How do students ‘see’ globalization? How do they understand visual representations of its political, social and ethical dimensions? This article discusses the use of visual materials as a tool for teaching globalization theory. Images convey specific values and beliefs, frame understandings of global problems, provide access to distant locales and offer a form of resistance. Such media allow students to consider how images may reproduce inherently politicized articulation, and to gain a better understanding of models of and concepts related to globalization. The article discusses a specific exercise, learning outcomes and pedagogical barriers to students’ understanding of visual representation of space and place. It provides both specific images related to globalization and student analyses which illustrate how visual analyses may facilitate integration, synthesis and retention of otherwise abstract theories and concepts.

Keywords: globalization; visual sociology; pedagogy

This article discusses the use of visual materials as a tool to teach students about globalization theory and concepts. Visual exemplars play an important role in both the study and the politics of globalization. Images diffuse international norms, reproduce prevailing assumptions and inform our understanding of complex global processes such as financial crises, migration and climate change. When social scientists use photography and video as empirical evidence, imagery may support interpretive analyses of larger, complex patterns (Harper, 1998). Visual material may express popular views about globalization, mobilize people to reform or resist its harmful processes or reify existing assumptions about the bifurcation of the so-called First and Third Worlds. Beyond visual content, the marketplace of imagery contributes to and grows with globalization. Because visual content moves almost instantly through global media, it acquires expansive audiences that producers may never have considered (Appadurai, 1996; Bauman, 2000). Quite simply, imagery not only allows us to ‘see’ globalization, but also to observe how others envision it. For these reasons, visual content provides rich and accessible teaching material that enriches globalization courses, while drawing from the vast and interconnected spheres students bring to the classroom.

Using experiences from two related globalization seminars (‘Globalization and Social Change in the World System’ and ‘Gender and Globalization’), this article articulates how research on visuality and learning guides our integration of particular teaching tools, techniques and exercises based on visual content. At the same time, we illustrate how the use of visuals expanded our pedagogical framework. We focus this dialectic process on a particular tool we...
developed to integrate visual content within our globalization seminars. The Visuals and Imagery of Globalization Online Repository (VIGOR Project, 2013) website brings visual content into our graduate seminars in ways that express our central commitments to active student engagement and the co-creation of knowledge and interdisciplinarity. This article has three objectives: (1) to demonstrate how visual content informs the pedagogy of globalization; (2) to illustrate the ways in which central teaching theories anchor our use of visual content; and (3) to show how VIGOR may be adapted to a range of subjects about the politics of globalization.

Pedagogical perspectives on visuality and globalization

Our use of the VIGOR website seeks to help students develop a deep understanding of the simultaneous political, social, cultural, economic and technological forces of globalization. For the purposes of this article, we define ‘globalization’ as a set of social, economic, political, commercial and technological processes through which social life has assumed relatively distanceless and placeless qualities. In many aspects, social relations have become trans-planetary, instantaneous and simultaneous, with geographic distance imposing few costs (Rosenau, 2003; Scholte, 2005). Although we offer this definition at a later point in our seminars, we initially leave the term ‘globalization’ undefined. Students arrive with many intuitive understandings of the term that facilitate discussion and learning: as trade liberalization, modernization, internationalization, transnational culture and others. One goal of our imagery assignment is for students to find representations of and disagreements among these conceptions. Because scholars contest the meaning of ‘globalization’, imagery itself may be a form of contestation that elucidates the sources of disagreement. Visual analysis provides students means for understanding the social processes central to globalization theory (Rose, 2012). Visual media empower people to negotiate, define and impart meaning to ‘globalization’, as contested by researchers and societies alike. Some view it narrowly as trade liberalization and global investment; others emphasize technological processes; while some understand it in cultural terms (Ritzer, 2013). Visual methodology allows students to access the layers of such complex processes and debates through concrete and often affective dimensions of the impact of globalization in everyday life.

