The Developing World

Description
In this course we will consider critical approaches to the notion of "The Developing World" looking at how this conceptualization emerged and what effects it entails, especially in the Arab World today. In addition we will explore some of the alternative ways local actors and social movements are redefining notions of development, governance and well-being.

This seminar is about taking a journey; looking along the way at concepts and other worlds from novel perspectives and rethinking our understandings of notions such as ‘self’ and ‘others’, power and knowledge, developing and developed. Thus, rather than providing straightforward answers, this seminar centers more on raising questions. The emphasis is on the journey. We will examine and question several commonly held conceptions and explore how particular notions and beliefs come to appear as “natural” and how they take form within certain historical, social and economic contexts. In doing so, this seminar seeks to foster critical thinking skills and encourage introspection, openness and a desire to think through particular issues regarding development and the Arab World. Finally, this seminar relies on your active involvement, and I am receptive to your questions, comments, concerns or suggestions.

Required Texts


Grading
Your evaluation for this course will as follows:

1. Class Participation (20%)
2. Exams (2): Midterm (20%) and Final paper (30%) — 50%
3. Quizzes (10) 10%
4. Book Report and Presentation = 20%

Class Participation (20%)
Class participation includes three components:
Attendance (10%), Participation in class discussions (5%), Leading discussions (5%)
This seminar centers on active participation in the class discussions; as such attendance and participation will be valued highly. Following your second missed class, all absences
without documented cause will be detracted in proportion of 1 point for each missed class.

Understanding and mutual respect are essential for productive in-class discussions. Difference of opinions should allow us to engage not only someone else's beliefs but also our own beliefs and values. In addition to reading the class assignments, I encourage you to follow the daily news covering the developing world, especially coverage of the Arab World (by reading newspapers, magazines, radio, TV, the internet, see links below) and try to see how our class readings and discussions relate to news reporting on current affairs in the region. I also encourage you to raise such relevant news topics during our class discussions. Following is a list of some useful websites which you might want to consult:

http://merip.org/ (maintained by Middle East Report)
http://assr.orgl (Arab Social Science Research)
http://ahram.org.eg/weekly/ (weekly English edition of the Ahram newspaper - Egypt)
http://www.democracynow.org/ (Democracy Now daily news program)
http://english.aljazeera.net/ (Al-Jazeera English Channel, see esp. the programmes section)
http://electronicintifada.net/ (the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict from a Palestinian perspective)
http://mondediplo.com/ (maintained by le Monde Diplomatique)
http://www.iraqbodycount.org/ (update on civilian deaths in Iraq)

Leading discussions: each class, a team of students will be in charge of presenting the readings and leading class discussion. They will be in charge of assigning the readings and organizing the presentation. Preparing for the class in group is a great way to gain additional insights and understanding of the text. Each team will have up to 10 minutes for presenting the readings, including the main arguments, your reflections and few guiding questions for discussion. When presenting a text by a new author, you are expected to begin with giving us a brief biographical sketch of the author. Evaluation will be individual and based on the performance of each presenter.

Exam Papers (50%)
There will be two take-home exam papers: Midterm and Final. The midterm must be 5-7 pages long and is due on Monday October 10; the final must be 8-10 pages long and is due on Wednesday December 9. For each paper, you will be given two questions to choose from. The questions for the final paper will cover all the course material while focusing on the second half of the term. You will receive the questions of the midterm paper a week prior to the due date, and those of the final two weeks prior to the exam date.

Quizzes (10%)
There will be 10 short quizzes given approximately once a week. Each quiz will have one question about each assigned reading. These quizzes are intended to check that you are keeping up with the readings, in which case you will find them fairly easy to answer.

Book Report (20%)
You will be given a list of books from which you will choose one to write a report on and present it in class. The book report must be 5-7 pages long and should be informed by the course readings and in-class discussions.

Notes on Writing Assignments:
- Write assignments in essay form. Combine the points you are asked to address into a coherent narrative with an introduction, clearly written paragraphs and a conclusion.
- All submitted writing assignments (including the midterm, book report and final) will be graded on the basis of MUN criteria of good writing which include: content, organization, style and mechanics. For more details on each of these see http://www.mun.ca/regofficalendar/sectionNo—REGS-0661.
- Type and double-space all assignments using an 11 or 12-point font and 1 inch margins.
- You are encouraged to consult wider sources than those specified in the questions; however, all used sources must be cited in the text and listed in the bibliography. Using someone else's ideas or writing without properly citing that source is plagiarism. For further information on the policies regarding plagiarism see http://www.mun.ca/posc/undergraduate/planning/plagiarism.php
- Finally, use the writing assignments as an opportunity to reflect and creatively express yourself. Your assignments should demonstrate critical thinking and fully explore the topics or questions.

Papers Submission: The midterm paper and book report are due in class on the dates listed in the syllabus and the final paper must be submitted at my office by 5 pm on the due day unless otherwise specified in class. Papers submitted later than the due date without a valid and legitimate excuse will be penalized one grade point per day. Legitimate excuses will require supporting documentation (e.g., a doctor's letter).

Final course grades will be assigned according to MUN grading regulations:
A = 80-100%, B = 65-79%, C = 55-64%, D = 50-54%, F = below 50%

Schedule and Assigned Readings
Note: assigned readings may be modified as the semester progresses

Week 1: Introductions and warm-up (9/9)

Week 2: Approaching Development


Film: Life and Debt

Week 3 'The Developing World': Origins of the concept


Week 4: The political economy of Development


Film: Life and Debt

Week 5: Post-Development and its critiques

Gilbert Rist, The history of Development pp. 47-68 (10/5)


Week 6: The Arab World Today: An overview

Week 7: The Arab World and the West: the colonial encounter

**Midterm Paper Due**


Week 8: Orientalist Structures: Islam and Modernity


Film: The Power of Nightmares


Salvatore, A. 1997. Islam and the political discourse of modernity, (excerpts) (10/28)

Week 9: Orientalism, Sectarianism, and Secularism


Ussama Makdisi, Modernity of Sectarianism. (11/2)


**Occidentalism & the Criticism of Orientalism;

Bernard Lewis, ed., As Others See Us, (excerpts) (11/4)


Week 10: Looking at Palestine and Iraq


Films: Interview with Edward Said, Peace propaganda and the Promised Land


Week 11: Terrorism, Media and the Arab World
Films: Reel Bad Arabs, Arna's Children

**Social movements in the Arab World**
Abdel-Wahab M. Elmessiri 2003. "Towards a New Islamic Discourse" (11/18)

Week 12: Neoliberalism and the politics of Human Development

Book Review Due
Arab Human Development Report 2009 http://www.arab-hdr.org/ (Scan all and focus on Chapter 8: Occupation, military intervention and human insecurity) (11/23)

** Development: Saving Arab Women?**

Week 13: Alternatives and Emergent Possibilities

Esteve and Prakash "Grassroots postmodernism: Beyond the Individual self, Human Rights and Development" (Ch 1) (11/30)
Film: The fourth world war.

Matthews, Sally "Post-development theory and the question of alternatives: a view from
Africa" in *Third World Quarterly* 25(2): 373-384, 2004 (12/2)
EZLN, 2006. The Sixth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle (12/2)
International Forum on Globalization, 4 Better World is Possible. Alternatives to Economic
Film: Zapatista

*Final Paper Due Wednesday 9 December 2009*