

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: DONORS, NGOS, COMMUNITIES AND CULTURE
(INTRODUCTION TO DEVELOPMENT ANTHROPOLOGY)

Course Syllabus

Time and venue: Wednesday, 10.50, r. 1/216 and Friday, 10.50, r. 1/324

Instructor: Dr. Emil Nasritdinov, r.404 (Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 14.00-16.00) emilzn@gmail.com

Course abstract

The development effort has been going on a global scale for more than half a century by now involving the governments of developed and developing nations, bilateral and multilateral institutions, international and local non-governmental organizations, and local communities in the attempt to improve the living conditions of people in the less fortunate corners of the world. The development narrative is now full of stories of success and failure. Many studies have been carried out on the analysis of development initiative and one of the main reasons of failures is seen in the standardized universal approach and projects that do not take into account the uniqueness of local cultural context. Anthropologists arrive at the scene as experts with the knowledge of local communities and local traditions. What makes such knowledge useful and how can anthropologists engage successfully in helping communities improve their lives and solve their problems are the main questions of this course.

This course will introduce students to the field of development and to the role that anthropologists play in it. It will look at the history of development effort and evolution of its concept and will analyze major theories of development. It will review major directions of the development work, such as participatory development, use of indigenous knowledge, micro-credit schemes, natural and cultural resources management, politics of development, etc. It will introduce students to the nature of development projects and main principles of working with the communities, donors and local governments. Finally, this course will introduce students to the development discourse in the context of Central Asia. Currently, Kyrgyzstan, due to favorable political climate, large numbers of international and local development organizations and thousands of realized development initiatives, can be seen almost like a development lab of Central Asia. Guest lecturers from development organizations will be invited. All in all, this course will be essential for anthropology students thinking of a career in applied anthropology and interested in the contemporary issues of developing nations.

Assignments

Attendance = 10%

Participation = 20%

Development project = 40%

- Project proposal and design =10%
- Fundraising 10%
- Project implementation 10%
- Project report and presentation 10%

Organization of a seminar = 15%

Final Exam = 15%

Attendance

If you don't miss classes, you automatically receive 10% for attendance. For each class missed without a reason - you will lose 2% of your grade. If you are sick you should inform our office manager before the class and then bring the note from your doctor. Without a call to the office manager and without a note, your absence will not be excused.

Participation

Participation is the discussion of readings. There will be 15 seminar classes where we will discuss texts. For each class you will receive 2% if you participate and give evidence that you have read the text. If you miss a class or opportunity to speak in class, you have an option of submitting a reflection paper to compensate for missed reading. It is important that in your reflection you give evidence of reading the complete text.

Development project

This is perhaps the most interesting part of the course. You will be literally learning by doing. In the team of five people, you will have to complete four steps. Each step is worth 10% of your grade:

- a) Come up with the idea of a development project; do a bit of literature review and research on this topic in Kyrgyzstan; contact NGOs that work on similar issues; write the proposal and present it in class.
- b) Do fundraising. This is a very important part of any development effort. You should find money to implement your project. You can approach donors of any kind: NGOs, foundations, wealthy individuals, banks, business companies, AUCA president Andrew Wachtel, your parents or relatives, or collect money from the AUCA student community by standing with a bucket at the university entrance doors.

- c) Implement the project. Once you raise money, you will work with you project beneficiaries to realize your project ideas – simple as that.
- d) Finally, write a report and make final presentation in class. In addition to the literature review and description of the project ideas and implementation, you will have to include a section on the analysis and evaluation of project outcomes.

Since it is a course in anthropology, it is important that by learning from your own experience you should develop a) a critical perspective on the development concept you chose as your main topic, and b) think of the role of such traditional anthropology concepts like culture, gender, identity, kinship, etc. play into the project design and implementation. This should be reflected in all stages of your project, but explicitly explained in the final document.