In general, students gain a better understanding of expert models and concepts when instructors use visual material to complement texts and lectures (Jacobson and Archodidou, 2000; Rourke and O’Connor, 2009). The pedagogical integration of imagery serves four learning outcomes. First, it facilitates a conceptual understanding of processes, patterns and examples that encourage analogical reasoning. Rather than simply recognizing patterns or examples – what some researchers have called ‘shallow’ understanding (Gazit, Yair and Chen, 2005) – visual materials help students understand the underlying causal mechanisms that give rise to frequently observed patterns. For example, we ask our students not only to recognize similarities among images, films, commercials and other media, but also to understand how such patterns may reflect the work of ‘image producers who themselves have agendas and biases that should be subject to scrutiny’ (Falihi and Wason-Ellam, 2009, p. 414). Such deep understanding is particularly important in the study of globalization because of its multi-scalar dimensions. We want our students to develop the ability to transfer knowledge to new domains, situations, problems or scales, whether at the personal, familial, community, national or global level. For example, an image may juxtapose material and ideational factors, such as a McDonald’s advertisement in the Middle East that celebrates Ramadan with a crescent moon-shaped half-eaten hamburger. Such images illustrate both globalization (the
presence of American products in a foreign market) and, just as importantly, points of disagreement among scholars (Westernization versus cultural hybridization). In this way, images help students integrate wider conversations on globalization theory with the multiple ways in which their own lives interface with all dimensions of mondialisation.

A second learning outcome is that visual materials can facilitate collaborative learning (Suthers and Hundhausen, 2003). Because we present visual materials in the seminar room, analysis and discussion foster a rich discussion-based classroom community. Students do not consider the material individually as they would a text, or passively as they might receive a lecture. Rather, visual materials encourage active dialogue and engagement with larger globalization themes.

Third, visual materials allow for ‘active learning’ about phenomena that students cannot easily touch or manipulate – that is, where kinesthetic learning is impractical. Active learning refers to any classroom activity that ‘requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing’ rather than simply listening to an instructor (Prince, 2004). These activities encourage students to take responsibility for their own initial learning by helping them discover important concepts, disagreements and debates. There is some evidence that students who participate in active learning activities before a lecture achieve a deeper synthesis and integration of knowledge (Schwartz and Bransford, 1998). Active learning using visual representations has played an important role in teaching and learning about molecular structures and processes in most chemistry classes, for example (Levy, 2013). This is not to say, however, that visual materials speak for themselves. Rather, they complement and bring tangible structure to abstract theories and distant locations. Two studies have found that students obtain a deeper understanding of concepts, models and processes only when instructors emphasize information in imagery that is relevant to the learning objectives (Crouch et al., 2004; Keehner et al., 2008). By using VIGOR, a user-friendly online repository to which students contribute their own images and analyses, students assume a greater responsibility for their learning by participating in virtual dialogues with their peers. Substantial research on active learning has shown that students have better recall of information and ideas when learners are cognitively active, whereas participatory activities (such as ‘learning by doing’ or group role-playing exercises) have less effect on student recall (Mayer, 2004). For these reasons, we conduct the exercise during the seminars to encourage an active link between written reflection and classroom dialogue.

Finally, a visual pedagogical approach also promotes the affective dimension of learning. As the research on emotions and learning repeatedly posits, when students share an affective experience of classroom content, they are more likely to enjoy a richer learning experience and to retain content (Belenky et al., 1997). We draw in the affective dimension of imagery to expose students to the experiences and perspectives of ‘the other’, encourage empathy and integrate a range of virtual geographic locations. While the written word can explain the juxtaposition of social tensions, visual media often capture such ideas more powerfully and viscerally. Indeed, the visual arts arguably provide shared understandings precisely because they reproduce complex ideas in manners that are most widely accessible at both intellectual and emotional levels, irrespective of language, prior education or culture. The accessibility of visual data allows students to see and feel how their everyday worlds are directly impacted by globalization – another core tenet of affective-intellectual learning. By asking students to find tangible evidence of globalization in their personal lives, social worlds and use of technology, we sought to tap into their experiences to illustrate the juxtapositions of social opposites: the
distant with the proximate, the foreign with the familiar, the global with the local, the modern with the traditional and the universal with the particular, to name just a few. This focus on how the tensions of opposites pervade our daily lives reframes globalization from abstract and purely theoretical forms to tangible and personal encounters.

