

**Sociology of International Development, Environment, and Sustainability**  
**C&ES 540, IES 540, Soc 540**  
**Fall 2013**

Instructor:

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Class information:

Meets: T and R 9:30-10:50  
Meets in: 10 Agriculture Hall  
First meeting September 3  
Last meeting December 12

**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:

McMichael, Philip. 2008. *Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 2004). **Fifth Edition.**

Bell, Michael. 2009. *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge Press. **Fourth Edition.**

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

Bhavnani et al., "An Introduction to Women, Culture, and Development," in Kum-Kum Bhavnani et al. (eds.), *Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture, and Development* (New York: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 1-39.

Ramachandra Guha, "Radical Environmentalism: A Third-World Critique," in Carolyn Merchant (ed.), *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, International, Inc., 1994), pp. 281-289.

Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Sierra Club, 1970), pp. 12-57.

Saul Halfon, "Overpopulating the world: Notes toward a Discursive Reading," in Peter Taylor et al. (eds.), *Changing Life: Genomes, Ecologies, Bodies, Commodities* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 121-148.

World Commission on Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 1-23 and 43-66.

UNEP, "Integrating Environment and Development, 1972-2000" pp. 1-27.

Amy Lind and Jessica Share, "Queering Development: Heterosexuality in Development Theory, Practice, and Politics in Latin America," in Kum-Kum Bhavnani et al. (eds.), *Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture and Development* (New York: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 55-73.

Vandana Shiva, "Biotechnology and the Environment," in *Mono-Cultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology*, chapter 3, pp. 95-131.

William Fischer, "Development and Resistance in the Narmada Valley," in William Fischer (ed.), *Towards Sustainable Development: Struggling Over India's Narmada River* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 3-46.

Anil Patel, "What do the Narmada Valley Tribals Want?," in William Fischer (ed.), *Towards Sustainable Development: Struggling Over India's Narmada River* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), pp. 3-46.

Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famine: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 39-44 and 86-112.

Joseph Lappe et al, "Myth 1: There is Simply not Enough Food," in Lappe et al, *World Hunger: Twelve Myths* (New York: Grove Press, 1998), pp. 8-14.

Craig Humphrey et al, "Energy and the Environment: The Reemerging Energy Crisis," in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002), pp. 136-174.

### 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](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

Chapter 2: "Instituting the Development Project," pp. 25-54.

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### **September 10: Making the case for environmental sociology**

Michael Bell

Chapter 1: "Environmental Problems and Society," pp. 1-38.

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

Phil McMichael

Chapter 3: "The Development Project: International Framework," pp. 55-79.

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### **September 17: Women, development, and globalization**

Bhavnani et al.

Chapter 1: "An Introduction to Women, Culture, and Development," in Kum-Kum Bhavnani et al. (eds.), *Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture, and Development* (New York: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 1-39.

### **September 19: From national development to globalization**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 4: "Globalizing Developments," pp. 80-110.

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### **September 24: Globalization and the new institutions**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 5: "Instituting the Globalization Project," pp. 112-149.

Ramachandra Guha, "Radical Environmentalism: A Third-World Critique," in Carolyn Merchant (ed.), *Ecology: Key Concepts in Critical Theory* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, International, Inc., 1994), pp. 281-289.

### **September 26: Globalization: is it that innocent?**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 6: "The Globalization Project in Practice," pp. 150-181.

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### **October 1: Development, Globalization, and resistance**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 7: "Global Counter Movements," pp. 182-214.

### **October 3: Beyond Globalization**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 8: "The Globalization Project in Crisis," pp. 216-250.

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**October 8: In-class Discussion and Reflection**  
**Mid-term evaluation**

**October 10: Do we consume too much?**

Michael Bell

Chapter 2: "Consumption and Materialism," pp. 33-56.

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**October 15: Growth and Production**

Michael Bell

Chapter 3: "Money and Machines," pp. 57-84.

**October 17: Discovering the population problem**

Paul Ehrlich

*The Population Bomb* (New York: Sierra Club, 1970), pp. 12-57.

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**October 22: Population growth in political context**

Saul Halfon

"Overpopulating the World: Notes Towards a Discursive Reading," in Peter Taylor et al (eds.), *Changing Life: Genomes, Ecologies, Bodies, Commodities* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 121-148.

**October 24: Rethinking population**

Michael Bell

Chapter 4: "Population and Development," pp. 85-110.

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

Michael Bell

Chapter 5: "Body and Health," pp. 111-131.

Michael Bell

Chapter 6: "The Ideology of Environmental Domination," pp. 135-154.

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

Michael Bell

Chapter 7: "The Ideology of Environmental Concern," pp. 155-184.

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

Michael Bell

Chapter 8: "The Human Nature of Nature," pp. 185-208.

**November 7: The encounter of development and environment--sustainability**

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED)

*Our Common Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 1-23 and 43-66.

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**November 12: Institutionalizing sustainability**

UNEP

“Integrating Environment and Development, 1972-2002” pp. 1-27.

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

Michael Bell

Chapter 9: “The Rationality of Risk,” pp. 209-233.

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**November 19: Sexual politics of development**

Amy Lind and Jessica Share

Chapter 2: “Queering Development: Heterosexuality in Development Theory, Practice, and Politics in Latin America,” in Kum-Kum Bhavnani et al. (eds.), *Feminist Futures: Re-imagining Women, Culture and Development* (New York: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 55-73.

**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

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**November 26: Hunger**

Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famine: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 39-44 and 86-112.

Joseph Lappe et al, “Myth 1: There is Simply Not Enough Food,” in Lappe et al, *World Hunger: Twelve Myths* (New York: Grove Press, 1998), pp. 8-14.

**November 28: NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

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**December 3: Energy**

Humphrey, Craig R., Tammy L. Lewis, and Frederick H. Buttel

Chapter 5: “Energy and the Environment: The Reemerging Energy Crisis,” in *Environment, Energy, and Society: A New Synthesis* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2002), pp. 136-174.

**December 5: Mobilizing environmental action**

Michael Bell

Chapter 10: “Mobilizing the Ecological Society,” pp. 237-262.

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**December 10: Rethinking development and the environment**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 9: “The Sustainability Project,” pp. 251-283.



Michael Bell

Chapters 11: "Governing the Ecological Society," pp. 263-286.

**December 12: Post-Development?**

Phil McMichael

Chapter 10: "Rethinking Development," 284-303.