

Development in a Global Context **INTL_ST 393-0**

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Lecture time: Tuesdays: 9:30am-11am (CST) / 5:30pm-7:00pm
(non-mandatory, recorded for asynchronous viewing)

Working discussion: Thursdays 9:30am-11am (CST) / 5:30pm-7:00pm (AST)
(mandatory)

This seminar presents a critical overview of the history, operation and structure of non-profits, NGOs and development organizations. It introduces students to concepts such as cultural humility that will help students to build the skills necessary to operate ethically and reflexively in complex transnational work environments. Particular attention is paid to the ethical and sociological orientation of such organizations, as a means to inform students' experiences working remotely for small nonprofits around the world. Students will incorporate what they learn from their experience as interns for nonprofit/NGOs and extrapolate from it using the concepts learned through readings and participatory lectures. This will be paired with collaborative team-building and decision-making role-play scenarios. These goal-oriented activities will expand the experiential course model, challenging students to engage with the multiple entanglements and social realities involved in the work of nonprofits/NGOs through a primarily flipped classroom model. In this course, we will explore: How are these interventions grounded on moral and political ideology? Moreover, how do international development projects construct their communities of intervention? The aim of the course is therefore not to provide simplistic answers in condemnation or celebration of nonprofits/non-governmental organizations, but to engage seriously with the complexities of this industry and its variable impact upon communities around the world.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To think critically about development concepts, paradigms, and institutions; and to analyze theories, policies, and strategies NGOs/non-profits employ to address global inequality and how they limit or expand the potential for social change. This will include changing development trends, specifically participatory and community-based approaches.
- To develop skills in cultural humility and to improve students' capacity to work collaboratively, reflexively, and professionally in a non-profit context.
- To think critically about one's place and role in global development and social change efforts, while preparing students to work collaboratively, humbly, and

equitably with community partners. This will also mean examining the social structures, conditions of power and privilege that influence development projects and possibilities for social change, including opportunities to examine one's own positionality in these contexts.

- To introduce students to the bureaucratic, social and institutional work that underlies the public face of development and humanitarian work through a work-study model. And for students to think critically about the vast array of relationships that must be built and maintained in order for development projects to happen.

EVALUATION

Course evaluation will be based on students' participation in discussion forums and in their small-group exercises, as well as two written reflection pieces (5 pages each). The first writing assignment will require students to research and reflect upon the local history of one of your institution's target issues. The second writing assignment, will be a reflection on the student's role in your host institution's efforts to address that target issue. These written reflections will require students to bring together: independent research, internship experiences, and concepts introduced through course readings.

Participation in lecture/online discussion forum: 15%

Participation in Group Work: 35%

Written work: 30%

Report from Nonprofit Partner: 20%

All written work must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font (one page per sheet and without staples please). These short reflection essays must be written in academic prose with in-text citations and bibliography.

Attendance to discussion groups is **mandatory**. You have 1 excused absence, no questions asked, but you will need to consult with the instructors about missing more classes without penalty. Discussion groups are where most of the classwork takes place.

COURSE BREAKDOWN

Week 1: Orientation

Meet the GESI team and learn the basics of your internship, engagement with your organization, meet your peers!

- Otzelberger, Agnes (2018) "Five Questions you Need to Ask yourself if you (want to) work in International Development," *The Good Jungle*, Jan. 24th
- Moore McBride, Amanda and Mlyn, Eric. "Innovation Alone Won't Fix Social Problems." *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 2, 2015

Week 2: Identifying and Analyzing the Causes of Global Poverty

What are causes that produce conditions of poverty? How can we think about the proximate and root causes? What are the differences between individual and structural causes? How do different causes interact and reinforce one another? How can understanding the causes of poverty help guide choices and priorities for how to intervene to create positive social change?

- Chang, Ha-Joon. “Thing 15: People in poor countries are more entrepreneurial than people in rich countries.” *23 Things They Don’t Tell You About Capitalism*. 2010.
- Jason Hickel, Joe Brewer and Martin Kirk, “3 Ways Humans Create Poverty,” *Fast Company: Co-Exist*, March 12, 2015.
- Frances Moor Lappé and Joseph Collins, “Why can’t people feed themselves?” In *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*, Lappé and Collins, 1978: 75-85

Week 3: What is “Development”?

What are the experiences and legacies of previous development efforts? What are the trends, assumptions and models animating development debates and approaches today? What does it mean to enact change through the development model and what could it mean? Development work comes with a particular idea of how to enact social change. The goals of development projects are not always met smoothly. This isn’t necessarily a “failure” of development, but rather an existential aspect of collaboration. Development workers may not always be fully aware of their impact (or lack thereof). In this session, we will learn what “development” means in practice. What are some successes? What are some avenues for critique and improvement?

- Bartecchi, David. “A Brief History of International Development Theories and Practices,” *Village Earth*, July 5, 2015
- Haskell, Thomas. 1985. “Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility.” *American Historical Review* 90(2): 339–361.
- Sen, Amartya. “Introduction” *Development as Freedom* (Anchor Books, 1999), pp. 3-11.

Week 4: Participation and its Challenges

In this session, we take a closer look at a concept that has become a central component of development practice around the world: ‘participation’. We explore the difficulties inherent in defining ‘community’ and putting ‘community’ in charge. How are community members thought about and encouraged to participate in the issue or initiative your organization is working on, and what do you make of this framing?

