



Poverty and Global Development

INTL ST 402

Number of credits: 3

Meeting Times: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30 - 3:45pm

Meeting Location: Ingraham 222

Instructional Mode: Face-to-face only

This class meets for two, 75-minute class periods each week during the semester. It also carries the expectation that students will spend around 6 hours per week working on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc.) outside of the classroom. The syllabus includes more information about meeting times and expectations for student work.

Primary Instructor

Siddharth Menon

Office: 301 E Ingraham

Office Hours: Thursday, 12:00 - 2:00pm

Email: ssmenon@wisc.edu

Course Description

International institutions such as the United Nations and World Bank have long aspired to eradicate poverty and underdevelopment across the world. Recent events suggest that this goal could soon be achieved with “extreme poverty” decreasing by more than 50% between 2000 and 2015, driven by rapid economic growth in developing countries, like China, India, South Africa, and Brazil, among others. However, during the same time, the gap between the “haves” and “have nots” has increased exponentially such that the top 1% owns almost half of the world’s wealth today. Is it possible to eradicate poverty while living in a world where the distribution of wealth, resources, and opportunities is so skewed? What are some of the key drivers of economic inequality and uneven development? These are the key questions we will be addressing in the course. We will start by understanding the ways in which the global economy is structured due to which it (re)produces poverty and inequality at the global scale. Here, we will analyze the role of governments, development agencies, and non-governmental organizations around the world and how “development” is understood, practiced, and contested by these actors. We will then explore ways in which poor communities in the Global South encounter and navigate poverty and inequality in their everyday lives. Finally, we will analyze alternative ways of conceptualizing the “economy” for a more just and equitable world.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, all students should be able to:

1. Understand the historical causes of poverty and underdevelopment in world
2. Identify key development strategies to alleviate poverty in the Global South
3. Evaluate how the world's poor navigate poverty and inequality in their everyday lives
4. Examine alternative ways of conceptualizing the “economy”

5. Communicate your own ideas effectively and clearly

Required Texts

There are two required texts for this course. You are welcome to rent or purchase a copy for yourself. They are available via UW Libraries and will also be made available through the course Canvas site.

Werner, M. 2015. *Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Development in the Caribbean*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J., & Healy, S. 2013. *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*. University of Minnesota Press.

Other shorter supplementary reading materials and media will also be made available via the course Canvas site.

Grading

Your assignments will be carefully reviewed and graded according to transparent criteria. I will return your work within two weeks of receiving it, usually sooner. The grading scale follows the standard used in most UW courses.

A: 93-100

AB: 88-92

B: 83-87

BC: 78-82

C: 70-77

D: 60-69

F: 59 or lower

Grade contestations must be submitted in writing to me and you will receive a response within a week. An “incomplete” grade can be awarded to any student who has completed most of the class in good faith but experienced a medical or family-related issue that prevented them from finishing all the coursework on time. Please contact me as early as possible if you feel this applies to you.

Assignments

There are three ways you will be evaluated in this course. See course site for more details.

Worksheets (30%)

You will submit 10 worksheets during the semester, each of which is worth 3% of your total grade. Worksheets will include a series of prompts for you to respond to resulting in a 2-page double-spaced paper (~500 words). Worksheets are due by 10am on Thursdays.

Assignments (45%)

You will submit 3 assignments during the semester each of which is worth 15% of your total grade. Assignments will include questions that require you to discuss and synthesize some of the topics in the Module. You will respond to the prompts resulting in 5-page double-spaced paper (1000-1200 words). The 3 assignments are due on October 20, November 17, and December 15 at 10pm.

Participation in Discussions (25%)

While attendance is required, it is only the first step toward meaningful participation. In the course. You are expected to come to class fully prepared to engage in lively, pointed, and collegial discussion and analysis of the week's assigned reading. The following criteria, adapted from a rubric created by Adam Nelson and Walter Stern, will be used to assess your participation grade.

A: This student always comes to class having completed assigned reading, ready to think carefully and the connections between readings and topics. They are willing to take the lead in discussion periodically, posing interesting questions or taking risks by answering tough questions. They also avoid dominating discussion, instead participating mindfully in discussion with other students, considering their ideas and responding thoughtfully and respectfully.

