

End-of-Semester Summary
Global Flows, Spring 2008
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I may be wrong, but I got the impression that this presentation was supposed arise from a personal analysis of the subjects covered this semester. A few words rife with citations, a quote or two, maybe even page numbers. But I can't do that. You ask me, professor, to expand upon the most provocative aspect of this class, and I ask where should I start? Possibly with the teacher himself? Present about how I've never before had a professor that was mistaken for an enthusiastic and enraged student? Or that I've never been taught by a teacher who visibly disdains lecturing, who would rather sit and stoke discussion amongst his students as opposed to standing above them? Maybe I start with the class itself; about how quickly the group became accountable to the group; for the first time in my short academic life, I was responsible for the quality of your learning, dear class, and you were responsible for the caliber of mine; and how we, even before getting to Marx, became a class within a class, a class for itself. Never before have I encountered something like that in a college setting. And what about the presence of this particular Global Flows course itself? I could prepare a PowerPoint on the two-semester-long legacy this class has etched into the student body: all the readings, the classes at Spain, parties in the middle-of-nowhere Brooklyn. Suddenly, unexpectedly, like knots in a scarf trailing behind it, we are now a part of the tradition of this Global Flows course. That surely was not anticipated. Or what about the material? Names like Appadurai, Rosenberg, two Markes (one with an "x," one with an "s"), Spruyt, Philpott, Neocleous, Slaughter, Polanyi—and how I stayed up an ungodly amount of hours trying to finish them not because I was enraptured with their writing, or that I could feel my brain get bigger with each word read, but mostly I wanted to figure the fu*king point they were trying to make. That could be a platform for a presentation, or, even better, how fuller and more compete the readings became after a Wednesday of reading presentations. Again, all of this was completely unexpected.

What was expected was a class that would be over just as quick as it began. A room full of competitors, all eyeing that 4.0. A teacher with chalk in hand, graphing, classificating what he or she expected from us, the students. A few papers that would be hell to get though, but blissfully forgotten once turned in and graded. Maybe a group project that would only bolster initial (and usually wrong) impressions of classmates and encourage that distance that can only be felt when sitting across from one another, all with different opinions on how the project should be undertaken. These were the aspects of the classroom I was familiar with before Global Flows. This, or some derivative of it, is what I expected. A classroom is a classroom is a classroom. They all have been the same, in some degree; so much so

these expectations became the norm, the status quo, as natural as sun in June. Global Flows, from the professor, to the group, to the readings, has shattered this lens of expectation. And if boiled down to the salt of things, each reading is asking us to do the same to the world we see and have come to expect. The class, for me, has made concrete the ideas we read within it. Possibly more dangerous, it has made this mode of thinking accessible, doable, almost required from this point forward.

Whether or not this rates as provocative, because of this class I am left with a new seed of seeing, of process, of thought. It will be hard to grow, even harder to put into use, but retreating to dank garden of pre-Global Flows expectations is insufferably impossible. I think I would rather do my best to nurture what I found here and hope one day that a full "Challenge the administrative order of all things" flower opens in flush on my shirtsleeve.