Several researchers have reported on the use of visual materials to teach concepts from political science and international relations. Beth Dougherty (2002) discusses using political cartoons in the classroom to enhance students’ critical thinking skills, facilitating discussions and encouraging students to develop a familiarity with current affairs. Ian Macgillivray (2005) used video from the satirical television show *South Park* to examine how societies may reproduce homophobic prejudices. Abigail Ruane and Patrick James (2008) report on the use of the *Lord of the Rings* films to teach debates about feminist international relations theory. Beyond the study of politics, numerous other scholars report on the use of visual materials for teaching evolutionary biology (Jacobson and Archodidou, 2000); physics (Dori and Belcher, 2005); astronomy (Gazit, Yair and Chen, 2005); and chemistry (Levy, 2013). To our knowledge, however, few scholars have systematically used visual materials to help students develop a deep understanding of the politics of globalization.

Our teaching approach applies insights from visual sociology, a field that seeks to contextualize imagery within larger social structures to analyze the production, consumption and wider meanings of visual material. The field investigates how images both reflect and reproduce cultural norms, beliefs and social conflicts across a span of global locations (International Visual Sociology Association, 2013; Visual Sociology Study Group, 2013). Within the social sciences, the visual studies movement may be credited with expanding units of analysis, consideration of the role of visual data in research, and a growing integration of micro–macro linkages. From this field, we intend for students to develop the capacity to see visual data as legitimate social science evidence, while expanding their capacity for meta-analysis and mixed research methods.

**Practicing analysis: the VIGOR assignment**

As the designers and instructors of two complementary globalization courses within an international studies graduate program, we created an interactive website that would allow students to find and share photographs, film, television, graphic arts, advertisements, fashion and other exemplary imagery of globalization, both of their own creation and from outside sources. We house the collection of these images on the VIGOR website, which seeks to enrich the learning environment by fostering students’ abilities to: (1) analyze and relate their choices of images to course readings and concepts; and (2) record and track course material on a website that allows other students to access and learn from the original contributions of their peers. This co-created teaching resource provides a data archive for use in a growing number of globalization courses offered across disciplines.

Of course, the success of student analyses and our teaching integration hinges on the range, accessibility and quality of content stored on the website. To build a library of images, our seminars require students to complete two assignments:

1. Students contribute an image to the VIGOR webpage. They may draw this image from popular media, their own experiences or any other source. We ask students to provide a written assessment of four features of their selection: (a) its source; (b) the date, time and location of the image (if known and appropriate); (c) the concepts, debates, ideas or
processes that the image illustrates; and (d) relevant authors or scholarship that can help us understand the imagery.

2. Students give an oral presentation to the seminar which places this image within wider theoretical and contemporary discussions of globalization.

We have assigned this exercise in three different seminars in international studies. These seminars have enrolled between eight and 17 graduate students pursuing either Master’s degrees or doctorates. These seminars meet once a week for 16 weeks, with each session lasting three hours. Each week we devote approximately 30 to 45 minutes to student presentations of their images and to classroom discussion, although we will permit discussion to continue if students are productively debating important theories, concepts or disagreements. We use the following measures to assess learning outcomes:

A. **Enhance students’ meta-cognition about globalization:** We evaluate students’ abilities to analyze the simultaneous and interwoven representations of technological, political, economic and cultural dimensions of globalization within their particular instance.

B. **Elicit students’ latent knowledge about and personal experiences with globalization:** We evaluate both the students’ images and their associated analyses for personal references. Measures include an original image created by the student, such as a photograph or ‘found art’; written analysis that refers to personal experiences or those of an immediate family member; analysis that refers to the students’ culture or home; and comments in the student’s oral presentation that draw from personal experiences or observations.

