POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

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Course Description

The course is intended to provide critical readings of the ‘problems’ and ‘prospects’ of development. It begins by looking beyond the mainstream ideas of change, progress, and transformation, and then takes up contemporary discourses of development. It allows students to link theories and perspectives on development with ways of conceptualizing the phenomena and processes of ‘development’ and ‘underdevelopment’ with the Global South as the central focus. It focuses less on the mainstream seminal works about development. Instead, the seminar is explicitly focused on the current issues of political and economic development in the developing world. The general idea is to assess where the literature currently stands on topics of interests such as slavery, state capacity, labour practices and gender question in global South, while at the same time identifying gaps in the mainstream literature on development.

Please note that the course does not cover all core topics on PE of Development in South. Because of our formal training and expertise, the course emphasis on literature from South Asia (particularly India) and Africa. Nonetheless, we seek to achieve two main goals. First, the substantive goal is to familiarize students with foundational theoretical arguments and empirical evidence on questions in the political economy of development and second, is to expose students to a variety of methodological approaches and cutting-edge research coming from scholars based in the global south.

Prerequisites

Given the state of affairs owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the course will be taught online. This makes a stable internet connection with a web call capable computing device a prerequisite. Though it gives us the liberty to expand to new geographical regions and at the same times this excludes students from regions with little internet connectivity or state induced communication blackouts. Another reflection of the unequal world we live in.
**Course requirements and Grading Policy**

The course is set up with an intent to provide a critical assessment of developmental issues in Global South. We expect students to be well versed with introductory knowledge on diverse perspectives on development, a brief history of colonialism and the North-South divide. Also, the course will be taught in English, so an intermediate knowledge of the language is a must. If you fulfill the aforementioned required criteria, you are good to go. And now that you are part of the course take a look at our grading policy.

1. Reading and participation (10%): Each week’s lecture is accompanied by two required readings and two optional, typically book chapters, academic articles, or long-form journalism. Ensure you have read and digested all the readings before attending class, so you can contribute to the discussion. Your participation in class discussions will be graded.

2. Weekly Writing (30%): Before the start of each lecture, baring week 1, students are expected to submit a summary of previous weeks reading plus lectures in writing. These writings should be precise highlighting the major ideas and contestations and not more than three pages (MS Word). Critical assessment with local or country-specific examples will be rewarded.

3. Final project (60%). Each student is supposed to produce a final project. The project can be an academic paper, a short documentary based on any developmental issue or a photo essay. Students must take a note that the project needs to be approved by week 4 and the written approval of all three instructors is compulsory.

**Weekly schedule and readings**

This is a reading-intensive course. Each week we will assign about 2 required book chapters or papers. There is no textbook for the course. Two additional readings are added to each week’s reading list. In most cases, these readings are either critical or agreement with the required ones thus giving the student a holistic understanding of the theme.

**WEEK 1 - Introduction to Political Economy of development**

This week introduces the broad discipline of development from a political economy perspective. The concept of development has been a contested terrain among scholars as evidence by different theories, unequal patterns of global development, and rapidly changing nature of the global economy. Therefore, this chapter will cover the historical and contemporary pattern of the political economy of development from a decolonised approach.

**Required readings:**

Additional readings:


WEEK 2 - Slavery, Colonialism, and Global Development

Slavery and colonialism played a crucial role in the development of the West and the underdevelopment of the South. This has lingered over the years with important implications for understanding the roots of unequal development across the world. Students will learn about the role of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism in shaping the patterns of development historically.

Required readings:


Additional readings:


WEEK 3 - Post-colonial Theory and Dependency Theories

Building on week 2, this week aims to critically examine the ideas of post-colonial and dependency scholars to understand how globalist capitalist system and the western-centric manifestation of ideas and culture have shaped the evolution of development in the global South. Similarities and contradictions between these two schools of thoughts will be examined, while their relevance in the contemporary hyper globalised world will be debated.

Required readings:

Additional readings:


**WEEK 4 - Globalization and Financialization in the Global South**

Over the past decades, globalisation has led to a huge increase in the flows of goods and capital across the world. Particularly, poor countries have been integrated into the global economy through global production networks and financial systems, thereby exposing them to external shocks and vulnerabilities. This week focuses on how global capital has penetrated developing economies and the implications for development.

**Required readings:**


**Additional readings:**


**WEEK 5 - Political Settlement, Institutions, and State capacity**

This week will examine the role of institutions, political settlement and the state in enabling or constraining development in the global south. However, the analysis is focused on juxtaposing contemporary institutional theories on the role of power, corruption and democracy in determining economic outcomes in the global south.

**Required readings:**

WEEK 6 - Inequalities within and between countries

Inequality has become a burning issue both nationally and globally. Yet discussions of inequality have paid little attention to the historical and structural factors that have significantly influenced the evolution of unequal distribution of wealth within and between countries. This week takes a unique approach by interrogating the role of imperialism, globalisation, and neoliberal policies in determining inequality in the global south.

Required readings:


Additional readings:


WEEK 7 - Labour and Gender Inequalities

The role of gender in economic development is often overlooked in mainstream literature. However, women actively participate in both unpaid household chores and productive economic activities despite facing unequal conditions compared to men due to patriarchy. This week draws on both theoretical and empirical feminist economic literature to examine the role of women in developing countries.

Required readings:

**Additional readings:**


**WEEK 8 - Conflict, Migration, and Development**

Recently, conflicts, civil unrest, and climate change have triggered unprecedented migration of people particularly in some of the poorest countries of the world. This week examines how these three variables interact and reinforce each other, while also introducing nuances by unpacking the socio-economic impacts of ‘reverse migration’ in developing countries.

**Required readings:**


**Additional readings:**


**WEEK 9 - Global Economic Governance, Multilateral Institutions, and Aid**

Since the 1980s, multilateral institutions like World Bank and the IMF have wielded significant power in shaping economic policy in the global south through technical assistance, loans and grants. Likewise, the role of aid from rich countries, as well as new donors such as China, has been contested among scholars. This week critically examine the role global governance and aid from a broad perspective.

**Required readings:**


Additional readings:


**WEEK 10 - Capitalist exploitation, climate justice, and sustainable development**

The impacts of neo-colonial and capitalist structures of the global economies shall be explored with focus especially on marginalized communities. Climatic and environmental issues will be linked to the globalized economic and political structures and issues of social justice. The United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development shall be considered from a critical perspective.

*Required readings:*


*Additional readings:*


**WEEK 11 - Indigenous and social movements and political participation**

Indigenous peoples and social movements have since ever positively shaped changes, transitions and developments in many countries and regions. However, their voices have often been suppressed as the consequence of colonialism and racism. How can people contribute to development and transformations in a bottom-up way? We want to discuss that and involve the students' experiences and perspectives.
Required readings:


Additional readings:


WEEK 12 - Rethinking development: Degrowth in the Global South

In the past weeks, we discussed current concepts, problematic implications and critical perspectives on the political economy of development. This leaves us with the question which alternative approaches we can find. We would like you to read the suggested readings in preparation plus looking for one alternative approach which can be either a concept for the globalised economy, an idea for local, regional or national economies or an approach that is already implemented in a specific context. We want to discuss together how we can envision global socioeconomic development in the future in times of post-pandemic, the climate crisis and global injustice.

Required readings:


Additional readings: