What is “Development”?  
An Introduction to the Study of International Development and Poverty

Gallatin School of Individualized Study
New York University

Waste picker, Manila, Philippines (Source: geography.org.uk)

Professor: Rosalind Fredericks
Course: FIRST-UG 76
Office: Room 618, 1 Washington Place
Semester: Fall 2012
Office Hours: Tues. 3:30-6:30; Weds. 2-3pm
Time: Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:15pm
Contact: rcf2@nyu.edu
Location: Rm. 401, 1 Wash. Place

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From Bono to indigenous community activists in the Amazon, everyone is talking about “development.” The term, however, means different things to different people and has a long and contentious history. This class provides an introduction to the study of international development and poverty from an interdisciplinary perspective. To begin, Part 1 characterizes and historicizes the uneven geographies of development and poverty we see today. We will explore some key debates considering the role of geographical endowments as well as the intertwined legacies of colonialism and capitalism. We then briefly trace the history and key agencies of intentional development in the contemporary era. In Part 2, we discuss contrasting paradigms for what the object of development should be, including: economic growth, social indicators, political freedom, and happiness. Finally, in Part 3, we explore these debates through specific topics and case studies, including social movements in India, fair trade coffee, and structural adjustment in Jamaica. The goal is to provide a clear sense of the chief objects, processes, actors, and policies of international development in order to grapple with the important stakes held by these different views on combating global poverty.
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.

• **Short papers.** The course will be centered on three short writing assignments engaging the readings with further analysis and research. More details on specific requirements will be announced a few weeks before each is due. Each essay should be no more than 3–4 pages long (double-spaced, 12 point font).

1. **Colonialism and Development** *(due Monday, October 1st)*
2. **What is the Object of Development?** *(Due Monday, November 5th)*
3. **Case Studies of Contemporary Development** *(Due Monday, Nov. 26th)*

• **Visit to the United Nations Headquarters** *(date TBD).* In the second half of the semester, we will be taking a tour of the UN offices in New York. The tour will be followed by a lecture on “Economic and Social Development.” You are expected to submit a one-page write up on the UN’s vision of development. *Due date TBA.*

• **Final Group Project and Presentations:** Each student will be assigned to a group with two other classmates. During the course of the semester, you will conduct outside research on the subject matter and prepare a class presentation and written project report due at the end of the semester.

*Presentations: December 11th and 13th.* *Write-up due Friday, December 14th.*

**Course Grades:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short papers</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit to the UN</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final group project</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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**OFFICE HOURS and CONTACT**

I will hold office hours on Tuesday from 3:30-6:30 and Wednesday from 2-3pm in my office by appointment only. You can sign up for office hours here: [http://goo.gl/5i6R](http://goo.gl/5i6R). 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.
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] for a full description of the academic integrity policy.

READINGS and FILMS

Required readings for the course are listed in the weekly syllabus. All readings are available through Blackboard, in the library’s reserves, or at the NYU Bookstore.

Required books


Related Films

The following is a list of some films relevant to the course. They will either be screened in class, or you are encouraged to watch them in your own time. Whenever possible, they have been placed on reserve at the library.

*Bamako* (2007)  
*Between Midnight and the Rooster’s Crow* (2005)  
*Big Spuds, Little Spuds* (1999)  
*Blue Gold* (2009)  
*Cash Flow Fever* (2005)  
*China Blue* (2005)  
*Commanding Heights* (2006)  
*Crude: The Real Price of Oil* (2009)  
*Dam/Age* (2002)  
*Darwin’s Nightmare* (2004)  
*Drowned Out*  
*Food, Inc.*  
*Garbage Dreams* (2009)  
*Health for Sale* (2007)  
*Leaving Home for Sugar*  
*Q2P* (2006)  
*Life and Debt*  
*Maquilapolis*  
*Our Friends at the Bank* (1997)  
*Poto Mitao: Haitian women, pillars of the global economy* (2009)  
*Sowing Seeds of Hunger* (2008)  
*Small Fortunes*  
*Still Life* (2006)  
*Tambogrande* (2006)  
*The End of Poverty?* (2009)  
*T-Shirt Travels* (2001)  
*The Price of Aid*  
*The Price of Sugar* (2007)  
*The perfect famine* (2002)  
*The Other Side of Outsourcing* (2004)  
*The Quiet Revolution*  
*Wasteland* (2009)  
*White King, Red Rubber, Black Death*  
*The Women’s Bank of Bangladesh*
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COURSE SYLLABUS

PART 1: INTERROGATING UNEVEN DEVELOPMENT

Week 1: Introduction: The State of Global Development and Poverty

September 4th
  o  Introductions and course details

September 6th

Week 2: The Question of Geography

September 11th

September 13th

Week 3: Colonialism, Capitalism, and Development

September 18th

September 20th

Film: The End of Poverty
Week 4: The Legacies of Colonialism

*September 25th*

*September 27th*
- Hall, Stuart. 1992 *(cont.)*

Film: *Babique-area*

Week 5: The Actors and Politics of Contemporary Development

*October 2nd*

*October 4th*

PART 2: THE OBJECT OF DEVELOPMENT: CONTRASTING PARADIGMS

Week 6: Development as Economic Growth

*October 9th*

*October 11th*

Week 7: Development and Social Indicators

*October 18th*
- No Class (Fall Break)

*October 18th*
Week 8: Development as Social and Political Freedom

October 23

October 25

Week 9: Development as Happiness

October 30
- Guide to the Gross National Happiness Index, Center for Bhutan Studies.

November 1
- Savage, Michael. 2005. “If you're happy and you know it...Why has happiness become a matter for public policy?” Spiked. 29 November 2005

PART 3: CASE STUDIES

Week 10: Development and Social Movements: The Narmada Dam in India

November 6

November 8
- Film: Drowned Out
Week 11: Sustainable Development: The Case of Fair Trade Coffee

November 13th
  o Jaffee, Daniel. 2007. *Brewing Justice: Fair Trade, Sustainability, and Survival.* (Selections)

November 15th
  o Jaffee, Daniel. 2007. (Cont.)

Week 12: Gender Empowerment and Microfinance

November 20th
  o Yunus, Mohammed. (Selection)

November 22nd
  No Class (Thanksgiving holiday)

Week 13: The Politics of Debt and Trade in Jamaica

November 27th

November 29th
  o Film: *Life and Debt*

Week 14: Public Health and Social Justice in Haiti

December 4th

December 6th
  o Farmer, Paul. 2003. (Cont.)

Week 15:

Group Presentations on December 11th and 13th