ANALYSING DEVELOPMENT

PGSP11319

Semester 2, 2017-2018

You’ve told me lots about all the problems here, but can you show me an example of how you’re actually solving them?
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Course Organiser

Dr Jean-Benoît Falisse
jb.falisse@ed.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0) 131 651 1632
Skype address: jbfalisse
Guidance and Feedback: Wednesday 14:00 – 16:00 GMT or by appointment

Course Secretary

Jason Andreas
Graduate School Office
Pgtaught.sps@ed.ac.uk
Course Description

International Development is a practice as much as a theory. How development is understood and practised, both by organisations and individuals, depends upon the frameworks constructed to explain and legitimise particular goals, methodologies and values. This course investigates what development “means” to different actors and how this affects the impacts development programming can have on the communities who experience “development”. Assessing particular organisational approaches to development – from the United Nations to donor states to local NGOs – and sector-specific focuses – from humanitarian aid to businesses and private actors – this course will survey the particular constraints and challenges faced in negotiating the bureaucracies of institutional development, and provide you with a clear understanding of how social science can help to scrutinise the construction and evolution of development perspectives from within.

This is a fully online course. It is similar to, and shares most topics with, the face-to-face course Interpreting Development (PGSP11296).

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course students will have gained familiarity with the major trends in development aid and the rationales behind it. They will have an understanding of important past and contemporary debates in development aid, and will have learned how to engage critically with the complex social, political and economic contexts in which aid programmes are designed and delivered. Students will gain experience in the analysis of aid policy documents and strategies.

More specifically, upon completion of the course the students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the work and actions of some of the key ‘players’ in international development and international aid.
2. Apply the analytical toolbox gained in the course (knowledge, skills, and understanding) to academic and day-to-day engagement with research and news about international development. Be able to de-construct international development ‘myths’.
3. Critically analyse, synthesise, and evaluate assessments international actors make of their actions, programmes, and projects.
4. Be able to communicate your analysis of international development actors to a lay and academic audience.
Teaching

This course is taught entirely on-line in a virtual learning platform called Learn. The course is delivered through short lecture clips, podcasts and pre-recorded lectures. There are weekly readings and students engage with the material through on-line asynchronous discussion boards as well writing activities across the semester. On-line tools are provided with instructions to complete these tasks. Teaching also occurs through two live on-line seminars that are delivered through Blackboard collaborate and are recorded for students who are not able to attend in person.

Each session is built in a similar way:

- A multimedia content (video, animation, infographic, etc.) introduces the session. Most of the weeks, it will include an interview from the Bigger Picture Project, a University of Edinburgh project that bridges practice and research in international development.
- A couple of core readings that are essential to understand the key concepts of the session. For some weeks, they contain primary material tool (original texts).
- One mandatory reading to pick from the reading list (not one of the core readings), which will give you a chance to further one aspect you are more interested in.
- A series of complementary, optional, readings help the student go further and explore particular sub-topics.
- Online activities designed to enhance learning and develop a discussion between students. The activities will be disclosed at the beginning of every week and may include:
  - Wiki contribution / entry
  - Skype discussion
  - Online presentation
  - Argument/dissertation plan
  - Finding/presenting a case (blog post)
  - Creating an infographic / mind-map for explaining an idea / case
  - Creating an online resource list on a relevant topic
  - Creating a reading list on a relevant topic
**Topic Overview**

**PART I: SETTING THE STAGE**

- Week One: *Introducing the Course*
- Week Two: *What do we know? The Politics and Political Economy of Evidence*

**PART II: ‘GIANTS’ OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGIME**

- Week Three: *Humanitarian Perspectives on Development*
- Week Four: *DFID, USAID and bilateral attempts to aid development*
- Week Five: *Development decades, goals, and organisations: the UN ‘system’ and development*

[one-week break between week 5 and week 6]

- Week Six: *IMF, the World Bank and the changing nature of the ‘global financial order’*
- Week Seven: *The WHO, the Fund and the politics of global health*

**PART III: BEYOND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGIME**

- Week Eight: *Religion in development*
- Week Nine: ‘*local*’ NGOs and the place of civil society in development*
- Week Ten: *Global Technology Promotion and the Business-Development Link*
Assessment

For Assessment requirements you should consult the Taught MSc Student Handbook 2017-18.

