The Political Economy of Development  
*In Theory and History*

Gallatin School of Individualized Study  
New York University

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

What are the historical origins of the unequal geographies of wealth we see today and the institutions purportedly charged with relieving them? How can the international Development project be contextualized within transformations of the global world order and transnational capitalism? Why did certain Asian countries become economic tigers while many African nations saw their economies shrink? How do histories and theories of development help us to grapple with some of the greatest challenges faced in the era of globalization?

The various meanings of the word “development” have changed over time, but it has become shorthand for a complex set of social, economic, political, cultural and institutional transformations over the last five hundred years. This course provides an introduction to the political economy of development in theoretical, historical, and comparative perspective. In so doing, it makes the fundamental distinction between (“big D”) Development as a post-war international project that emerged in the context of decolonization, and capitalist (“little d”) development as a dynamic and highly uneven historical process of global integration and transformation. The purpose of the course is to highlight the interplay of theories and histories of “big D” and “little d” development in order to draw insight towards understanding different trajectories of socio-spatial change.

Professor: Rosalind Fredericks  
Office: Room 618, 1 Washington Place  
Office Hours: Weds. 12-4pm *(by appt)*  
Contact: rcf2@nyu.edu

Course: IDSEM-UG1636  
Semester: Spring 2017  
Time: Tues./Thurs. 3:30-4:45pm  
Location: Gallatin Room 401
The course draws primarily on scholarship from the fields of political economy, geography, anthropology, development studies, and history. The inquiry is organized into five parts. In Part 1, we begin by contrasting the dominant metrics used today to measure the object of development. Part 2 examines some of the most important and influential theoretical ideas and intellectual traditions which seek to explain the historical origins of capitalist development. This provides a foundation for understanding the legacies of previous eras of empire in shaping today's international political economy as well as the origins of the core ideas influencing Development policy. Part 3 will then trace the history of Development as an international project. We examine how Development emerged from the process of decolonization in the 1940s, and the ways in which theories and practices of Development have shifted over time. Tracing this history, we will consider Development as a set of discourses as well as concrete practices and effects. Part 4 analyzes regional trajectories of socio-spatial change in theory and history through detailed case studies from East Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Finally, Part 5 will consider key themes framing contemporary development discourse and practice including gender and sustainable development.

REQUIREMENTS

- **Class attendance and participation.** You are expected to read all assigned materials, attend all classes, and participate actively in discussions. If you are unable to attend class, you must let me know and come to my office hours that week. In the case that you miss a film screened in class, you must view the film in your own time. You will only be allowed one unexcused absence during the semester without penalty. Consistent lateness will be penalized as well.

- **Response papers.** You are required to write a one-page weekly response paper examining a selection or theme from the readings assigned for a total of 5 weeks, to be posted on NYU Classes/Forums by 8pm on the Monday evening before class. These responses are not meant as summaries of the readings, but, rather, as analysis of the way the readings relate to each other and the questions they pose for the larger themes raised in the class. Though individual responses will not be graded, the quality of the analysis and writing will be taken into account in the final participation assessment. You may choose the weeks for which you will post a response, but you should have at least one response from each Part of the course.

Writing Assignments

- **Paper 1: Metrics of Development (10 points).** Due Sunday, February 12th.

- **Paper 2: Theories of Development (15 points).** Due Sunday, March 5th.

- **Paper 3: Histories of “big D” Development (15 points).** Due Sunday, March 26th.

- **Paper 4: Regions and Trajectories (15 points).** Due Sunday, April 16th.

- **Paper 5: Contemporary Themes in Development (15 points).** Due: Sunday, May 7.

Late policy. Unless you have received an extension from me (only granted for serious/medical issues), lateness will be penalized as follows: each day that your paper is late, your grade will drop 1/2 of a grade point (e.g. from a B+ to a B). You are required to inform me if the paper is going to be
more than two days late. I will only consider incompletes in extenuating circumstances and with prior agreement.