C. **Encourage students’ active learning:** Students establish an ‘account’ on the website. The website measures the frequency and regularity of student visits and their ‘page views’ or the number of times they visit a particular image in the database.

D. **Identify relationships among scholars and concepts:** We evaluate students’ oral presentations for the frequency and accuracy of the students’ identification of globalization debates; the frequency and accuracy of the students’ references to research about globalization; explicit comparisons and contrasts of scholars when analyzing imagery; and their ability to draw conceptual linkages between the applied examples they contribute and the central course themes.

**Examples of images and student analyses**

Several examples illustrate how students use images to unravel globalization’s central ironies and diverse impacts across a range of political, geographic and social landscapes. ‘The Chai Bar’ Internet cafe in Jaisalmer, India, represented in Figure 1, demonstrates how an image can capture the tensions between global processes. The cafe is nestled within a twelfth-century fort originally constructed to exclude the outside world. In 2013, it symbolizes global interconnectedness in a way that suggests Westernization as progress. Yet, in our course conversations about this photograph, we delve into India’s location as a ‘second tier’ country in the global arena, the gendered divisions of access to such Internet cafes, as well as the role India’s call centers play in fulfilling the service needs of global capital. When students examine a collection of exemplars such as this image, their knowledge of globalization expands through peer contributions, group dialogue and the combined visual-affective dimensions of learning. Our use of visual data within our seminars has afforded the most active, contemporary, creative and relevant approach to teaching the complex and simultaneous layers of globalization as both theory and praxis.
Figure 2, taken in Casablanca, Morocco by one of our colleagues in May 2005, demonstrates how a photograph may capture different definitions of globalization. The King Hassan II Mosque on the horizon draws the eye, making it easy to miss the innumerable satellite television dishes dotting the roofs of the residences in the foreground. The ubiquity of satellite dishes illustrates the basic idea of the globalization of media, and the ease with which images, information and ideas traverse sovereign borders. Beyond global processes, however, the photograph also subtly represents a cultural definition of globalization: as a conflict between tradition and modernity, hybridity and Westernization, or perhaps between religion and consumerism, technology or secularism. The composition of the image interposes the means of globalization between the viewer and the mosque; the technological foreground is in shadow while the spiritual horizon is enlightened. In our class discussions, we query the extent to which globalization is associated with Westernization through the emphasis on connectivity, as reflected in this image of the relationship between physical and social spaces. Although the photographer may not have intended this symbolism, the composition may suggest to some audiences a ‘truth’ or shared orientation toward these prevailing tensions. Of course, other interpretations of this photograph are possible – we do not mean to suggest that
there is a ‘correct’ reading of any given image. Imagery is inherently ambiguous and allows for contested meanings, which offer a valuable opportunity for learning. When a student presents his or her image to the seminar, the comments of and discussion among his or her peers often elicit these contested meanings, allowing for a deeper understanding of debates about globalization.

Gillian Rose (2012) argues that beyond the representation of processes, images may reproduce how actors negotiate social conflicts wrought by globalization. Neoliberal trade practices may exacerbate economic inequality (Brune and Garrett, 2005). Technological exchange may strengthen the state’s capacity to surveil its citizens (Mattelart, 2010). Transnational migration may reinforce labor and gender inequalities in political and economic engagement (Marchand and Runyan, 2000; Sassen, 1998). Global cultural exchange may valorize science and rationality, while marginalizing traditional epistemologies and practices (Scholte, 2005, ch. 8). Images, videos, advertisements and other media often represent these normative concerns in ways otherwise inaccessible. For example, Figure 3 presents The Hulk by Tibetan artist Gade. The painting represents not only forms of social conflict on its panels, but also how American and Tibetan cultural understandings of social conflict may complement each other in