- Cornwall, Andrea. 2003. "Whose Voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and Participatory Development." *World Development* 31.88: 1325–42.
- Hardina, Donna. "Strategies for Citizen Participation and Empowerment in Non-profit, Community-Based Organizations." *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society*, Vol. 37, No. 4, Winter 2006
- Mitchell, Tania. 2015. "Identity and Social Action: The Role of Self-Examination in Systemic Change." AAC&U Diversity and Democracy, Fall Issue.

Week 5: Power, Privilege and Humility

How do systems of privilege and power produce and reproduce communities of poor and otherwise marginalized people? How do systems of privilege and power affect international development efforts? How does your own positionality fit into this context? During this session we look in particular at assumptions of privilege embedded in ideas of cultural competence, and we introduce students to the importance of practicing cultural humility.

- Fanon, F. 1967. "Medicine and Colonialism". In *A dying colonialism*. New York: Grove Press.
- Fisher-Borne, Marcie, Jessie Montana Cain, and Suzanne L. Martin. 2015. "From Mastery to Accountability: Cultural Humility as an Alternative to Cultural Competence." *Social Work Education* 34.2: 165–81.
- Teju Cole. "The White-Savior Industrial Complex" *The Atlantic*. 2012.

Week 6: Global Ethics

What ethics should guide social and political action in a world marked by conspicuous global inequality? Is such a thing as ethical international development even possible? In this session, we read a case study of a charity who resist the planning and evaluation imperatives of European donors, and we consider the possibilities and pitfalls of imagining ethics and political action on a global scale.

- Scherz, China. 2011 "Let us make God our banker: Ethics, temporality, and agency in a Ugandan charity home"
- Jaggar, Alison M. 1998. "Globalizing Feminist Ethics." *Hypatia* 13.2: 7–31.
- Secret aid worker. 2017. "Secret Aid Worker: Why Don't We Practise What We Preach about Gender Inequality?" *The Guardian*, sec. Working in development. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/may/09/secret-aid-worker-why-dont-we-practise-what-we-preach-about-gender-inequality>.

Week 7: Non- Profit and Development Institutions

How do non-profits and development organizations set goals, plan projects and make decisions? This session explores the institutional, bureaucratic and relational work that underlie development and non-profit work. And we look at how decisions are made in NGOs, including at efforts to engage diverse stakeholders in decision making.

- Mosse, David. 2005. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*. London: Pluto Press. Ch. 5 “Implementation: Regime and Relationships”
- Renz, D.O. & Herman, R.D. eds. 2016. *The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management* Fourth Edition. (excerpts)
- Homann-Kee Tui, S. et, al. 2013. *What are innovation platforms?* Innovation Platforms Practice Brief 1. Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI.
<https://hdl.handle.net/10568/34157>

Week 8: Funding, Structure, Evaluation

The history of nonprofits, their funding structures, and the expansion of the business sector model into all forms of social organization have placed nonprofits in a series of binds. How is it that nonprofits sustain themselves, yet also attempt to fulfill their mission? How do engaging with such contradictions in the model allow for a path forward? This session introduces a key practice in the work of many NGOs and development organizations: monitoring and evaluation or ‘M&E’. We explore how M&E practices attempt to combine the potentially conflicting goals of a) reflexive learning; b) accountability to project participants; and c) accountability to project donors.

- Bornstein, Lisa. 2006. “Systems of Accountability, Webs of Deceit? Monitoring and Evaluation in South African NGOs.” *Development* 49.2: 52–61.
- Harrell-Bond, Barbara, Eftihia Voutira, and Mark Leopold. 1992 Counting the Refugees: Gifts, Givers, Patrons and Clients. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 5(3-4): 205–225.
- Grant, M.M. & Crutchfield, L. (2007) “Creating High-Impact Nonprofits.” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall.

Week 9: Killing With Kindness (or how NOT to save the world)

To what extent does international development work need to address and change power relationships in society to be successful? What degree and type of development is possible given existent socio-economic and political structures? Under what conditions is it more or less likely that power relationships can be effectively challenged? How does this inform your view of the relationship between power and development outcomes? What are your reflections about what it takes to live out a commitment to sustainable development and social change? In this session, we consider circumstances in which good intentions in international aid do

not necessarily match good outcomes. By now, you should be reflecting on your specific project, and your particular subject position can productively interphase with issues of inequality, development, and participation-driven social change at your GESI site, and beyond.

Green, Duncan. 2016. *How Change Happens*. "Chapter 2: Power Lies at the Heart of Change." Oxford UP.

Hobbes, Michael. "Stop Trying to Save the World: Big Ideas are Destroying International Development." *The New Republic*, November 17, 2014.

Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press. Chapters TBD.

Week 10: Participation and Community-Led Development

What is your assessment of community-based development as an approach to development and social change? What do you think community-based, participatory development approaches can do well and what do they not do well? To what extent are these approaches scalable? Under what conditions? What are the implications for community development work at home and abroad? Does this newfound drive motivate you to take action in some way? Are there communities, organizations or opportunities you want to get connected with?

- Spade, D. (2020). Solidarity Not Charity Mutual Aid for Mobilization and Survival. *Social Text*, 38(1 (142)), 131-151.
- Biruk, C., & Trapence, G. (2018). "Community engagement in an economy of harms: Reflections from an LGBTI-rights NGO in Malawi." *Critical Public Health*, 28(3), 340-351.
- Green, Darren. 2016. *A Power and Systems Approach to Making Change Happen*. "Chapter 2: Power Lies at the Heart of Change." Oxford UP.