POL2400H:
Theories and Issues in the Politics of Development
Fridays, 10am-noon
Online Synchronous (using BB Collaborate on Quercus)

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Virtual Office Hours (BB Collaborate): Fridays 1-2pm and by appointment

Overview
This course provides a selective overview of some of the theoretical and conceptual issues and debates that have dominated the study of the Global South. These issues and debates are not necessarily exclusive to the Global South and may be relevant to the study of politics in other contexts.

The course starts with a brief introduction to the field of development studies. The course then discusses the evolution of the major theoretical approaches, which have attempted to explain the social, economic, and political experiences of the countries of the Global South. The third section of the course includes a more focussed examination of some of the key topics and debates in development studies.

The field of development studies has affinities with comparative politics and with international political economy but it departs from these subfields in significant ways. POL 2400 attempts as far as possible to avoid overlap with other core courses.

Objectives of the Course
The course is primarily designed to help prepare Ph.D. students for the main field exam (MFE) in development, for teaching, and for future research activities by encouraging critical thinking about political science and development studies. Interested MA students are welcome to enroll in the course but should note that the reading requirements are heavy.

Format and logistics
This course is an online synchronous course. We will be using BB Collaborate on Quercus. Discussions will not be recorded and students are expected to attend the session at the scheduled time (Fridays, 10am-noon).

This seminar is reading and discussion intensive. All students are expected to have covered all the required readings for each session. Active class participation is expected each week.

Students are encouraged to participate in synchronous online classes as they would in an in-person class. Active and informed participation in online synchronous classes is required and
constitutes part of the participation mark. Since this is a small seminar class, you are encouraged (though not required) to turn on your camera on if you are able to and if connectivity permits.

Readings

The syllabus is divided into required and recommended readings. All required readings will be available electronically through Quercus either as PDF copies or as electronic links through the library. Students are expected to complete required readings prior to each session and be ready to discuss these.

The recommended readings listed complement the required readings and the expectation is that, together, the required and a selection of the recommended readings will provide a foundation for students preparing for field examinations.

Basic Texts on Development Theory, Development Studies/International Development, and the Politics of Development

For those of you who are new to the field of development, a short list of texts on development studies, international development, and the politics of development is included below. There are many such texts available. These are only suggestions. If you have no background in the field, it would be useful to purchase one or more of these basic texts and to read these as background preparation for the course.

Note: The library should have copies of most of these books. They are also available from www.amazon.ca

**Development Theory**


**Development Studies/International Development/Politics of Development**


**Requirements**

**PhD students:**

1) **Class Participation (10%)**: Active participation reflecting close familiarity with the required readings for each week is essential.

2) **Class Presentation (5%)**: From week 3, each of you will be randomly assigned to present in one week. At the start of class, you will be asked to make a brief presentation (10 minutes) on the required readings for that week. Presentations should identify and discuss key questions, themes and issues that arise from the set of required readings in a given week. In addition, you should also discuss research methodology and design where relevant. Connections with readings in other weeks should also be highlighted where relevant. The presentations should be treated as critical reflections on the week’s reading and should not be summaries of various articles.

3) **Written assignments**: Students are required to complete the written assignments as specified below. All written assignments have to be emailed to me before the start of the session in which they are being handed in. In each case, your assignment submissions are to be no more than 8 pages of 12-point, double-spaced text.
a) **Three critical review essays (45% in total; 15% each):** You may choose the weeks in which you would like to turn in your essays with the caveat that the three essays must be in weeks 3 through 7. Essays must be emailed prior to the start of class when they are being handed in. Essays must cover the set of readings that will be discussed in that session. The review essays should engage with the themes, questions and debates in the set of readings for that week. You should offer brief summaries of the readings but must analyze the readings and not merely summarize them. Summaries of readings should be brief and the main portion of your essay should be devoted to critical analysis.

b) **Essay on assigned question (20%):** Due on Nov 20th.

c) **Article Review (20%): Due on December 10th.** Pick an article published in the last decade from one of the following journals (World Development, Studies in Comparative International Development, Third World Quarterly, Development and Change, Journal of Development Studies). Situate and contextualize the argument being made in your selected article within the one or more theories, debates or topics on the syllabus of this course. How does the article relate to those theories/topics/debates? Reference at least four sources from the syllabus.

