The Political Economy of Labor and Development (POLS 2155)

Professor Richard Locke

Wednesdays 9:00-11:20 Prospect House 102

This graduate research and reading seminar examines an array of issues facing labor in today’s global world. The premise of this course is that recent developments (e.g., globalization, liberalization, privatization, etc.) have created a mix of opportunities and risks for labor in most developing (and already developed) countries. On the one hand, these trends have encouraged foreign direct investment and the diffusion of global supply chains, which in turn, have promoted economic development and job growth for some groups of workers in some of these countries. On the other hand, globalization and liberalization have undermined social safety nets, eroded labor and environmental standards, and resulted in greater rates of poverty for other groups of workers within these same countries as well as in other developing economies. How do we explain these differences? What kinds of policies can be promoted (and by whom) to more evenly distribute the benefits of globalization? This course seeks to address these questions.

Requirements

Aside from regular class attendance, preparation for and participation in class discussions, each student will be required to write:

• **Weekly memos:** Each week, I would like you to write a concise (2-3 page) memo on the course readings. Memos should address (a) ideas and arguments in the readings that you found stimulating, (b) questions, concerns and/or disagreements with the claims of the individual texts, (c) connections among the various texts.

• **A 10-15 page research proposal** on a topic related to the course. I will explain early in the semester how to write a successful research proposal. The last few weeks of the course are dedicated to presentations of these research proposals.

• In addition to writing one’s own research proposal, all students will be required to write **1-2 page memos, constructive** comments, on each other’s proposals.

The objective of these assignments is not only to encourage students to pursue interesting new research projects on labor politics in developing countries but also to create a vibrant and supportive intellectual community of people interested in these topics.
Readings:

All required articles will be posted on a course web site. In addition, the following four books have been ordered at the Brown bookstore:


Schedule

**CLASS 1 (SEPT. 4):**  
**INTRODUCTION: GLOBALIZATION: PROMISE OR PERIL FOR LABOR IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES?**

Readings:  

Available on-line at:  
http://go.worldbank.org/K300RCMF10

**CLASS 2 (SEPT. 11):**

**BROADENING THE DEBATE: LABOR AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Readings:**

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Introduction, chapters 1-6, 12.


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**CLASS 3 (SEPT. 18):**

**WHAT KIND OF DEVELOPMENT?: GLOBAL VALUE CHAINS AND (VS.) LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Readings:**


**CLASS 4 (SEPT 25): TRADE, DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDS**

Readings:


**CLASS 5 (OCT 2): THE DEBATE OVER STANDARDS I: MARKET AND CIVIL SOCIETY SOLUTIONS**

Readings:


The Debate Over Standards II: What Role for the State?


Class 7 (Oct. 16): *SESSON WITH BROWN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, DR. IAN STRAUGHN, ON RESEARCH RESOURCES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES*

Class 8 (Oct 23): *THE “OTHER” LABORERS: WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR AND WORKING IN “FISSURED” WORKPLACES*

J. Bhagwati and A. Panagariya, *Why Growth Matters*, chapter 8,


**Class 9 (Oct 30):**

**Possible Solutions? Workers into Entrepreneurs...Micro-Credit and Local Economic Development**


Class 10 (Nov 6): Possible Solutions II: Global Justice and New Forms of Collaboration between State and Society


Class 11 (Nov. 13): Student Presentations

Class 12 (Nov. 20): Student Presentations

No Class (Nov. 27): Thanksgiving Break

Class 13 (Dec. 4): Student Presentations