Source: Drake, 2005.
Tibetan art is rife with symbolic representations that edify Buddhist followers. In particular, wrathful deities are frequently displayed in tapestries and sculptures bearing angry expressions, surrounded by flames, and/or adorned in skulls. Although intimidating in appearance, these iconic figures champion the ideals of dharma teachings and protect against exogenous forces that seek to threaten the value-laden beliefs of Buddhism. Thus, a wrathful deity is perceived as a positive entity and guardian of Buddhist principles ... In the Western culture, comic-book superheroes perform a similar function as the deities depicted in Tibetan art forms. They are guardians of righteousness and morality whose primary objective is to shield the people from ‘evil’ influences ... A similar theme recurrently surfaces in the process of globalization as the nation-state inherently produces an ‘us’ and ‘them’ narrative even though, as [Thomas] Friedman would argue, the world has gone flat.
Social mobility coupled with technological advancements has led to deterritorialization and respatialization which has undermined state boundaries obscuring the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dynamic (Roberts, 2010).

Roberts’ exemplary reflection illustrates the potential for students to integrate imagery, existing theory and globalization concepts to enhance our understanding of how global processes may exacerbate some social conflicts while attenuating others.

Finally, imagery plays an important role in social construction by producing and legitimating social subjects and objects of globalization. For example, the notion of ‘human security’ illustrates how imagery may constitute new actors both as providers of security and as deserving of the state’s protection (Hurrell, 1999). Images of human suffering, whether from starvation, human rights violations or civil war, help us understand how governments grew to understand military intervention as both a legitimate and moral use of force. Craig Warkentin and Karen Mingst (2000, p. 249) argue that imagery played a role in the success of the International Campaign to Ban Land Mines: ‘The emotive images were, and continue to be, electrifying: children in wheelchairs, the devil carrying away victims, people with missing limbs, and truckloads of crutches being disseminated to victims. Visual media, including the Web, substantially increased NGOs’ effectiveness in addressing the landmine issue’. As some scholars argue, photographs and television can help people imagine new forms of participation (Appadurai, 1996). James Rosenau suggested that the reach of imagery’s impact shapes perceptions of a common human existence. As his culminating analyses suggest, ‘the need to speak of transnational authority was intensified by the Apollo picture of the earth taken from outer space that depicted a lonely spheroid in a vast universe and thereby served to heighten a keen awareness of humankind as sharing a common fate’ (Rosenau, 2006, p. 147). The photo anticipates the role of imagery in the ecological movement: people increasingly understand the Earth itself as not only a location of globalization, but also as an object of global processes. Anthropogenic climate change produces transboundary effects from declining biodiversity in the Amazon to flooded estuaries in Bangladesh or entire islands in the Maldives threatened by rising oceans. Imagery can portray such problems as a collective responsibility, deserving of a coordinated response. ‘Polycentric’ governance is partly a response to the absence of transparency and accountability in governance and the transboundary nature of global challenges (Scholte, 2005, ch. 11). Imagery, then, is not only a form of contesting the failures of state-based governance but also a medium for identifying problems and mobilizing actors to address them.