**MA students:**

1) **Class Participation (10%):** see above under Ph.D students for description

2) **Class Presentation (5%):** see above under Ph.D students for description

3) **Three critical review essays (60% in total; 20% each):** You may choose the weeks in which you would like to turn in your essays with the caveat that one essay must be in weeks 3 through 7 and one in weeks 8 through 12. The third essay can be in any week of your choice. All critical have to be emailed to me before the start of the session in which they are being handed in. In each case, your assignment submissions are to be no more than 8 pages of 12-point, double-spaced text. The review essays should engage with the themes, questions and debates in the set of readings for that week. You should offer brief summaries of the readings but must analyze the readings and not merely summarize them. Summaries of readings should be brief and the main portion of your essay should be devoted to critical analysis.

4) **Essay on assigned question (25%):** Due on December 10th

**Extensions/late papers**

Late papers will not be accepted except for extenuating circumstances. Please contact me as soon as possible if you cannot meet a particular deadline.
TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1 (September 11th): Course introduction: organization, requirements and logistics

Week 2 (September 18th): Introduction to Development Studies

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


California Press, 1-41, 64-92


PART 1: DEVELOPMENT THEORY

**Week 3 (September 25th): The Modernization Perspective**

**Required Readings**


Huntington, Samuel. 1968. Political Order in Changing Societies Chapter 1 (partial), pp. 1-77


Recommended Readings


Week 4 (October 2nd): Dependency, World Systems, and Theories of Imperialism

Required


Kohli, Atul. 2020. Imperialism and the Developing World: How Britain and the United States Shaped the Global Periphery. Introduction (pgs. 1-20), Conclusion (390-426), either Chapter 3 (147-205) or Chapter 6 (325-390)
Recommended Reading


**Week 5 (October 9th): Development Alternatives (Sen) and Alternatives to Development: Post-Colonial/Post-Development Perspectives**

*Note:* Due to space and time limitations we are treating Sen and Post-Colonial/Development perspectives in the same week. Sen, of course, is not a Post-Colonial/Post-Development thinker.

**Required**


*Note:* Post-Colonial Feminist thought is an important subset of the Post-Development perspective, which we do not cover in this session. We pick this topic up in the session on gender.

**Recommended Readings**


(Fanon’s work was an important precursor to postcolonial thought and he is a key figure in the development literature).


PART 11: DEBATES AND ISSUES

Week 6 (October 16th): The Neoliberal Turn

Required


**Recommended readings**

(In general, development studies takes a dim view of the impact of economic globalization, neoliberal reform, and structural adjustment programs. Most of the readings below reflect this perspective).


Week 7 (October 23rd): State Formation; The Developmental State

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


**Week 8 (October 30th): State Weakness and State Failure**


Recommended Readings


Helmke, Gretchen and Steven Levitsky. 2004 Informal Institutions and Comparative Politics: A Research Agenda. Perspectives on Politics 2, 4: 725-740


Week 9 (November 6\textsuperscript{th}): The Debate on the Role of Institutions in Development Outcomes

*The readings on institutions are distinct but related to the literature on the state

\textit{Required}


**Recommended Readings**


*Reading Week Break: No Class on Nov 13th*

**Week 10 (November 20th): Gender and Development**

*Essay due for Ph.D students*

**Required Reading**


**Note:** Mohanty is a Post-Colonial Feminist thinker. Her 1991 article became a landmark piece identifying the patriarchal and western bias of western scholarship. In this article, she is critical of the failure of western scholarship to take into account the contextual/historical circumstances that shape the struggles of global south women and their agency in achieving social change. The next four readings illustrate the importance of this context and agency.


**Recommended Readings**


Week 11 (November 27th): Ethnicity, Race and Development


Frantz Fanon, 1952 (reissued 2008), Black Skin, White Masks, New York, NY: Grove Press: Read Foreword by Kwame Anthony Appiah and Chaps 1, 7, 8.


**Recommended Readings:**


Week 12 (December 4th): Resource Curse and “Neo-Extractivism”

**Required Readings**


**Recommended Readings**