Requirements included are:

• Coursework submissions
• Extension request
• Penalties

• 70% of the course assessment will be based on a final essay (3,250 words). The course cannot cover all the actors and sectors of international development and the final will therefore be your own analysis of one particular actor and sector and its approach to international development. **You are strongly encouraged to think about your topic / sector in advance and to integrate it into your activities (e.g. infographic, case study, etc.)**

Prior to the deadline you have to submit a detailed essay plan and I will give you written feedback on this.

• a total of 20% of the course assessment will be based on the online activities:

  • 10% on a first e-tivity that has to be the annotated research question/plan and bibliography (instructions in week 3).

  • 10% on a second second e-tivity can be freely selected from the other e-tivities of the course (if more than one activity is submitted, the final mark will be the average of the different activities). Activities that can count towards this will be indicated when released on Learn.

• 10% based on participation in on-line discussion forums.

**Submission Date for the ‘annotated research question and bibliography’: 16 March**

**Submission Date for the Activity Portfolio: 5 April**

**Submission Date for Long Essay: 12 April**
Collaborate Seminars

We will hold two whole-group virtual seminars on collaborate this semester. You will receive an agenda for the seminar before each session. The seminar will be recorded and available to students who are not able to participate in the live session.

The date and time for the seminars will be decided via an online poll.

Guidance and Feedback

Throughout the semester I will be available for 20 minute sessions, preferably during my guidance and feedback hours on Wednesdays 14.00 – 16.00 GMT (or at other times by advanced appointment). You can also email me with questions throughout the semester and I will endeavour to respond to your email during the week within 48 hours. Feel free to send me a reminder if you have not heard from me after three working days.

Resources, reading lists, and class preparation

The reading list includes:

- Required reading, which students must read to prepare each session and be prepared to discuss. These are always available on-line (journal articles), as library E-books [E], or on the Learn page.
- Further reading for additional background, more in-depth knowledge and essay preparation.

All the readings are on a platform that will give you direct access to the electronic resources. Students are encouraged to read beyond the required readings.

Below there are three lists of general reading material:

- A list of accessibly written texts which provide broad overviews of the different actors of international development. They may not be available as e-books.
- A list of key development studies academic journals, all of which are accessible online via the library website. Students are encouraged to browse these journals to examine the cutting-edge of new development research and debates. They may also prove useful for essay preparation.
- A list of influential blogs and websites on international development issues. Students are encouraged to follow the latest news and opinion relating to international development during the course, and reflect on its relationship to the material covered.

General texts

There is no handbook for this course. A few more general monographs could, however, be useful if you are looking for a general introduction to the different actors we will be discussing.

**Key academic journals**

- Development and Change
- Development Policy Review
- Economic Development and Cultural Change
- Journal of Development Studies
- Journal of Development Economics
- Journal of International Development
- Oxford Development Studies
- Studies in Comparative International Development
- Third World Quarterly
- World Development
- IDS Bulletin

**Blogs and online media**

DeveX devex.com
The World Bank blog blogs.worldbank.org
The Guardian, Global Development theguardian.com/global-development
UN Dispatch undispatch.com
Overseas Development Institute blog odi.org/comment
Institute of Development Studies blog ids.ac.uk/opinion
Oxfam blogs oxfamblogs.org
Centre for Global Development blog cgdev.org/global-development

**Weekly reading list**

All the readings are on a resource list that will give you direct access to the electronic and digitalised resources.
Core readings are in bold. Don’t forget that you are also expected to do at least one reading in the list of non-core readings (non-bold items).

**PART I: SETTING THE STAGE**

Week One: **Introducing the Course**

In this first session we start exploring key questions at the heart of the course: How do we construct the idea of ‘development’? What are the principles motivations and agendas that shape different institutional understandings and practices of development? How should we study them? How do we understand different development actors as well as the networks and systems – formal and informal – that shape their relationships?

- **Hagen, R.J., 2015. 15. Rents and the political economy of development aid. *Companion to the Political Economy of Rent Seeking*, p.248.**

Week Two: **What do we know? The Politics and Political Economy of Evidence**

This session looks at monitoring and evaluation, which has become a key component of most aid and international development programmes and policies, and the different ways in which the impact of interventions are assessed. In particular, we will try to get a better sense of the effect of varying the perspective and the claims that can reasonably be made about causality and causation. The session also critically considers the extent to which research and evidence do matter in practice, and the frameworks that have developed in the recent years, pushing towards a culture of accountability and results. We will critically reflect on this approach, considering its achievements and shortcomings.