AB: This student does most of what an A student does but may be slightly deficient in one area – for instance, they may be a conscientious reader and thinker who tends not to listen to other students or otherwise dominates conversation instead of engaging in productive deliberation.

B: This student participates often, but not consistently. They may attend every class but they avoid taking the lead in discussion, instead only responding to questions or adding periodically to others' ideas.

BC: This student may be a regular but superficial discussion participant, not participating as fully as they should. At times the student may seem not to have done the readings, though they usually come prepared.

C: This student is intermittently prepared for class and rarely participates beyond the occasional superficial comment.

D: This student very rarely participates, and only in superficial ways.

F: This student has missed three classes without adequate explanation and/or attends most classes but never participates.

Rules, Rights & Responsibilities

- See: <https://guide.wisc.edu/undergraduate/#rulesrightsandresponsibilitiestext>

Academic Calendar & Religious Observances

- See: <https://secfac.wisc.edu/academic-calendar/#religious-observances>

Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion.

<https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/syllabus-statement/>

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Policy

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and applications (including, but not limited to, ChatGPT, DALL-E, and others) for course assignments and assessments does not support the learning objectives of this course and is prohibited. Using them in any way for this course is a violation of the course's expectations and will be addressed through UW–Madison's academic misconduct policy, specifically UWS 14.03(1)b (b) Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA. <https://mcburney.wisc.edu/instructor/>

Diversity & Inclusion

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

As your instructor, I recognize that my own profession has privileged certain people and excluded others—both in terms of the people it includes, and in terms of the perspectives and experiences that have been deemed worthy of analysis. I also acknowledge that the University of Wisconsin-Madison itself occupies the ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk, a place their nation has called Teejop. In an 1832 treaty, the Ho-Chunk were forced to cede this territory. While we cannot simply undo all forms of injustice in a single course, it is important that we recognize our ongoing obligation to foster a more just and inclusive university. I take seriously my responsibility to create a learning environment where all students can participate in open and honest dialogue with one another. I expect all members of the class to contribute to a learning atmosphere that is respectful and inclusive and which recognizes the dignity of each member. I welcome disagreement and varying viewpoints as a productive and necessary part of intellectual inquiry, and I expect students to express disagreement in a respectful way.

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

MODULE I: INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Week 1: Introducing the Course

This week you will be introduced to the course, your instructor, and each other. We will establish some rules about how to build an effective and inclusive learning environment and share our learning objectives for the semester.

Sep 7 - Discussion

Week 2: What is Development and how does it Address Poverty?

This week we will begin by unpacking what international development is, how and when the term became popular across the world, and how different actors understand and practice development.

Sep 12 - Lecture

Sep 14 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Sachs, J., Mellinger, A. and Gallup, J. 2001. The Geography of poverty and wealth. *Scientific American*.
- Lawson, V. 2007. Chapter 1: Development as Situated Knowledge. From *Making Development Geography*.
- Browse through the websites of World Bank (www.worldbank.org/) and United Nations Development Program (www.undp.org/). Think about how these organizations discuss and frame issues around poverty and inequality in the world.

Activities

- Worksheet 1 due by 10am on Thursday, Sep 14

Week 3: Colonialism and the Making of Poor Places

This week we will examine the relationship between development interventions in the Global South and colonial empires from the past. We will analyze how contemporary development practices and discourses sometimes echo colonial logics such that they further marginalize the people they intend to help.

Sep 19 - Lecture

Sep 21 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Davis, M. 2001. The Origins of the Third World. From *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*.
- Hall, S. 1992. The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power. From Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (eds). *Formations of Modernity*.

Activities

- Worksheet 2 due by 10am on Thursday, Sep 21

Week 4: Decolonization and Post-WWII Interventions in the Third World

This week we will study how international development emerged in the post-World War II era as a specific strategy of Western intervention through international organizations in newly independent countries of the Third World.

Sep 26 - Lecture

Sept 28 - Discussion

Required Materials

- McMichael, P. 2017. Instituting the Development Project. From *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*.
- Lawson, V. 2007. Chapter 3: Development as Intervention: from modernization to neoliberalization. From *Making Development Geography*.

Activities

- Worksheet 3 due by 10am on Thursday, Sep 28

Week 5: International Aid and Volunteerism

This week we will examine the structural logic of one of the primary strategies that international organizations use to eradicate poverty in the Global South, international aid programs, and the various ways this system has been critiqued.