Beyond the image itself, students must understand that social actors impart meaning to images at three locations: the site of production, the location of consumption and on the image itself (Rose, 2012). Where and how audiences receive images may tell us as much about globalization as the content of the image itself. Furthermore, imagery drawn from television and popular press often reflects binary constructions about global development. In many student submissions, for example, we see imagery of ‘poor, vulnerable third world women’ who appear rather agency-less at the hands of the ‘techno-muscular capital’ of globalization (Marchand and Runyan, 2000). Such analyses reinforce predominant notions of the benefits of globalization flowing from the developed ‘West’ to the ‘Rest’ of the Global South. As we ask our students to interrogate images, we continually encourage larger classroom dialogues that question (1) why such polar representations convey readily in global media and (2) how such reifications speak to wider debates about access to the institutions and decision-making procedures that govern global processes.
Figure 4 demonstrates the power of imagery to produce and legitimate both actors and issues. A supposed Buddhist monk sits at a desk. The monk’s athletic footwear juxtaposes his saffron robes, representing the tensions between tradition and modernity that globalization introduces. That the monk is taking a test suggests that individuals possess some agency in their choices between traditional culture and the homogenized, Westernized, commercialized culture of sneakers. Interestingly, the creator of this image suggests an answer to these tensions – the monk looks to modernity for answers, conveniently scribbled on his shoes. Yet these answers are false ones – he is cheating rather than finding answers for himself. The image itself thus presents important questions about the globalization of culture and the clash of tradition and modernity, Westernization, consumerism and homogenization. As we learned by discussing this image repeatedly in class, viewers may contest meanings that the image’s creators never intended, at sites beyond the original location of consumption. Although the image appeared on a billboard in San Francisco, the Thai parliament’s Committee on Religions, Art and Culture protested that the image’s portrayal of a monk considering wealth contravened Buddhist teachings to forego material pleasures (Anon., 1997). Although images
themselves convey meanings and understandings about globalization, global audiences impute meanings that illustrate how social actors understand and contest global processes.

Our classroom experiences repeatedly illustrate how visual content and analyses bring written theoretical concepts to life. The integration of visual data has expanded our understanding of our own pedagogical approaches in four central ways. First, students become invested in the learning process by bringing their own found images to the classroom. Second, these images generate an affective experience for the wider cohort of students. Third, classroom dialogue allows for multiple vantage points to assess the range of interpretations of images. Finally, students exercise their capacity to link data with core concepts and theories, thereby strengthening analytic writing skills for larger research projects, theses and dissertations. The VIGOR repository of globalization imagery allows instructors to access visual material collected by students to encourage active learning and the co-creation of knowledge.

Assessing outcomes

At the time of writing, we have used the VIGOR assignment in six graduate seminars: twice in globalization theory; twice in global political economy, and twice in gender and globalization. This provides us only a small sample from which we offer a few impressions about the assignment’s effectiveness. Although student evaluation forms do not ask specifically about the VIGOR assignments, comments on the assignment generally have been favorable. One student in the globalization seminar wrote: ‘VIGOR [was a] creative avenue for us to apply the abstract concepts we were learning to tangible daily events’. Another described VIGOR as ‘fabulous’, stating: ‘I really enjoyed and it enriched my understanding about the subject matter’. These comments affirm our intuitive teaching sense that the web-based dimensions of this assignment ‘reach students where they are’ in terms of their exposure to global media and their integration of online forms of response and discussion.

Of course, student satisfaction with the assignment does not necessarily translate into active learning, eliciting latent knowledge or enhancing meta-cognition. Here too, however, we find some indicators of success. Of the 61 student contributions to the VIGOR website, nine of them are postings above and beyond what the assignment required students to contribute. Such second postings indicate that students are taking an active interest in learning rather than simply satisfying the assignment’s requirements. We also identified some evidence of eliciting the students’ latent knowledge about globalization. Although the majority of images in the database are found images (i.e. an image created by another that a student identifies as demonstrating something relevant about globalization), 16 entries show photographs that students themselves took. Two of these photographs show scenes from New York City and the city in which our university is located, indicating proximate processes of globalization in our own community. Many more are photographs students captured while traveling overseas, including scenes from Morocco, Poland, Rwanda, Mexico, Afghanistan, China and elsewhere, indicating that students connected their classroom learning with their previous experiences overseas. In this sense, students bring the global to the local and ‘globalize the university’.

