Dear Jean,

Thank you so much for your consideration, and for sharing Ari and my thoughts on the article called “What is Global Studies?” with the APC.

To be more inclusive in our understanding of critical global learning practices at the university, we have included one more reading for APC perusal. It builds upon the dialogue about global studies presented at the workshop Rama and David organized, and Asha participated in. Critical global studies began in and continues to develop in the humanities and Ari and I have already begun cross-disciplinary conversations in order to try and engage with faculty across disciplines and schools.

1. The article is by Mark Juergensmeyer and called “What is Global Studies?”

   It is particularly useful in outlining five key points:
   - Global studies is transnational
   - Global studies is IDIS
   - Global studies is both contemporary and historical
   - Global studies tends to be postcolonial and critical
   - Global studies programs aim at global citizenship.

   (It is the third article in the global-e (A Global Studies E-Journal) sponsored by different universities including the Global studies Center at UW-Madison and the Center for International education at UW-Madison. http://global-ejournal.org/tag/global-studies The piece presents a nice articulation of current thinking on the terminology surrounding “global studies” and the implications and relevance of terms like “international” and “transnational”. We have already shared this document with the Chancellor and with some of our colleagues across campus.)

   Each of these goals would work towards the following global outcomes:

   - Promote study abroad
   - Promote faculty abroad
   - Develop experiential learning at home
   - Establish clear global learning goals
   - Develop reliable global learning assessments
   - Promote cross-country and cross-institutional cooperation
   - Develop global learning into an integrated curriculum
Ari’s comments presented below helps further explain the points made in the above article:

1. To articulate a viable “global studies” program, we need to recognize its antecedents, which necessarily include postcolonial critique of the very notion of the “global” as a colonial legacy. This is because it is necessary to understand what it is we are studying: if we are studying the “global,” we need to account for how it has come into being as an object of study rather than naturalizing it as a given. So we need to historicize it—in terms of the sociopolitical and intellectual processes that produced it. That is, our understanding of GS needs to be always under interrogation. We need tools to interrogate GS.

2. “Global Studies” necessarily needs to articulate with “multicultural studies”, to the extent that “local” and “global” dimensions of our lives are increasingly difficult to disentangle. People, products and processes exist as simultaneously global and local, depending on the scale one is looking at. Marginalized (e.g., minoritarian) identities are located not just in regional and national but in inter- and trans- national contexts, and these contexts exert pressures that produce identities and experiences. They cannot be separated to the extent that a thorough study of social identity needs to at least try to be holistic. This means that we cannot treat “global” and “domestic” issues as if they are completely different worlds that require completely different intellectual and ethical approaches. It also means that we not conflate the two. There’s a tension here that we at UWEC have barely begun to develop a vocabulary to discuss. But at the very least, it means that we bring the same critical approach to GS that we use for critical multicultural studies. Being attentive to power and privilege in the context of race, class, gender and sexuality cannot be confined to the US, because similar processes (colonialism, capitalism) have had, and continue to have, similar effects in other parts of the world. The violently ugly arguments we hear about migration and migrants in the USA is a great example in which the “domestic” versus “foreign” divide hobbles any sensitive understanding of peoples’ lived realities.

3. Juergensmeyer suggests that the aim of GS is “global citizenship”, which involves “understanding both the specific aspects of diverse cultures and traditions as well as commonly experienced global trends and patterns.” In critical multicultural studies, it seems that we have begun to acknowledge that understanding aspects of “diverse cultures and traditions” in the USA involves examining the inequitable distribution of institutional and social power, privilege, and vulnerability. Such inequities also occur on a global scale, and they are related to national and inter- and trans- national ones. Non-critical approaches to GS acknowledge, but do not adequately engage, this issue. White privilege exists in the USA, and it exists in India. It exists differently in different locations, but these different forms are all historically tied to colonial history and its legacies. Most of our White students inhabit a kind of epistemology of innocence when they travel abroad, and have little sense of the privilege that attaches to their very being when they are abroad. Neither students of colour nor faculty of colour have the same experiences as their White counterparts when they travel abroad as part of US study abroad trips (having been both, I speak from experience here!). An African American student studying in India should not be expected to check in her critical apparatus at the door in order to engage with “Global Studies”; if anything, GS needs to offer her the tools to analyze the ways in which she is located in a differently raced, nationalized and gendered location, and to be able to confidently negotiate that social landscape by drawing both analogies and
historical connections with her prior experience in the USA. If a White student complains about having been “discriminated against for speaking English” during a semester in Spain, we have probably failed her, even if she has had a “high-impact immersion experience” and learnt some Spanish.

4. To the extent that our organizing narrative for GS currently enables students to accumulate the kind of cultural capital that they will need to do well in a diverse world, our entire orientation is toward a status-quo in which current forms of privilege are being maintained, and our teaching is devoted to the advancement of privileged students who will enhance their privilege by consuming otherness. As David points out, they do not even know themselves as social subjects, and our narrative positions them as neutral consumers rather than as non-innocent subjects in an uneven world.

Thank you again for your consideration.

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