Oct 3 - Lecture

Oct 5 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Moyo, D. 2009. Chapter 3: Aid Is Not Working. From *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*.
- Richley, L.A. and Ponte, S. 2011. Introduction and Conclusion. From *Brand Aid: Shopping Well to Save the World*.

Activities

- Worksheet 4 due by 10am on Thursday, Oct 5

Week 6: Development Alternatives

This week we will assess how some commentators have called into question the idea of “development” itself while discussing possible alternatives for the same.

Oct 10 - Lecture

Oct 12 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Escobar, A. 1994. Chapters 1 & 2. From *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press.
- Ferguson, J. 1994. The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development” and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. *The Ecologist*, Vol. 24, No. 5.

Activities

- Worksheet 5 due by 10am on Thursday, Oct 12

Week 7: Module Review

This week we will review key concepts from this module while you work on Assignment 1.

Oct 17 - Module review lecture

Oct 19 - No discussion today. Open office hours during discussion time.

Required Materials

- Watch: *Give us the Money* (2012)

Activities

- Assignment 1 due by 10pm on Friday, Oct 20

MODULE II: GLOBALIZATION AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

Week 8: Neoliberalism and Uneven Development

This week we will examine arguments for and against neoliberal economic restructuring in Global South countries and its role in lifting the world's masses out of poverty and deprivation.

Oct 24 - Lecture

Oct 26 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Werner, M. 2015. Introduction and Chapter 2. From *Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Development in the Caribbean*.

Activities

- Worksheet 6 due by 10am on Thursday, Oct 26

Week 9: Poverty, Identity, and Intersectionality

This week we will discuss how everyday poverty is worsened for those at the intersection of class, caste, gender, race, ethnicity, and other social identities.

Oct 31 - Lecture

Nov 2 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Werner, M. 2015. Chapters 3 and 4. *Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Development in the Caribbean*.

Activities

- Worksheet 7 due by 10am on Thursday, Nov 2

Week 10: Local vs Global

This week we will deconstruct the binaries between the “local” and the “global” to understand how we can critically practice in the local in an ever changing and globalizing world.

Nov 7 - Lecture

Nov 9 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Werner, M. 2015. Chapters 6, 7, and Conclusion. *Global Displacements: The Making of Uneven Development in the Caribbean*.

Activities

- Worksheet 8 due by 10am on Thursday, Nov 9

Week 11: Module Review (No Classes this Week)

There will be no classes this week. You will use this time to work on Assignment 2.

Nov 14 - No lecture today

Nov 16 - No discussion today. Open office hours via Zoom link.

Required Materials

- Watch: *A Killer Bargain: The Human Cost of Cheap Consumer Goods* (2007)

Activities

- Assignment 2 due by 10pm on Friday, Nov 17

MODULE III: ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES

Week 12: Political Economy of Capitalism

This week we will begin a new module looking at poverty and inequality from the perspective of those who argue that the economy requires fundamental change to create a more just and sustainable world.

Nov 21 - Lecture

Nov 23 - Thanksgiving Break

Required Materials

- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J., & Healy, S. 2013. Take Back the Economy and Chapter 1. From *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*.

Activities

No Worksheet this week

Week 13: Basic Income and Work

This week we will examine alternative ways of organizing work and distributing the surplus.

Nov 28 - Lecture

Nov 30 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J., & Healy, S. 2013. Chapters 2, 3, and 4. *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*.

Activities

- Worksheet 9 due by 10am on Thursday, Nov 30

Week 14: Global Environmental Change and the Commons

This week we will look at arguments that we need to reclaim the “commons” and manage them in the interests of social, environmental, and economic justice.

Dec 5 - Lecture

Dec 7 - Discussion

Required Materials

- Gibson-Graham, J. K., Cameron, J., & Healy, S. 2013. Chapters 5, 6, and Any Time, Any Place... From *Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities*.

Activities

- Worksheet 10 due by 10am on Thursday, Dec 07

Week 15: Module and Course Review

This week we will review our final module and provide constructive feedback on the course.

Dec 12 – Module and Course review lecture

Required Materials

- Watch: *The Take* (2004)

Activities

- Assignment 3 due by 10pm on Friday, Dec 15