

**2008 Report on the “Globalization, Society, Labor, and the Environment”  
Submitted by Radhika Gajjala (co- cluster facilitator) and Rahul Mukherjee**

**Cluster formation and membership:**

The “Globalization, Society, Labor, and the Environment” cluster is a research cluster new to ICS that began meeting in Spring semester of 2008. The cluster was facilitated by Radhika Gajjala, Communication Studies and Candace Archer, Political Science. Members invited to participate in this cluster included pre-tenure and tenured faculty members from Women's Studies, Communication Studies, Political Science and Sociology, while there were graduate students from Communication Studies and American Culture Studies.

The following faculty and graduate students are members of the cluster:

Candice Archer, Assistant Professor, Political Science  
Joshua Atkinson, Assistant Professor, Interpersonal Communication  
Phyllis Dako-Gyeke, graduate student, Communication Studies  
Radhika Gajjala, Associate Professor, Communication Studies  
Ellen Gorsevsky, Assistant Professor, Interpersonal Communication  
Vikki Krane, Professor, Women’s Studies  
Sue Ellen McComas, graduate student, Communication Studies  
Rahul Mukherjee, graduate student, Communication Studies  
Clayton Rosati, Assistant Professor, Telecommunications  
Laura Sanchez, Associate Professor, Sociology  
Sarah Tebbe, PhD student, American Culture Studies

**Purpose of the cluster:**

Economic globalization impacts our environment and ecology – both socially and in terms of natural resources and the climate around us. This highlights how critically Economic Globalization processes affect culture and ecology. This impact pertains both top-down globalization (as in the case of Multinational corporations) and globalization from below (as in the case of “anti-globalization” activism).

Activities of globalization occur in both urban and rural places. They are affected by community activities and by NGOs at work on issues relating to environment and ecology. To respond, scholars must engage both locally and globally, and work both with community and non governmental organizations.

Thus this cluster is formed around research collaborations across geographical and cultural contexts. We seek to develop scholarship that will shed light on the socio-economic and political processes around globalization, labor movements, and the environment. Drawing on existing connections that cluster participants have within and outside the United States both transnationally, trans-urbanly, and trans-rurally, we plan to examine issues that connect globalization, place, culture, economics, politics, and the environment.

This interdisciplinary research cluster seeks to bring together scholars from various disciplines while collaborating with other existing research groups to plan a symposium in the next two years. Topics and issues discussed have ranged from industrial disasters, transnational activism, theorizing globalization, interrogating development projects, flows of bodies, and the rhetoric of human rights.

### **Summary of meetings:**

On February 29, we held our first meeting in order to set agendas and introduce members to each other. A lot of very exciting dialogue occurred around the themes of the cluster including graduate student mentoring and peer tenure-track mentoring. Ongoing meetings will emphasize learning, examining, reviewing and open the possibility of sharing research and collaborating.

Dialogues across research occurred as Candice Archer talked about her work in relation to Free Trade and Globalization, Rahul Mukherjee talked about his research on continuing activism around the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, and Radhika Gajjala spoke about her work with NGOs in India.

Our second meeting of the semester took place on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Ellen Gorsevsky shared her work on the rhetoric of nonviolence and some research projects related to “Edutainment” and “plastic Chinese bodies.”