

ANSC 192GS
Rethinking Development
Summer 2017 India
Professor Nancy Postero

Syllabus

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Course Overview:

In the contemporary world, we often hear that the inequality and poverty can be resolved through “development”. We are assured that buying the right kind of coffee or shoes, donating to the right organization, or volunteering time on an international project will lead to a better world. Development is described as a means to improve the environment, create social justice, and to lift the poor out of poverty. Yet at the same time that efforts to help the “global poor” abound, extreme inequality, increasing environmental degradation, and stark, new vulnerabilities seem to have grown exponentially as well. How do we make sense of these two seemingly contradictory phenomena? What are the roots of contemporary inequality and poverty? What are the goals and discourses that structure contemporary schemes of development? Does development work? Does it fix poverty or improve our environment? What are the politics of development? Who benefits?

This course considers these questions by examining the colonial roots of poverty and inequality and the production of development as a social, political, and economic field. Focusing on India, we will look at current and past development strategies like rural development, women’s empowerment, and microfinance, to consider the possibilities and limitations of development as a means of eradicating poverty and creating social change. Finally, we ask how Western liberal notions of growth and industrialization might be complemented by Buddhist notions of compassion, community, and interdependence.

Course Requirements:

This is a five week global seminar that will take place in three different locations in India: Delhi, Kerala (where the students will carry out community work with our partner university), and Dharamsala (where the students will meet with His Holiness the Dalai Lama). The syllabus is designed to compliment the travel and community work components, and the assignments are timed to give the students opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their experiences during the trip.

Students are expected to do all the readings on the syllabus and to be ready to discuss them in our class meetings. Participation in class is a significant part of the

course grade. There are three written assignments: two 3-page response papers during the time we are in India, and one final paper due the week after our return. The last session of our class will meet in Dharamsala, and each student will make a short oral presentation summarizing the last paper. This meeting will give us all a chance to think together about the visit with His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Course Outline:

Week One (Delhi): Introduction: What is development ?

Meeting 1: Introduction, What is Development?

1. Narayan, Deepa, 2000. Definitions of Poverty, in *Voices of the Poor, Can Anyone Hear Us?*, Deepa Narayan, ed. New York: Oxford University Press for the World Bank (pp.30-80). 50pp.
2. Thomas, Allen, 2000. Meanings and Views of Development, *Poverty and Development into the 21st Century*, Tim Allen and Allan Thomas, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (pp 23-48) (25pp).

Meeting 2: Development in the Indian Context

1. "Introducing the Right to Development" and "The Right to Food, Education, and Health in the Indian Context", in *The Right to Development, a primer*, 2004. Centre for Development and Human Rights (New Delhi: Sage), pp. 43-72, 157-226.

Excursion in Delhi: Interview with **The Centre for Development and Human Rights (CDHR)**

Week Two (Kerala): Development Toolkit: Colonialism and Discourse

Meeting 3: Otherness and Representations of Poverty

1. Hall, Stuart, 1996. The West and the Rest, in *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson, eds. Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers (pp. 185-227) (42pp) (skim pp189-197).

Meeting 4: Development as Discourse and Case Study from Lesotho: The Bovine Mystique

1. Ferguson, James, 1997. Development and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. *In The Post-Development Reader*, Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree, eds. London: Zed Books. (pp. 223-233)(10pp).
2. Ferguson, James, 1994. *The Anti-Politics Machine, 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (Chapters 5 and 6, pp. 135-193) (58pp).

Excursion: Work in local community

First Critical Response Paper: In a 3 page paper, referring to at least two of the readings, answer the following: What assumptions or discourses about poverty and development did you bring with you to India? How does the discourse of the West vs. The Rest become visible in the development project you are working on here in India?

Week Three (Kerala): Development Strategies

Meeting 5: Microfinance and NGOs

1. Karim, Lamia, 2011. The Social Life of Debt, in *Microfinance and its Discontents, Women in Debt in Bangladesh*, pp 95-131 (36pp).

Recommended but not required: Introduction (pp xii-xxxiii), and Conclusion (pp 191-206).

Meeting 6: Compassionate Development

1. Appadurai, Arjun, 2004. The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition, in *Culture and Public Action*, Vijayendra Rao and Michael Walton, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press (pp 59-84) (25pp).

2. Bond, George, D. 2005. The Sarvodaya Movement's Vision of Peace and a Dharmic Civil Society. In *Social Movements, an Anthropological Reader*, June Nash, ed. Oxford: Blackwell (168-173) (5pp). (Check out this site for a view into an ongoing alternative vision of development: <http://www.sarvodaya.org>)

3. Gandhi, Mahatma, 1997. My Quest for Simplicity: 'My Idea of Swaraj.' In *The Post Development Reader*, Majid Rahnema, ed. London: Zed Books (1p).

Excursion: Work in local community

Week Four (Kerala): The Politics of Knowledge

Meeting 7: Playing with Fire 1, Gender Oppression and NGOs

1. Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar, 2006. *Playing With Fire, Feminist Thought and Action Through Seven Lives in India*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Introduction, and Chapters 1-3, pp. ix-67) (101pp)

Meeting 8: Playing with Fire 2, the Politics of Knowledge

1. Sangtin Writers and Richa Nagar, 2006. *Playing With Fire, Feminist Thought and Action Through Seven Lives in India*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapters 4-6 and Postscript, pp. 68-156) (88pp).

Second Critical Response Paper: In a 3 page paper, answer the following: What are the politics of knowledge in *Playing with Fire*? What did the "blended we" of the Sangtin writers make visible that individual writers might not have? In what ways is the project you are working on in the village reinforcing or challenging the politics of knowledge?

Week Five (Dharamsala): Developing New Visions of Development

Meeting 9: What is to be Done?

1. Ferguson, James, 1994. Epilogue: What is to be Done?, in *The Anti-Politics Machine, 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (pp.279-288) (9pp).
2. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, 1999. "Modern Society and the Quest for Human Happiness", "Universal Responsibility", "Levels of Commitment", and "Ethics in Society", in *Ethics for the New Millennium*. New York: Riverhead Books, pp. 3-18, 161-200.

Excursions: Dharamsala visits to Orphanage, Temple, Textile factories, and all day meeting/panels with the Dalai Lama.

Meeting 10: Student Discussion

Each student will write a final 3-page essay answering these questions: What different visions of development did you see operating in India? Who should enact these visions? What are the challenges and the resources for making this happen? What role can and should you have and why? This final meeting will give us an opportunity to discuss our reactions to our day with the Dalai Lama and to refine the essays, which will be due the week after we return to the US.