**Class Description:**

For the past four decades, debates about international development had been focusing on environmental issues. The following question became increasingly important: How can we sustain economic development, especially in poor, third world nations, protect the integrity of the global environment, and avoid pollution and ecosystem degradation, all at the same time? On the face of it, this question seems to be harmless and progressive. It mobilizes the international community in an effort to eradicate global problems of “underdevelopment” (poverty and hunger most prominently) while at the same time protecting the environment for our, as well as future generations. However, upon further inquiry, this question does not seem as innocent as once believed. If nothing else, it takes as unproblematic both assertions: that “economic development” will deliver human dignity; and that “environmental vulnerability” constitutes a looming threat for everyone equally.

Even though the question of how best to achieve developmental goals while preserving the environment will constitute the background for our readings and discussions, our aim will be to unpack these concepts and place them in their historical and political contexts, examine the images they invoke, and critique the assumptions they build upon.

For example, we will discover that “economic development” divides the world into the discrete categories of developed and underdeveloped; it also takes for granted the meaning and importance of economic growth, free trade, liberal market economy, and the globalization of capital. The notion of “environmental vulnerability,” as well, takes for granted a number of assertions: the threat of population ‘growth,’ especially in Third World poor nations, global warming and its relation to deforestation, resource scarcity, and the existence of “one global environment” that is both vulnerable and in need of protection.

What is most striking is that development institutions, both national and international, had the tendency to simplify questions of development, environment, and sustainability and produce universal solutions that are thought to fit all cases. Among other things, this tendency ignores questions of identity along gender, class, and race lines; sidesteps different cultural and economic contexts; and, avoids discussion of local and global relations of power that are relevant to people’s experiences on the ground.

Readings in this course will come from a number of disciplines that grappled with these issues over the years—from environmental sociology, development studies, international relations, feminist theories of development, and theories of power. On the substantive level, we will read and discuss cases that include, among others, issues of hunger, poverty, population change,
biotechnology, genetically modified foods, the green revolution, and women’s positions in the development project.

**Required texts:**

There will be two required books for this class:


You can purchase both at the University Book Store or any other online vendor. I suggest you buy these two books since we are going to use them heavily. However, they will also be on reserve at Steenbock library.

In addition, there will be a few extra articles/book chapters. To save you money, I decided not to print a reader for the course. Instead, all of these pieces will be in **electronic form** and accessible through your Learn@UW.

**Table of contents for extra articles/chapters (all on Learn@UW)**

Harry Truman, “Inaugural Address,” January 20, 1949


General course objectives

- Recognize the important role of history in our understanding of the present (in this case of development, globalization, and environment)

- Learn how to appreciate and practice critical reading, thinking, and writing

- Learn how to engage in civil discourse about personally, nationally, and internationally important aspects

- Learn how to relate the personal to the local, national, and international

- Learn how to relate the practical in everyday life to the conceptual

- Appreciate learning issues of international importance and how to connect them with things happening locally

Specific Course Objectives

- Learn and comprehend the complex meanings and basic histories of international development, globalization, and environment

- Learn about the history of sustainability and how it mediated development, globalization, and environmental politics

- Learn about the sociology of international development, environment, and globalization

- Learn social theoretical concepts for talking about development, globalization, and environment. Among others, these concepts include: class, power, culture, identity politics; colonialism, postcolonialism, North and South relations; discourse, realism, relativism, social constructionism, and feminism
More on the substantive objectives of the course:
Substantive knowledge of the international development discourse—its history, its different issues (women and development, sexuality and development, catching-up, underdevelopment, poverty, migration, modernization, technology transfer), its institutions and forces behind it, its relation to colonialism, post-colonialism, and its stages through the past six decades. Did anything go wrong? What? How? Why and under what pressures? And, was the development discourse doomed from the beginning?

Understand the history of globalization as a specific project—its history, its relation to development? What marks it, what are its main issues (migration, neoliberal economics, the changing role of the nation-state? global governance, etc.), its institutions (WTO, WB, IMF, etc.)

Acquire substantive knowledge of the environmental discourse—its history, institutions (especially of international interest), its relation to development, its development into an international concern, its different substantive issues (acid rain, global warming and green house effects, biodiversity, energy use, land use, etc.), and its relationship with global governance.

Acquire substantive knowledge of the development/environment encounter (sustainable development)—its history, its issues (growth without harming the environment), when did it start as an important notion for development and environment, how was it institutionalized, did it do the work, what are the different interpretations of sustainable development.

Important notes on the course
I will lecture and lead discussions

Lectures are for the most part new material on the general objectives of the course, coming from social theory, defining such terms as: power, discourse, modernization, the nation-state, North versus South, environment, development, etc. They overlap with, but do not match the readings.

Discussions will focus on the readings, using where possible lecture material.

Most classes will have a bit of both—lecture and discussion.

