



**INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
INTL ST 620**

Number of credits: 2

Meeting Times: Fridays, 2:25 - 3:15pm and one pre-decided lecture per week (see syllabus)

Meeting Location: Social Sciences 4308 and pre-decided lecture venue (see syllabus)

Instructional Mode: Face-to-face only

This class meets for one 50-minute class period each week during the semester on Fridays from 2:25-3:15pm in Social Sciences 4308. Prior to this, students will also attend one 50-minute-long international development-related lecture on campus (see syllabus). The class also carries the expectation that students will spend around 3-4 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

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

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Course Description

While the world has been increasingly shrinking since the advent of globalization in the 1970-80s, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought the wheels of international integration to a grinding halt by disrupting global supply chains, barricading international borders, and limiting the transnational flow of capital, labor, and commodities. However, recent events like the transnational migration of refugees to Europe, North America, and Southeast Asia, extreme climate events in Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands, and destructive wars in Eastern Europe and the Middle East have highlighted why – now more than ever – it is important to understand our place in an interconnected and interdependent world.

This course is designed to foster such an understanding. If you're in the later stages of your undergraduate program and are wondering how to make sense of these global events and how to address global issues, this might be the course for you. If you're thinking about pursuing these inquiries by joining graduate school programs or international aid agencies, think-tanks, and NGOs, this might be the course for you.

Through the course of the semester, students will attend internationally themed lectures across campus, many of which are organized by Regional Centers at Institute for Regional and

International Studies (IRIS). Students will then write a short reflective commentary drawing out connections of the seminar to different world events while thinking through the methods, tools, and theories used by the speaker to contextualize the specific case study. This will be followed a discussion seminar on Friday where we will deliberate over different disciplinary approaches used by speaker to address their case study. Throughout the seminar, the emphasis will be on adopting a critical, interdisciplinary, and comparative perspective to understand contemporary and historical world issues.

Learning Outcomes

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

1. Acquire multiple forms of knowledge about different world regions (e.g. South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc.)
2. Understand why different world regions developed unevenly
3. Examine how different world regions are connected to each other
4. Learn how research and fieldwork is conducted in different world regions and how it can generate unique insights
5. Identify common development strategies across different world regions
6. Communicate your own ideas effectively and clearly

Required Texts

There are no required texts for this course. Course readings for each week will be made available through the course Canvas site on the weekend before the class. 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 as outlined below;

Think Pieces (50%)

You will submit 10 think pieces during the semester, each of which is worth 5% of your total grade. Aim for roughly 2 pages, double-spaced (400-500 words) in total. A “think piece” is a short piece of writing that aims to capture your initial response to a research talk. It is designed to help you to begin making sense of the weekly lectures and readings and help me understand what to prioritize in our classroom conversations. Think pieces are due by 11.49pm on Thursdays before class on Fridays (check syllabus below). Below you will find some guidelines about what your think piece should include.

1. Summarize the scope of the lecture.

In this lecture, Ruth Gilmore examines the political and economic forces behind California’s prison boom since 1980.

2. Identify and concisely state the central argument of the lecture.

In this lecture, Ruth Gilmore examines the political and economic forces behind California’s prison boom since 1980. Her main argument is that prison building provided a “fix” to the crises created by deindustrialization by absorbing surplus capital and land as well as warehousing surplus bodies.

3. Describe the evidence that is used to support the claims.

In this lecture, Ruth Gilmore examines the political and economic forces behind California’s prison boom since 1980. Her main argument is that prison building provided a “fix” to the crises created by deindustrialization by absorbing surplus capital and land as well as warehousing surplus bodies. Gilmore draws on secondary data, legal documents, and participatory research with prison abolitionist activists.

4. Evaluate the main strengths and weaknesses, contributions and limitations of the research.

In this lecture, Ruth Gilmore examines the political and economic forces behind California’s prison boom since 1980. Her main argument is that prison building provided a “fix” to the crises created by deindustrialization by absorbing surplus capital and land as well as warehousing surplus bodies. Gilmore draws on secondary data, legal documents, and participatory research with prison abolitionist activists. I found the argument about why prisons building accelerated in California convincing but I was unclear as to how generalizable the argument is beyond California.

If you have done steps 1–4 correctly you are already on course to writing a good think piece. The key now is to finish strongly by demonstrating active learning skills. Here are three suggestions for the last step. I suggest you pick one approach.

5a. Apply the insights from the lecture to another situation or event.

The racial disparities in incarceration outlined in the lecture enabled me to understand why COVID-19 has spurred a new wave of abolitionist activism.

5b. Compare and contrast these findings with those in another lecture/reading.

While films such as 13th explore the political-legal aspects of mass incarceration, Gilmore's analysis highlight important economic drivers.