- **Pritchett, Lant An Homage to the Randomistas on the Occasion of the J-PAL 10th Anniversary: Development as a Faith-Based Activity**


**PART II: ‘GIANTS’ OF THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGIME**

**Week Three: Humanitarian Perspectives on Development**

Traditionally, humanitarian actors are not development actors. Increasingly, however, humanitarian relief and development aid are delivered in the same spaces. Moreover, some actors try and bridge the ‘relief-development gap’ through ‘early recovery’ efforts in places of protracted crisis like Afghanistan and Somalia. This lecture examines how humanitarian organisations approach development and working with development actors. It investigates the rise of ‘multi-mandate’ organisations, and traces the split between these and more ‘classic’ humanitarian actors including ICRC and MSF who largely eschew development work, as well as looking at behaviour of actors like UNHCR in protracted crises.


Week Four: DfID, USAID and bilateral attempts to aid development

Why do democratic governments responsible for the well-being of their own citizens, give financial and technical assistance to foreign governments? This session starts by looking at how bilateral aid is not only shaped by the political or economic interests of donors in receipt countries but also by a number of other factors including the domestic politics of the donor countries. We focus in on two bilateral aid agencies - USAID and DFID – analysing their roles in ‘aidland’.

- Ferguson, J. The anti-politics machine: ‘development’ and bureaucratic power in Lesotho. Available at: [NB: this is an short summary of his book - not the book itself]

Week Five: Development decades, goals, and organisations: the UN ‘system’ and development

This week we explore global governance and government by focusing in on the UN ‘system’, and its relationship with issues of international development. We analyse the crises and challenges that face the UN ‘family’ in recent years, explore the impact of two ‘development decades’ and the UN Millennium Development Goals, as well as attempts by individual UN bodies to intervene in specific development projects.

• Jerven, M. What did we learning from measuring the costs of monitoring the SDGs? Accessible at: http://mortenjerven.com/what-did-we-learn-from-measuring-the-costs-of-monitoring-the-sdgs/
• Odén, Bertil. 2010. "The UN and development: from aid to cooperation." In Forum for Development Studies, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 269-279. Available at:
• [Do also dip into the book on which this review is based: Stokke, Olav. The UN and development: from aid to cooperation. Indiana University Press, 2009.]

Week Six: IMF, the World Bank and the changing nature of the ‘global financial order’

This week, we explore how policy making and practice and research in international development are set against the backdrop of the World Bank and IMF, whose power, presence and authority shape our world. It sets out to ask how significant the World Bank and IMF are to development today and why, surveys their critics and competitors in recent years, and explores their attempts at reform.


Week Seven: The WHO, the Fund and the politics of global health

This week will look at health and development, considering why health has become so central in recent years to understandings of development. We will consider the particular salience of global health challenges, how anxieties over security have pushed health up the development agenda, and how public health campaigns - from clean hands to anti-malaria drives - produce global publics.
PART III: BEYOND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT REGIME

Week Eight: Religion in development

International Development is not only the business of international organisations and governments. In the last decades, non-states actors and in particular grass-root civil society organisations, international NGOs, and churches have led their own development programmes and promoted their own vision of what development should mean and how to materialise it. At the core of these initiatives is the idea of people ‘reclaiming development’. Yet, at the very same time, NGOs, grass-root organisations, and churches represent specific groups within a population and do not necessarily have democratic legitimacy. The role of religions in international development is attracting increasing amounts of attention. This week we explore the intersections between religion and development as change.
Week Nine: ‘local’ NGOs and the place of civil society in development

From the late 1970s, a growing critique of the role of the state was paired with a mounting hope that NGOs would be the flexible, responsive, and efficient developmental actors of the future. The idea that NGOs are a ‘silver bullet’ for development has now been comprehensively critiqued, but the number and importance of NGOs continues to grow. This week, we take a look at local, international, and diasporic NGOs in development exploring how NGOs attempt to legitimate themselves in the crowded field of development.


Week Ten: Global Technology Promotion and the Business-Development Link

This final week looks at global business and technology as a key forces in present day international development. We will look at the way technology and the private sector have entered the international development ‘industry’ and try to understand how they shape current practices, leading to both great hopes and fears that international development is significantly changing.


