

# Colloquium Series

## **Global Capitalism: A Love Story, a Tragedy, an Enigma**

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The sprawling processes referred to as capitalism have been credited and blamed for many things, from improvement of living standards to destruction of the environment, from alleviation of poverty to the generation of new forms of poverty, from promoting development to generating maldevelopment. Basing my claims on both theoretical considerations and comparative global data that have become available in the last few decades I argue for three "qualitative" claims and one "qualitative" proposal: global capitalism has been consistent with the (uneven) production of substantial improvements in material standards of living; global capitalism has generated historically unprecedented levels of income inequality, the geographic forms of which have shifted slightly in the era of neo-liberal globalization; global capitalism has so consistently and unevenly transformed livelihoods and consumption that it undermines attempts to make meaningful statements about its effects on poverty; the most politically significant result of all of the above is that global capitalism generates struggles over the distribution of wealth which pose serious challenges to the maintenance of democracy.

**1080 Derby Hall, 3:30-5:00pm**  
**Thursday, November 12**