

02-45-488(01)/588 (01)
Development Challenges in the 21st Century

Dr. Jamey Essex / Winter 2011 / W 2:30-5:20 pm / CHN 1137
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Course description

This course is a one-time special topics seminar, designed for fourth-year undergraduates and master's students, on development challenges in the 21st century. In many ways, the challenges of development have remained stubbornly consistent – poverty is as entrenched as ever in many parts of the Global South, almost a billion people are chronically hungry, dozens of states remain politically and economically unstable or under autocratic regimes, and many global institutions have failed to adequately incorporate voices and views from below. On the other hand, a plethora of new actors has emerged within development practice, while new theories and approaches to development (some of which even unsettle the very meaning and objective of development) have come to the fore with changes in global systems of governance, exchange, and culture. This course will examine some of the key contemporary trends, ideas, and problems within development theory and practice, with an eye toward how these may develop in the near future. As this is a mixed graduate/ undergrad seminar, there will be slightly different writing requirements for students in 488 and those in 588 at the end of the term.

Course goals and learning outcomes

The goals of this course are:

- To provide students a thematic overview of major themes, debates, and concepts related to the contemporary politics of development.
- To help students develop skills in critical thinking, writing, and analysis, and to help improve students' academic research skills.
- To facilitate self-directed learning and political literacy beyond the classroom.

At the conclusion of this course, successful students will be able to:

- Identify and explain major themes, debates, concepts, and arguments associated with the politics of development in the current period.
- Recognize, discuss, and contribute to arguments about the politics of development with consideration of different points of view and approaches to development.
- Demonstrate improved ability to read, understand, and discuss complex material orally and in writing, and to carry out academic research.
- Demonstrate increased political literacy and engage more effectively in the political, economic, and social life of their communities.

Required reading

Required reading for this course consists of **five books**, available at the university bookstore or online through Amazon or Chapters. Some are relatively recent publications, so used copies may not be readily available. If possible, I will place copies of the required texts on reserve at Leddy Library. Additional optional readings may also be placed on reserve at Leddy, in the department office, or electronically.

- Mike Davis. (2006) *Planet of Slums*. London and New York: Verso.
- William Easterly. (2006) *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Victoria Lawson. (2007) *Making Development Geography*. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Dambisa Moyo. (2010) *Dead Aid: Why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa*. Toronto: D&M Publishers Inc. [A 2009 hardback edition from Farrar, Straus and Giroux is also available with a different foreword.]
- Ananya Roy. (2010) *Poverty Capital: Microfinance and the making of development*. New York: Routledge.

Assignments and grades

Your grade in this course will be based on several components, but assignments differ slightly depending on whether you are enrolled in 488 or 588.

- Participation (20%): Participation marks are based on the frequency and (especially) quality of your contribution to class discussion (half of the participation mark), and on weekly submission of reading questions via the course CLEW site (the other half, 10 times at 5 marks each).
- Group presentation (30%): The class will be divided into four or five small groups, each charged with the task of researching a particular development issue, such as agricultural development, poverty reduction, the role of NGOs, public health improvement, and so on. This will involve a three stage process, each of which is to be completed for one-third of the mark for this portion of your grade:
 - *Step 1 (10%)*: Research bibliography, due in class on **Feb 9**
 - *Step 2 (10%)*: Progress report, due in class on **Mar 9**
 - *Step 3 (10%)*: In-class group presentations of findings, in class on **Apr 6**
- Final take-home exam (50%, for students in 488): The final take-home exam will consist of two essays (7-10 pp each) covering themes and concepts from the course readings (**Apr 20**).

- Final research paper (50%, for students in 588): An initial research question and outline are due in class on March 2 (no marks, just for feedback); the final research papers (16-20 pp) will be due **Apr 20**.

Participation

As this is a seminar course, your active engagement and participation are crucial to the success of the class – no one wants to sit in our seminar room and listen to me lecture for three hours a week while you stare at me and at each other. So I expect you will attend class **every week**, and that you will arrive **prepared** and ready to discuss the materials. Please note that the 20% mark outlined above is for participation and submission of discussion questions, and **not** for attendance. If you are not in class, of course, you cannot participate, but simply being here is not sufficient to ensure full marks in this portion of your grade. Neither, however, do I mark participation based solely on how much you talk. Rather, the mark you receive will reflect both the frequency and the quality of your contribution to the class discussion.

Classroom etiquette and academic dishonesty

Consistent with University of Windsor policy, cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty are **not tolerated**. Academic dishonesty includes turning in written work that is not your own, purposefully failing to provide adequate or full citations, and feigning illness to avoid turning in work on time. Those caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a **zero** on the assignment and will not be allowed to redo the work. Graduate students caught plagiarizing or cheating **endanger their status in the Graduate Program**.

In class, you are expected to respect others' right to learn and discuss course materials in a safe and comfortable environment. You should rely on facts, reason, and evidence to back arguments. Overtly racist, sexist, or otherwise inflammatory remarks will not be tolerated. I am very open about my own political views, and I encourage open debate and exchange of ideas.

Course expectations

You should treat this course syllabus as a contract. Given this, I want to clearly outline what I expect of you and what you should expect of me in this course.

I expect that you will:

- Attend class regularly (i.e., every day), arrive on time, and do all required reading;
- Pay attention, turn off your cell phone, refrain from distracting yourself and your classmates, and use your laptop only for class-related activities;
- Approach the course materials with an open mind and a serious attitude;
- Strictly adhere to the student code of conduct and observe the University's policies regarding academic honesty;
- Respect your fellow students' right to learn in a safe and hospitable classroom;

- Respect and take advantage of my office hours, particularly if you are falling behind or having difficulty with the material;
- Understand that grades refer to the quality and precision of the work being graded, *not* to your need for a particular grade or to an open-ended negotiation between you and me.

For my part, you can expect that I will:

- Arrive to class on time and well-prepared to lecture and facilitate discussion;
- Complete the grading of exams and assignments in a timely fashion;
- Reply to emails in a timely fashion, usually within two days;
- Be available during my scheduled office hours, and will re-schedule them if necessary (i.e., I won't cancel them without making them up at some other time);
- Take your questions and ideas seriously, so long as they are relevant to the material;
- Maintain a relaxed but professional classroom space for learning and discussion;
- Treat all students equitably with regard to grading and class discussion.

Course Schedule

Jan 12: Introductions and assignments

Jan 19 and 26: Theories of development, then and now

- V. Lawson, *Making Development Geography*

Feb 2 and 9: Endemic poverty and failed governance

- W. Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*

Feb 16: Foreign aid and North-South transfers

- D. Moyo, *Dead Aid*

Feb 23: Reading week

Mar 2: Foreign aid and North-South transfers

- D. Moyo, *Dead Aid*

Mar 9 and 16: Urbanization, housing, and social citizenship

- M. Davis, *Planet of Slums*

Mar 23 and 30: Microfinance and markets

- Roy, *Poverty Capital*

Apr 6: Group presentations

Wed, Apr 20: Final papers/exams due by 3:30 pm