The Global New Deal
Discussion Questions/Study Guide
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Oct 12: Plenary (with Bob Devin Jones)
Reading assignment: Chapters 1 & 2 (1-47)

The plenary will review the importance of a global perspective to a quest for meaning. Bob and I will stress the many viable and real alternatives to the daily structural violence confronting millions.

The presentation will cover:
* International Law and Human Rights
* International Political Economy
* Race and a Global Perspective
* Gender and a Global Perspective

I will review three key IPE concepts: economic equality, global public goods, and the capabilities approach (pp22-23). I will apply these concepts to issues of race and gender, hopefully demonstrating their centrality to the fulfillment of economic and social human rights. (Note: this is the ONLY time in QFM that issues of race and gender are specifically discussed.)

As the faculty retreat made clear, a “global” perspective is central to a quality liberal arts education. My hope is that through these sessions we can help out students make these global connections in their personal intellectual journeys.

Oct 17: Race and Gender
Reading assignment: Ch. 3, pages 49-55: Defining Economic/Social H.R.’s;
    Ch 5, Race & H.R.’s (skip long box pp 142-149);
    Ch 6, Gender & H.R.’s.

I. Review themes from chapter 1 and the plenary:
   1) Begin with a general discussion on the importance of a “global perspective” to one’s quest for meaning. Was the argument in the plenary convincing? Why or why not? (You could raise some specifics here from the plenary—AIDS/Bird Flu/SARS, racism, gender bias and so on.) With our daily lives
filled with personal, family and local issues, is it really possible to make
global issues a priority?

2) Is student cynicism and despair as prevalent as was portrayed in the plenary?

3) Is the common view among students one of TINA (There Is No Alternative)?
   Or do you (and other students) see viable alternatives to present economic and
   political systems which seem to be causing such suffering?

II. Review some of the basic IPE concepts from chapter 2 and the plenary:

1) Define and discuss global public goods
2) Define and discuss economic equality
3) Define and discuss the capabilities approach
4) Do these concepts help us approach issues of “rights” and “economic justice”? 
5) Do these concepts help us to move beyond a “Left” versus “Right”
   (”capitalism versus communism”) debate?

III. Ch. 3: Defining and measuring economic and social human rights

1) Why does the UN make a difference between economic and social human
   rights? Is this a valid and helpful distinction? (see pages 52-53)

2) Why does the U.S. have such difficulty accepting the validity of economic
   and social human rights? Do these claims for economic justice conflict
   with basic principles of capitalism?

3) The “Maastricht Guidelines” (see pages 53-54) hold the State responsible
   for respecting, protecting and fulfilling economic and social human rights.
   In this era of corporate globalization, is this fair? Given the overwhelming
   power of huge transnational corporations, banks and international
   organization (e.g., WTO), why should the State be held to be the primary
   actor responsible for implementing economic and social human rights?

IV. Ch 5: Race & Economic/Social Human Rights

1) (From the Plenary) Malcolm X argues that African-Americans must focus
   on human rights (and not civil rights) to achieve progress. He does not
want to confine the struggle for justice for African-Americans to the jurisdiction of the American government. Why does he make this argument? Do you agree? What does this say about a “global” perspective?

2) Review the UN’s approach to Minority Rights, e.g. the codification of human rights principles in the Minority Rights Treaty and the establishment of the Minority Rights Committee. (Note chart at the very beginning of the book, p. xiv—to help clarify the UN Committees.) The Committee hears Country Reports and Individual Complaints.

3) Discuss the case of Anna Koptova against Slovakia (p. 135-136). Why is this case important? (It is a clear example of how an individual can make a difference at the global level. It also shows how the UN system can work and overcome the dangers inherent to a big bureaucracy.)

4) Discuss the September 2000 U.S. report to the Minority Rights Committee (p. 138-139). What is the US argument? Why does the US not accept legal responsibility to remedy the economic and social human rights of its minority population?

5) The GND calls on the Minority Rights Committee to streamline its work and (in the areas of economic and social rights) focus on only two areas: health care and education. How is this proposal related to economic equality and global public goods? Is this a feasible and workable approach? (These proposals are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, pages 223-225.)

IV. Ch. 6: Gender and Economic/Social Human Rights

1) What are women’s human rights? Is it necessary to have a separate category of “women’s rights?” Aren’t women’s rights inherent to “human rights?”

2) Review the UN’s approach to Women’s Rights, e.g. the codification of human rights principles in the Women’s Rights Treaty and the establishment of the Women’s Rights Committee. (Note chart at the very beginning of the book, p. xiv—to help clarify the UN Committees.) The Committee hears Country Reports and Individual Complaints (in the same manner as the Minority Rights Committee).
3) See Upendra Baxi quote (p. 167): Does the legal human rights framework at the UN give states a way to side step real responsibility in regards to women’s rights? Since many resolutions and declarations regarding women never result in clear positive policy change, are these actions meaningful at all? Or are they dangerous? Do they then give a “cover” for States to claim they are acting on protecting women’s rights, when in reality they are not?

4) Note the progress at the UN in “measuring gender inequality” (see box p. 170-171). In 2001, the UN found gender inequality everywhere—in all 146 countries measured.

5) The GND calls on the Women’s Rights Committee to streamline its work and (in the areas of economic and social rights) focus on only two areas: health care and education. How is this proposal related to economic equality and global public goods? Is this a feasible and workable approach? (These proposals are discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, pages 225-228.) (Note the similarities between the proposals in the GND to protect minority rights and women’s rights.)
Oct 19: The Global New Deal
  Reading Assignment: Ch. 8 (28 pages)

Make sure the class comes prepared to discuss the specific GND proposal in chapter 8. The chart on p. 208 summarizes the proposed GND.

Divide the class into 4 or 5 groups. Have each group draft their own “global new deal” by addressing:
*Which elements from the GND program presented in chapter 8 would the group include in their proposal? Why?
*Which parts of the GND in chapter 8 does the group reject? Why?
*What new elements would they add? Each group should focus on realistic proposals designed to alleviate global economic and social deprivations.

Each group can then report back to the class on what they propose.