5c. Raise a critical question for discussion.

The question this leaves me with is what alternatives to the "prison fix" were being proposed at the time and why they were not successful?

Final Paper (20%)

You will submit one final paper at the end of the semester which is worth 20% of your total grade. The final paper will include questions that require you to discuss and synthesize some of the key topics and themes covered through the course. You will write a 6-page double-spaced paper (1000-1200 words). The final paper is due by 10pm on Thursday, May 2.

Participation in Discussions (30%)

While attendance is required, it is only the first step toward meaningful participation. In the course. You are expected to attend weekly lectures and come to class fully prepared to engage in lively, pointed, and collegial discussion and analysis of the week's assigned lectures and readings. 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 LECTURES & READINGS

WEEK 1: WEST ASIA

Lecture

Readings

No readings this week

Activities

No think piece this week

Discussion

Fri, Jan 26

WEEK 2: SOUTH ASIA/SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Lecture

Readings

No readings this week

Activities

No think piece this week

Discussion

Fri, Feb 2

WEEK 3: EASTERN EUROPE

Lecture

- Thu, Feb 8, 4pm, Ingraham Hall 206, “Mapping 20th century violence – the case of Kharkiv” by Karl Schloegel, Professor Emeritus, Eastern European History, European University Viadrina Frankfurt/Oder, Germany

Readings

- Wood, T. 2023. Against Relics. *London Review of Books*. Vol.25 No. 14.
- Maxwell, O. 2023. In Russia’s war against Ukraine, one of the battlegrounds is language itself. *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/in-russias-war-against-ukraine-one-of-the-battlegrounds-is-language-itself-201170>

Activities

Think piece 1 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Feb 8

Discussion

Fri, Feb 9

WEEK 4: NORTH AFRICA

Lecture

- Wed, Feb 14, 12pm Ingraham Hall 206, “Environment and Climate Change in North Africa” by Jeannie Sowers, Professor, Political Science and International Affairs, University of New Hampshire

Readings

- Sowers, J., & Weinthal, E. 2017. *Targeting Infrastructure in the Middle East: Environment, Conflict, and Law*. <https://sites.nicholas.duke.edu/time/>
- Sowers, J., Weinthal, E., & Zawahri, N. 2017. The New Middle Eastern Wars: To Protect Civilians, Protect Environmental Infrastructure. *New Security Beat: the blog of the Environmental Change and Security Program*. <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2017/10/middle-eastern-wars-protect-civilians-protect-environmental-infrastructure/>

Activities

Think piece 2 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Feb 15

Discussion

Fri, Feb 16

WEEK 5: EASTERN EUROPE

Lecture

- Thu, Feb 22, 4pm, Ingraham Hall 206, “Do you suffer from urbanities? Gender, cybernetics, and environmental concerns in the 1970s Estonian SSR” by Epp Annus, Associate Professor, Institute of Humanities, Tallinn University, Estonia

Readings

- Annus, E. 2020. The colonizer’s day off: Colonial subjectivities in the Soviet-era Baltics, In *Postcolonialism Cross-Examined* by Albrecht, M (Ed.). Routledge: London.
- McLaughlin, J. 2022. How one of Russia's neighbors is dealing with Putin's propaganda. *NPR*. <https://www.npr.org/2022/05/11/1096856581/how-one-of-russias-neighbors-is-dealing-with-putins-propaganda>

Activities

Think piece 3 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Feb 22

Discussion

Fri, Feb 23

WEEK 6: EAST ASIA/NORTH AMERICA

Lecture

- Thu, Feb 29, 4pm, Online (register [here](#)), “Island X: Taiwanese Student Migrants, Campus Spies, and Cold War Activism” by Wendy Cheng, Professor, American Studies, Scripps College

Readings

- Cheng, W. 2021. The Bold and Unruly Legacy of Chen Wen-Chen. *New Bloom Magazine*. <https://newbloommag.net/2021/07/02/chen-wen-chen-legacy/>
- Cheng, W. 2021. In Rancho Santa Fe, We Were Orientals. *Boom California*. <https://boomcalifornia.org/2021/06/10/in-rancho-santa-fe-we-were-orientals/>

Activities

Think piece 4 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Feb 29

Discussion

Fri, Mar 1

WEEK 7: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Lecture

- Wed, Mar 6, 12pm, Ingraham Hall 206, “African Women Writers and the Politics of Nationhood” by Susan Andrade, Associate Professor, English, University of Pittsburgh

Readings

- Andrade, S. 2011. Introduction, In *The Nation Writ Small: African Fictions and Feminisms, 1958-1988*. Duke University Press.
- Armillas-Tiseyra, M. 2013. Review of In *The Nation Writ Small: African Fictions and Feminisms, 1958-1988*. *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East*. Vol. 33, No. 1.