**Course Grades:**
- Attendance/Participation/Response Papers 30%
- Short Papers 70%

**OFFICE HOURS and CONTACT**

I will hold office hours on Wednesdays from 12-4pm in my office by appointment. You can sign up for office hours here: [http://goo.gl/5i46R](http://goo.gl/5i46R). If you are unable to meet during my office hours, email me to schedule a separate meeting.

Email: I am best reached by email at rcf2@nyu.edu. Although I do encourage you to stay in touch with issues of concern, I also urge you to be considerate with your emails. I will do my best to reply within 24 hours.

**TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

Cell phones and all other non-note-taking technological devices must be turned off during class out of respect for the instructor and fellow students. If technology becomes distracting, laptops will no longer be allowed in class.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website [www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html](http://www.gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/policy/integrity.html) for a full description of the academic integrity policy and be aware that all of your papers will automatically be checked by Turnitin via NYU Classes.

**READINGS and FILMS**

Required readings for the course are listed in the weekly syllabus. Background readings are also listed, if you desire to do further research. All readings are either available on NYU Classes, through the library’s electronic resources, or at the NYU Bookstore. At the Bookstore, you can purchase the following required textbook for the course:


The following is a list of some relevant films. They will either be screened in class, or you are encouraged to watch them in your own time. Most are in the Avery Fisher Center at the library.
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<td>Crude: The Real Price of Oil (2008)</td>
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<td>The Women’s Bank of Bangladesh</td>
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<td>White King, Red Rubber, Black Death</td>
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<td>Maquilapolis (2006)</td>
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<td>Our Friends at the Bank (1997)</td>
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<td>T-Shirt Travels (2001)</td>
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<td>The End of Poverty? (2009)</td>
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<td>The Price of Sugar (2007)</td>
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<td>Wasteland (2009)</td>
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<td>Darwin’s Nightmare (2004)</td>
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**COURSE SYLLABUS**

**PART 1: WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?**

**Week 1. Introduction**
(January 24, 26)


Easterly, William. “Chapter 1: Planners versus Searchers.” *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. (3-33).

**Week 2. What is the Object of Development? Metrics and Models.**
(January 31, Feb. 2)


**PART 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

**Week 3. Adam Smith, Classical, and Neoclassical Economics**
(February 7, 9)


Additional Reading:

**Week 4. Marx, Imperialism, and the Geography of International Capitalism**
*(February 14, 16)*


**Additional Reading:**


**Week 5. Colonial Regimes and Their Legacies**
*(February 21, 23)*


**Additional Reading:**


**PART 3: DEVELOPMENT AS A POST-WAR INTERNATIONAL PROJECT: A HISTORY OF CHANGING THEORIES AND PRACTICES**

Week 6. The 1950s - 1970s: From Import Substitution Industrialization (ISI) to Basic Needs

*(February 28, March 2)*


*Additional Reading:*


McNamara, Robert. ‘Paupers of the World and How to Develop Them,’ (Excerpts from the Address to the Board of Governors, World Bank, Nairobi 1973).


Week 7. 1980s- today: The Neoliberal Counter-Revolution and Beyond

*(March 7, 9)*


Additional Reading:


PART 4: REGIONS AND TRAJECTORIES

Week 8. The Late Industrializers and Asian Economic Miracles (Singapore) (March 21, 23)

* Readings TBA.
Week 9. “Underdevelopment” in Africa (Senegal)  
(March 28, 30)  
* Readings TBA.

Week 10. Latin America and the Third Way (Venezuela)  
(April 4, 6)  
Guest lecture with Gallatin Professor Alejandro Velasco.  
* Readings TBA.

PART 5: KEY THEMES in CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT

Week 11. The Greening of Development  
(April 11, 13)  

Additional Reading:  

Week 12. Social Entrepreneurship  
(April 18, 20)  
* Readings TBA.
Week 13. Gender and Development
(April 25, 27)

Guest Lecture with Gallatin Professor Raili Roy.


* Other Readings TBA.

Week 14. The Road Forward: Reimagining Development
(May 2, 4)


* Other Readings TBA.