Development Studies 2000: Theory and Research in Development

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101 Thayer, #116B
Thursday 9:30-11:50

Understanding and promoting economic, social, and political development is one of the primary challenges for the world in the twenty-first century. Despite the tremendous efforts over the last fifty years, a large share of the world’s population – in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and some of the Transition Economies – still lives in abject poverty. And while many countries have made the transition to democracy, pervasive inequalities, weak political institutions, and fragile civil societies pose significant challenges to the exercise of democratic freedoms. Moreover, the “problem” of development has become an increasingly global challenge as issues of security, governance, economic stability, and environmental sustainability have become internationalized. Recent cases of economic collapse, political upheaval, and resurgent nationalism provide jarring reminders that we still have much to learn. Success stories that defy traditional trajectories of development – rapid and sustained growth in South and East Asia, cases of social development without growth, and waves of democratic transitions – call for new explanatory models. Coming to terms with these complexities requires modes of thinking, forms of knowledge, and tools of research that draw from all the social sciences.

DS 2000 is the first half of a two-semester course. It explores a range of substantive debates in development by drawing on empirical and theoretical work from the disciplines of anthropology, economics, political science, and sociology. The course has four objectives: 1) to provide students with a broad understanding of core debates and current research on development; 2) to evaluate both the differences and complementarities among disciplinary perspectives; 3) to develop interdisciplinary analytic skills that can be applied to concrete research questions; and 4) to foster cross-disciplinary conversation and debate.

DS 2010 will be offered in the spring and is designed to assist students in preparing preliminary dissertation proposals (or, in the case of Economics students, a research agenda). The course will be organized around presentations by Brown and external faculty on a range of development topics. While DS 2000 can be taken alone, both DS 2000 and 2010 are required of all students in the Graduate Program in Development.

REQUIREMENTS

1) Participation (30%): Includes attendance and coming prepared to participate actively in class discussion.
2) Class presentations (20%): review/critiques of the literature for two class sessions and lead class discussion (note: this will be done as part of a group of students).
3) Final Paper (50%): a critical literature review paper (approx. 30 pages) that explores a subfield in development. A short proposal will be due mid-semester.
4) Mandatory attendance at the Colloquium on Comparative Research (CCR) presentations held every other Wednesday, 5:00-6:30. For the schedule see the Watson Institute website.
READINGS

The following book has been ordered and will be available at the Brown Bookstore.


All other readings are available electronically as published articles or will be posted electronically on MyCourses.

SCHEDULE

Sept. 6: Introduction: Course Logistics

I. Foundations: Alternative Approaches to the Study of Development and Inequality

Sept. 13: Modernization Theory across Disciplines


Sept. 20: Dependency Theory and Historical Institutionalism


Sept. 27: Macro-Comparative Political Economy


Oct. 4: The Capabilities Approach


II. Growth, Power, Distribution, and Inequality


**Oct. 18: Democracy, Governance, and Development**


[Note: If you are not familiar with the World Bank governance indicators, see http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp and annual reports by Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi.]

**Oct. 25: Global Labor, Power, and Distributional Conflicts (guest session with Peter Evans, Senior Research Fellow, Watson Institute for International Studies)**


**Nov. 1: Development as Power and Knowledge**


III. Looking Back and Scaling Down: History and Local Conditions in the Study of Development and Inequality

Nov. 8: History, Institutions and Development Trajectories


Nov. 15: Local Politics, Development and Inequality


Nov. 29: Ethnographic Perspectives


III. Conclusion

Dec. 6: The Political Economy of the Possible