Grading:
A 93-100%
AB 88-92%
B 83-87%
BC 78-82%
C 73-77%
CD 68-72%
F below 68%

Participation: 25%. The success of this course will depend on the quantity and quality of involvement in discussion. Participation is expected and required of all of you. If you have fear of speaking in public, then this is your chance to get over that. I will work hard to help you in the process. On the other hand, if you are not willing to work on that fear and/or to participate in discussions, then you will lose a large portion, maybe all, points for participation. Participation grades are often subjective, but here is what I expect the breakdown of the grade to be: mere
speaking out during class (5%), style of delivery (5%), respect and inviting (5%), and content (10%).

Please do not complain about how some students take over the discussion. I will do my best to give all of those of you who want to talk to do so, but I cannot always second guess who wants/does not want to speak. You have to take charge of your own participation.

Ten weekly journal entries to be submitted to the drop box of Learn@UW by 5 pm on Friday of that week: 30%. These will not be graded on writing or accuracy, but on their relevance to the course. The grade will be either 0 (irrelevant), 1 (somewhat relevant), or 2 (very relevant)—I expect all of the entries to earn you 1 point at least most of the time. I expect 10 entries (we have 14 weeks in the semester). You have the choice of which of the weeks you want to submit a journal entry. Relevant entries can be: a news story that made you think of the class, a discussion with friends that struck you as an important theme, a movie you saw and provoked you to write, things in the readings you did not agree with or agreed with so much that you had to write something addressing it, something I have said that you disagreed with and didn’t want to engage it in class, something you would like to suggest I do in order for the class to be better. This should be about 1-2 double-space, 12 point pages. It has to be typed. Note that you cannot upload your entry to that drop box before 12:01 AM on Saturday or after 5 PM on Friday. Those are automatically set through Learn@UW.

Mid-term Exam: 10% on October 8.

Two assignments: 20%. The first will be handed out on September 26 and will be due in class on October 8. The second assignment will be handed out on November 15 and due on November 25.

Final Exam: 25%.

Of Note: The following notes are extremely important. Continued enrollment in class after September 16 will indicate reading and understanding these comments and requirements. No exceptions are made for anyone after that date, unless he or she provides appropriate excuses as sanctioned by the university’s rules and regulations and can produce supportive documents.

Each student will be allowed three absences without the need for official notes and without affecting participation grade. Beyond that an official notification has to be produced. Otherwise, participation grade will be affected negatively.

Participation grades depend on presence, reading, and engaging in class discussions.

If you have any special needs (medical or otherwise), please see me by September 16 to work out special arrangements. I cannot address your needs if you come to me later than that date or just before something is due.

Each student is responsible for understanding and practicing appropriate academic codes of conduct as posted on the university web site: http://pubs.wisc.edu/ug/geninfo_rules.htm– please consult.

I’ve tried to take religious holidays into consideration while putting together the syllabus. Please review the syllabus. If you have religious conflict with any requirements, please discuss with me during the first two weeks of class (by September 16).
**Course Outline**

**September 3: Introduction: thinking the concepts**  
No readings:

**September 5: discovering underdevelopment**  
Harry Truman. 1949. Inaugural speech.

Phil McMichael  

**September 10: Making the case for environmental sociology**  
Michael Bell  

**September 12: post-WWII world order and the politics of development**  
Phil McMichael  

**September 17: Women, development, and globalization**  
Bhavnani et al.  

**September 19: From national development to globalization**  
Phil McMichael  
Chapter 4: “Globalizing Developments,” pp. 80-110.

**September 24: Globalization and the new institutions**  
Phil McMichael  
Chapter 5: “Instituting the Globalization Project,” pp. 112-149.


**September 26: Globalization: is it that innocent?**  
Phil McMichael  

**October 1: Development, Globalization, and resistance**  
Phil McMichael  

**October 3: Beyond Globalization**  
Phil McMichael  
October 8: In-class Discussion and Reflection
Mid-term evaluation

October 10: Do we consume too much?
Michael Bell

October 15: Growth and Production
Michael Bell
Chapter 3: “Money and Machines,” pp. 57-84.

October 17: Discovering the population problem
Paul Ehrlich

October 22: Population growth in political context
Saul Halfon
“Overpopulating the World: Notes Towards a Discursive Reading,” in Peter Taylor et al (eds.),

October 24: Rethinking population
Michael Bell

October 29: Cultural context of environmental problems I—using the environment
Michael Bell

October 31: Cultural Context of environmental problems II—protecting the environment
Michael Bell

November 5: Cultural context of environmental problems III—making sense of nature
Michael Bell

November 7: The encounter of development and environment--sustainability
World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)
November 12: Institutionalizing sustainability
UNEP

November 14: Cultural context of environmental problems IV—rational use
Michael Bell

November 19: Sexual politics of development
Amy Lind and Jessica Share

November 21: Biodiversity and biotechnology
Vandana Shiva
Chapter 3: “Biotechnology and the Environment,” in Mono-Cultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology, pp. 95-131

November 26: Hunger


November 28: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING

December 3: Energy
Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttel

December 5: Mobilizing environmental action
Michael Bell

December 10: Rethinking development and the environment
Phil McMichael
Michael Bell

December 12: Post-Development?
Phil McMichael