Organization of a seminar

During semester, you will have to work with one of your classmates to organize a seminar on the particular week's topic. How to organize this seminar is quite open to you. You definitely need to do some extra reading on the subject. Also you need to do some research on how this topic is relevant to our local Central Asian context. You can also bring a development specialist/practitioner to help you lead the discussion. You might want to organize a short presentation and then some group work/exercises in class in order to actively engage students in the discussion. You can prepare some provoking questions and/or give very specific tasks and ask students to find solutions to certain development issues. Your performance will be evaluated by your classmates anonymously at the end of the class.

Final exams

You will have one exam at the end of the course. There will be three essay questions. Each question is worth 5%. All questions will be based on readings and lecture materials

Guest lectures

Nearer to the end of semester we will invite representatives of various development organizations to talk to you about the development work they do in Kyrgyzstan.

Readings for the course

You have to borrow a course reader at the department and return it back when the course is finished. You will not be given a final grade until you return the reader. So, don't lose it or you will have to make another copy. The reader is compiled from chapters of the following books:

- Black, M. (2007) The No-Nonsense Guide to International Development, New Internationalist Publications
- Dichter, T.W. (2003) Despite Good Intentions: Why Development Assistance to the Third World Has Failed, University of Massachusetts Press
- Elliott, J. (2006) An Introduction to Sustainable Development, Routledge
- Isbister, J. (2001) Promises Not Kept: The Betrayal of Social Change in the Third World, Kumarian Press
- Mannan, M.A. (1989) Economic Development and Social Peace in Islam, Ta-Ha Publishers
- Momsen, J. (2010) Gender and Development, Routledge
- Sachs, J.D. (2005) The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities of Our Time, Penguin Books

However, structure of the course has changed and order of chapters does not follow the order of topics. Additional materials will be posted on the e-course.

Grading scale

- 100-96 = A
- 95-91 = A-
- 90-86 = B+
- 85-81 = B
- 80-76 = B-
- 75-71 = C+
- 70-66 = C
- 65-61 = C-
- 60-56 = D+
- 55-51 = D
- 50-46 = D-
- 45 and lower = F

Schedule of classes

Week 1	
Wed, Sep 4	Course introduction (lecture)
Fri, Sep 6	Global poverty (lecture)
Week 2	
Wed, Sep 11	What is development? History of development. Development theories. (lecture)
Fri, Sep 13	Seminar
Week 3	
Wed, Sep 18	Anthropology critique of development. Post-development theories. (lecture)
Fri, Sep 20	Seminar
Week 4	
Wed, Sep 25	Anthropology and development. Role of Culture in development. (lecture)
Fri, Sep 27	Seminar
Week 5	
Wed, Oct 2	Anthropology and development practice. Part 1: Nature of development projects (lecture)
Fri, Oct 4	Seminar
Week 6	
Wed, Oct 9	Development actors. Real world of NGOs. (lecture)
Fri, Oct 11	Seminar
Week 7	
Wed, Oct 16	Alternative and Post-Development (lecture)
Fri, Oct 18	Seminar
Week 8	
Wed, Oct 23	Development actors (lecture)
Fri, Oct 25	Seminar
Week 9	
Wed, Oct 30	Community participation in development (lecture)
Fri, Nov 2	Seminar
Week 10	
Wed, Oct 31	Gender and development (lecture)
Fri, Nov 2	Seminar
Week 11	
Wed, Nov 6	Sustainable development (lecture)
Fri, Nov 8	Seminar
Week 12	
Wed, Nov 13	Development in religious perspective (lecture)
Fri, Nov 15	Seminar
Week 13	
Wed, Nov 20	Development issues in Central Asia (lecture)
Fri, Nov 22	Seminar
Week 14	
Wed, Nov 27	Guest-lecture
Fri, Nov 29	Guest-lecture
Week 15	
Wed, Dec 4	Student presentations of development projects
Fri, Dec 6	Student presentations of development projects
Week 16	
Wed, Dec 11	Review for exam
Fri, Dec 13	Final exam