

SYLLABUS

Critical Thinking in Development

PSCI 4732, 002 & 003
Spring Semester 2006

Prof. Krister Andersson
Office Hours: MW 2:00-4:00 PM
or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What makes some countries richer and more developed than others? This question has puzzled social scientists for many generations. Politics, public policy and human organizational choices are becoming increasingly important factors for scholars who are seeking answers to this question. In this course, we will engage in a critical evaluation of the existing schools of thought and how these address the politics of development. We will pay particular attention to the situation in non-industrial societies and actively follow the contemporary debate on international development aid.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This is a [critical thinking](#) course, which means that the main vehicle for learning will not be lectures, but rather group discussions, student presentations, debates, and written critiques. As a student in this class you will learn how to construct, defend, and criticize arguments; how to identify and assess tacit assumptions; and how to gather and evaluate evidence related to some of the specific issues related to the broader theme of *Politics of Development*.

The course is divided into two parts. During the first part of the course, which lasts five weeks, we will read about and discuss the main theoretical ideas on social, economic and political development. The purpose of this first part is to introduce you to some of the on-going research and fundamental ideas about development. Some of you may have already covered this material in other courses, but we will use these weeks to bring everybody up to speed and to make sure we are all on the same page. The second part of the course starts in Week 6 and lasts until the end of the semester. The purpose of the second part is to start applying some of the big ideas about development to several concrete, contemporary issues in the international development arena.

Throughout both phases of the course, you are expected to follow current affairs in one of two recommended news sources: The [New York Times](#) or [The Economist](#). This means that you need to make it a habit to read these news outlets on a daily basis and search their archives for stories related to the topics that we discuss in class. You may want to consider taking advantage of [student specials](#) for subscribing to one or both of these (although you can get free on-line access to both through the CU library, following the links above).

During the last ten weeks of the course, we will examine and debate several controversial issues in the area of international development. Topics include Globalization, International Debt Crisis, Foreign Aid, and Corruption, just to mention a few. We will spend two class sessions on each of the ten topics. During the Tuesday session, a team of students (2-3 members) will make a short background presentation and then lead the class discussion on the assigned topic. By the end of the course, all students will have served as members of these discussion leadership teams. Your performance as a discussion leader will be evaluated both collectively and individually and will account for a proportion of your final grade. The Thursday session will be dedicated to a more structured debate and discussion. The class will be arbitrarily divided into a *pro* and a *con* group. The debates will be one of our main vehicles for learning to evaluate arguments and perspectives on development issues.

The success of this course depends almost entirely on diligent, prior preparation of each and every student. For almost all class sessions, there is at least one required reading assignment. To help you save some money on book purchases, I will post electronic copies of all reading materials on [WebCT](#) (except the readings from the only required book for the class, [The Samaritans Dilemma](#)).

Requirements for the course include general class participation, discussion leadership and debate participation, two literature critiques (memos), two short papers, and a comprehensive final exam. Your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

General participation and preparedness	10%
Memos (2)	10%
Discussion lead	10%
Debate preparation and participation	20%
Short papers (2)	20%
Final Exam	30%

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Gibson, C., Andersson, K., Ostrom, E. and S. Shivakumar(2005). *The Samaritan's Dilemma: The Political Economy of Development Aid*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Other texts used (scanned excerpts available on WebCT):

Easterly, W. (2003). *The Elusive Quest for Growth*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Handelman, H. (2006). *The Challenge of Third World Development* (4th ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall.

Lairson, T. and D. Skidmore (2003). *International Political Economy*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Rodrik, D. (1999). *The New Global Economy and Developing Countries: Making Openness Work*. WashingtonDC: Overseas Development Council.

Sen, A. (2000). *Development as Freedom*. New York, NY: Alfred Knopf.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability Services. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability please submit to me a letter from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities (303-492-8671, Willard 322, <http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/>).

Academic Integrity. The intellectual reputation of the university depends on maintaining the highest standards of intellectual honesty. Commitment to those standards is the responsibility of every student, faculty, and staff member on this campus. Consequently, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. Cheating is defined as using unauthorized materials or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination or other academic exercise. Plagiarism is defined as the use of another's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment. Examples of plagiarism include: failing to use quotation marks when directly quoting from a source; failing to document distinctive ideas from a source; fabricating or inventing sources; and copying information from computer-based sources, i.e., the Internet. For additional information on the academic integrity policies of the University, see <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/acadinteg.html>.

Civility. This course tackles subjects that are sometimes viewed as controversial. It is incumbent on every participant in the seminar (instructor and students alike) to strive to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning. We should always remember that people bring differences with them into the classroom and that these differences should be respected. It is imperative that each of us maintain civility when asking questions and making comments. Likewise, questions and comments by others should be treated with civility at all times.

COURSE OUTLINE

- Week 1** **Course introduction**
[Movie: Germs, Guns and Steel](#)
- Week 2** [What is development?](#)
Due: Memos for group 1 (1/24 at 8AM)
 Development issues in current affairs
 Case study: Ethos Bottled water
- Week 3** **What is Political Development?**
Due: Memos for group 2 (1/31 at 8AM)
 Political development issues in current affairs
- Week 4** [Economic Growth and its Causes](#)
Due: Memos for group 1 (2/7 at 8AM)
 The cases of the United States, Sweden and Japan
- Week 5** [Analyzing Development Aid](#)
Due: Memos for group 2 (2/14 at 8AM)
 The Institutional Approach Overview
- Week 6** [Institutions and Collective Action](#)
 Applying the IAD framework: case studies
 Film: TBA
- Week 7** [Foreign Aid](#)
 Student discussion leader(s) on readings
 Debate: Are poor countries better off because of
 foreign aid?
- Week 8** [Incentives and Development Aid](#)
 Student discussion leader(s) on readings
 Debate: The main problem of foreign aid-supported
 activities is that it does not encourage citizen
 ownership of the development benefits
- Week 9** [Corruption and Development Aid](#)
 Student discussion leader(s) on readings
 Debate: The best way to address corruption is to
 provide foreign aid to those actors who have proven
 to be transparent and accountable to the citizenry
- Week 10** [Debt Crisis](#)
 Student discussion leader(s) on readings

Debate: Forgiving the financial debt of the LDCs is undesirable because you would encourage fiscal irresponsibility

Due: Short paper #1 at beginning of Thursday Class

Week 11 **Spring break: March 27-31**

Week 12 **International Financial Organizations**

Student discussion leader(s) on readings
Debate: The policies of the International Financial Organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are the main causes of the high level of indebtedness and underdevelopment among the LDCs.

Week 13 **Structural Adjustment Programs**

Student discussion leader(s) on readings
Debate: Privatization and SAPs have lead to more poverty in the developing World?

Week 14 **Globalization**

Student discussion leader(s) on readings
Debate: Globalization is bad for the economic development of the Less Developed Countries

Week 15 **Natural Resources and Environment**

Student discussion leader(s) on readings
Debate: A country rich in natural resources has a clear advantage when it comes to generating economic growth compared to countries poor in natural resources

Week 16 **Non-Governmental Organizations**

Student discussion leader(s) on readings
Debate: Channeling aid through NGOs is more cost-effective than going through bilateral and multilateral aid agencies?

Due: Short paper #2 at beginning of Thursday class

Week 17 **Finals Week**