

Development in Theory and Practice

Why are some societies wealthier, healthier, and more highly educated than others? And how might we improve the lives of those individuals with the fewest opportunities? The purpose of this course is to investigate whether and how scholarly theories of development map onto the real world practices of development organizations (state development offices, intergovernmental agencies, not-for-profit organizations) and vice versa. Readings in development sociology will be interspersed with individual student analyses of specific development organizations across a range of issues including (but not limited to) gender, politics, the environment, education, health care, and the economy.

Tentative course outline:

Part I:

Theories of Development:

Modernization, Dependency, World Systems, Globalization, and Development Alternatives

Part II:

Debating Development with On-the-Ground Examples:

State intervention, free markets, or NGOs?

Reproductive rights: Women's Choice or Missing Girls?

Micro-finance: Empowerment or Entrenching Inequality?

Foreign Manufacturing: Sweat Shops or Employment opportunities?

Sex work: Trafficking in Humanity or Dignifying Workers?

Part III:

"Doing" Development with the "O's":

IGOs, NGOs, SMOs, INGOs, BINGOs, HRINGOS, WINGOS, and so on, and so forth.

Readings:

I'm still trying to narrow down the list of readings, but in general, my aim is to introduce students to the "big names" and "big books" in development debates. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of development, readings will be drawn from Economics, Political Science, and Anthropology as well as Sociology. I generally assign either one book or four articles per week.

Assignments:

Students will be required to write a one-page response paper discussing the week's readings for almost every class period.

In addition, students will choose one of two possible final projects. The first option is to write a research proposal for a possible senior thesis that you are interested in completing next year. The thesis would have to be on a development topic. The second option is to write a theoretically-informed evaluation of the development work being completed by an organization or set of organizations of your choice. Regardless of the student's choice, the final project will be approximately 15-20 pages in length.

Grades will be determined by the students' written work and their insightful and prepared contributions to class discussion.