Activities

Think piece 5 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Mar 7

Discussion

Fri, Mar 8

WEEK 8: NORTH AFRICA

Lecture

- Watch online recording, “Staple Security: Bread and Wheat in Egypt” by Jessica Barnes, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of South Carolina

Readings

- Barnes, J. 2022. Introduction & Conclusion, In *Staple Security: Bread and Wheat in Egypt*. Duke University Press.
- Barnes, J. 2016. Gluten. Theorizing the Contemporary, *Fieldsights*, <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/gluten>

Activities

Think piece 6 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Mar 14

Discussion

Fri, Mar 15

WEEK 9: WEST ASIA/EUROPE

Lecture

- Mon, Mar 18, 12pm, Online (register [here](#)), “Siege Creep: Waste, Airbnb, and Speculation between Israel/Palestine and Athens” by Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins, Associate Professor, Anthropology, Bard College

Readings

- Baumann, H., Massidda, A., Saad, B., Saleh, E., and Stamatopoulou-Robbins, S. 2022. Film and the Toxic Politics of Waste: A Roundtable. *E-flux Journal*, Issue #127, <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/127/464874/film-and-the-toxic-politics-of-waste-a-roundtable/>
- Stamatopoulou-Robbins, S. & Corak, H. 2019. Sophia Stamatopoulou-Robbins on her book, Waste Siege. *CaMP Anthropology blog*, <https://campanthropology.org/2023/12/25/5244/>

Activities

Think piece 7 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Mar 21

Discussion

Fri, Mar 22

WEEK 10 (Spring Break)

WEEK 11: LATIN AMERICA

Lecture

- Tue, Apr 2, 12pm, Ingraham Hall 206, “The Largest Latin American TNC Reaches the World: Capital and Labor at Vale S.A.” Thiago Aguiar, Visiting Research Fellow, King’s College, London

Readings

- Aguiar, T., & Micussi, P. 2022. Transnational Corporations and Capitalists from the Global South: Natura & Co. and the IEDI. *Latin American Perspectives*, 49(5), 86-99

Activities

Think piece 8 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Apr 4

Discussion

Fri, Apr 5

WEEK 12: LATIN AMERICA

Lecture

- Tue, Apr 9, 12pm, Ingraham Hall 206, “Women’s Presence in Contemporary Scenes of Mexican Son” by Raquel Paraiso, Researcher and Musician

Readings

- Paraíso, R. G. 2015. El Festival de la Huasteca: space for the construction and performance of identity and culture. *revista ANTHROPOLÓGICAS*, Año 19, 26(1): 159-200.

Activities

Think piece 9 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Apr 11

Discussion

Fri, Apr 12

WEEK 13: NORTH AMERICA

Lecture

- Wed, Apr 17, 4pm, Online (register [here](#)), “In the Shadow of the Ivory Tower” by Davarian Baldwin, Paul E. Raether Distinguished Professor of American Studies, Trinity College

Readings

- Baldwin, D. L. 2017. When Universities Swallow Cities. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/when-universities-swallow-cities/>
- Baldwin, D. L. & Klug, S. 2021. The Ivory Tower Is Dead: A discussion on the rise of the “UniverCity.” *Dissent Magazine*, Fall 2021, <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/the-ivory-tower-is-dead-an-interview-with-davarian-l-baldwin/>

Activities

No activities this week

Discussion

No discussion this week

WEEK 14: LATIN AMERICA/NORTH AMERICA

Lecture

- Thu, Apr 25, 12pm, Online (register [here](#)), “Latino Mass Mobilization: Immigration, Racialization and Activism” by Chris Zepeda-Millán, Associate Professor, Public Policy and Chicana/o & Central American Studies, University of California-Los Angeles

Readings

- Zepeda-Millán, C. & Chávez-Nava, C. 2022. There’s no way to teach about labor studies without dealing with intersectional issues. *UCLA Newsroom*, <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/q-a-with-chris-zepeda-millan-new-chair-of-labor-studies>
- Ayoub, P. M., Wallace, S. J., & Zepeda-Millán, C. 2014. Triangulation in Social Movement Research, In *Methodological Practices in Social Movement Research* by della Porta, D. (Ed.). Oxford University Press.

Activities

Think piece 10 due by 11:59pm on Thu, Apr 25

Discussion

Fri, Apr 26

WEEK 15: FINAL PAPER

This week we will review the course and the final paper.

Lecture

No lecture this week

Readings

Check course Canvas page

Activities

Final paper draft due by 11:59pm on Thu, May 2

Discussion

Fri, May 3