The students’ contribution of personal photographs is only one qualitative indicator that students integrate their prior experiences with and knowledge about globalization. In our assessments of student performance, we found some evidence that the exercise helped students connect their experiences to general concepts and theoretical debates. Many of our students who have studied globalization are either international students or American students with experience of living, working and studying abroad. In one graduate seminar, the
class included 17 students representing nine nationalities, and a US Navy officer who served in Afghanistan, the Middle East and elsewhere. In one telling example from the spring 2012 seminar, Laura Castro, who formerly worked for a French NGO, submitted a series of images depicting survivors of landmine explosions. In her written assignment, she posited: ‘the same patterns of Globalization that have fostered transnational trade have benefited the landmine market’. During her in-class presentation of the anti-landmine media campaign depictions of severely dismembered subjects, Laura shared: ‘In fact, I know all of these people’. By bringing her personal connection to the subjects of human rights campaigns, she brought a distinct affective perspective to the seminar’s understanding of the wider questions of human suffering and injustice within the context of globalization. As this ‘real life’ contribution demonstrates, visual data may provide a wealth of personal experience in the classroom in ways that would otherwise be unavailable. As evidenced by the seminar participants’ direct connection to the images they submitted, students who choose elective courses about globalization possess experiences and latent expertise about the topic that can benefit their peers, future students and instructors. Ideally, our intention is to expand these benefits to the wider field of globalization and international studies.

One final assessment of active learning is whether or not students continue to use the VIGOR website after they have completed our seminars. Beyond student-contributed content, we hope students return to the VIGOR website to read new student contributions and to explore thematically related images. In principle, website traffic analysis should allow us to assess the number of page views, clicks, time spent per page and total time on site for all visitors. Of course, such traffic analysis would require some way of identifying site visitors as current or former students, perhaps by requiring them to log in using a unique password. However, such monitoring may limit the site’s use outside our university. Furthermore, students may not explore the material as fully if they think we are ‘monitoring’ them. These concerns notwithstanding, traffic data may demonstrate the effectiveness of the website. If student contributions, page views and time online grow after their time in our seminars, this would give a strong indication that the website enhances student learning independent of the other content of our seminars.

Conclusions

Our assignment lies at the intersection of a burgeoning field of visual studies, globalization pedagogies and the technological worlds of our students. The use of imagery as data provides multilayered and rich connections among lived experiences, social research, theory and interactive teaching. Students have expanded their analytic capacities through their abilities to integrate the conceptual underpinning of this project in a range of courses and independent research.

In principle, instructors can use visual materials to teach students about a wide variety of concepts and theories in politics and international relations. However, our ongoing development of this project necessitates consideration of the two other issues: (1) the ethical standards for circulation of the visual materials outside classroom usage; and (2) avenues for publication of the material. According to the International Visual Sociology Association, images acquired for classroom assignments may be utilized without copyright permission, though this ‘fair use’ may not extend to public distribution through a website. We also must encourage students to adhere to copyright standards for larger distribution. Beyond legal considerations, we recognize ethical concerns with student-created images. Societies across

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the globe differ in their norms of privacy. What permission must a student receive from a subject that he or she photographs? What constitutes a ‘public’ space in which photography is permitted? Of necessity, we can offer no simple answers to our students because individuals, cultures and societies disagree on these questions. As our pedagogy evolves, then, we must expand our instruction on the ethics of gathering imagery across locations and available sources.

Our hope is that the vast potential of visual data illustrates to students with a range of interests the multiple and interconnected forms of globalization. If we consider visual data as performative, productive and political, they hold the potential to encapsulate the complexities of globalization in a single instance. Our students remind us to analyze critically the potential of imagery to convey and reify existing assumptions that equate ‘globalization’ and ‘modernity’ with ‘Western’ standards and values. Images may contain these undergirding messages because they present more immediate affective dimensions. In this sense, the role of the instructor is to build conversations among the affective, theoretical and critical dimensions of each image as an instantiation of such complexities. Our experience leads us to believe that students absorb a greater range of intellectual and affective responses to the data conveyed in visual forms. These processes enliven our classroom conversations by bringing the abstract dimensions of globalization to life in concrete, accessible ways that reflect students’ worlds.

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Note

1 We define ‘visual materials’ predominantly as photographic material. Although students may also utilize video and media clips, photographs best illustrate the teaching exercise we report in this article. The exercise may be easily adapted to other media such as music, film, advertisements and art.

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