
"As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website (http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html)"

**Session-by-session details**

**Part I  INTRODUCTION OF MAIN THEMES**

**Jan 30**  General Introduction

**Feb 6**  Language and Identity

*Culture, Language, and Personality* by Edward Sapir pp.1-44

On reserve in Bobst Library, Lower Floor

Plus film, *American Tongue*

**Issues:**
-- Universality of language and its implications
-- Is language the creator or mirror of experience?
-- Language and change: How do the arrows of connection go?
--Is identity inherited or invented?

Feb 13  **Globalization and Identity**  
*Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue* by Frederic Jameson [ in Jameson & Miyoshi’s *The Cultures of Globalization* pp. 54-77  
On reserve in Bobst Library, Lower Floor

**Issues:**

--Is Globalization a new phenomenon?  
--What happens to group identity in a globalized world?  
--Is globalization a positive or negative development? Why?

Part II  **ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND THEIR REPERCUSSIONS**

Feb 20  **Survey of Early World-Wide Connections**  
In Wolf’s *Europe and the People Without History*  
Read: Intro: pp. 1-7  
Cha 2: pp. 24-25, 71-72 plus pick I geographic area as ex.of connections  
Cha 4: pp. 101-110 plus pick 1 State as example  
Cha 5: pp. 131-149  
Cha 6: pp. 158 – 163 plus pick1 group as example

**Overall Issues:**

--What have been the “push” and “pull” factors in the world-wide contacts between different peoples?  
--Who has encountered whom? When? Why?  
--What have been the economic, political and social consequences of these encounters?  

**Specific Issues:**

--Listed in the *Study Guide* I will distribute

Feb 27  **Changes Wrought by Capitalism**  
In Wolf’s *Europe and the People Without History*  
Read: Cha 9 [pp.266-295]  
Cha 11[pp.310-318 PLUS one example of “foodstuff”]  
Cha 12 [pp. 354-383]

**Issues:**

--What was new and different about “capitalism”?  
--What are the transformations we have come to know as “capitalism” and “the industrial revolution”?  
--Why did they take-off in Europe in general and in England in particular?  
--How did these transformations affect the lives of people?  
--What were the world-wide connections that made such “revolution” possible?  
--What does “regional specialization” have to do with capitalism? –give some examples
Who were “the new laborers”?  
What were the forces that gave rise to “the new laborers”?  
What is “ethnic segmentation” and what does it teach us about identity?

March 6  Documentary: *The Tailenders*  
***MIDTERM DUE***

March 13  **Popular/ Current Takes on Capitalism**  
Articles from Mass Media – brought-in by students

Mar 20  **SPRING RECESS**

Part III  **LANGUAGE TRANSFORMATIONS AND THEIR REPERCUSSIONS**

March 27  **Language and the Framing of National Consciousness**  
Anderson, *Imagined Communities* [Chas. 1, 2, 3, 4]  
**Issues:**  
--What are “truth languages” and why are they relevant to our discussion of identity?  
--How is linguistic change tied to new conceptions of self?  
--How do the perception of time and the use of language foster novel views of self?  
--What are the factors that produce change in either?  
--What is the evidence for any of this?  
--What was the role of Pilgrimages [both religious and secular] in the birth of separate identities?

Apr 3  **The Source of Political Love / The Expediency of Political Manipulation**  
Anderson, *Imagined Communities*  
[Chas. 5, 6, 7, 8]  
**Issues:**  
--How did “standard languages” come about? What did choice have to do with it? What did “print” have to do with it?  
--What does Anderson mean by “Russification” processes? Why does he think they are important?  
--What do the images of “Colonial Gothic” and the pilgrimages of local intelligentsia teach us about the “last wave” of nationalist movements?  
--What is the relationship between/among nationalism, patriotism, and racism?  
[***for all the above, give specific examples from chas. 5, 6, 7, and 8, respectively***.]

Apr 10  **Silence and the Elusive Sources of Power**  
*Silence: The Currency of Power*
[Cha. 1, cha. 2,
plus ANY TWO of the following chas:
Cha. 3 (Cook),
Cha. 4 (Kingsolver),
Cha. 6 (Sheriff),
Cha. 7 (Sider)]

Issues:
--What is silence?
--How does silence come up in the chapters you have read?
--How is the study of silence useful for the understanding of language, identity, and processes of globalization?

Part IV INDIVIDUALS IN A GLOBALIZED ENVIRONMENT

Apr 17 A Voice from Africa
Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Apr 24 A Voice from Euro-America
Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*

May 1 A Voice from Latin North America
Rodriguez, *Hunger of Memory*

Issues, for each book:
--What Global issues / forces affect the characters in this book?
--What is the role of language in these characters’ identity?
--Identify short sections of the book you found particularly powerful/persuasive
--What previous readings have helped illuminate our take on this book?

May 8 Caught Between Race and Gender
Documentary: *Public Hearings, Private Pain*

***due: FINAL PAPER***