UNIVERSITY OF BREMEN—INSTITUTE FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

WHEN WHITE ELEPHANTS GIVE MAN A FISH: THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE

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Administrative details: Winter term 2019-20, B.A. Political Science, Module 11 "International Politics", course no. 08-26-5-M11-4, 2 SWS.

Time: Wednesday, 10-12am (21 Oct - 29 Jan) Place: FVG, Celsiusstraße 2, room M2010.
Substitute session: Tuesday, 21 January, 10 -12am Place: Unicom, Mary-Somerville-Str. 7, room 7.2210

Thematic scope: The course deals with theories and practices of development as a field of international relations. The class scrutinizes the most influential development theories since World War II, among them modernization theory, dependency theory, neoliberalism and post-development theory. These abstract concepts are linked to particular practices, such as “white elephant” projects that aim to provide a shortcut to progress. It also looks at the recurring repackaging of development interventions as something more effective than “to give man a fish”. Contemporary emphasis on minimal welfare provisions for the absolute poor is contrasted with competing neo-modern visions of state-managed progress. Besides establishing an overview over the field, the course aims at a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations, the history, and the different approaches towards development as an international endeavour.

Languages: The course discussion language is English. Student’s enthusiasm for reading English literature is a must. Written coursework may be submitted in English, French or German.

Literature: Obligatory literature and texts for presentation are electronically available on Stud.IP.

Online communication: Register for the class on Stud.IP and make sure you receive, read and respond to emails sent through Stud.IP on a regular basis.

Assignments (see additional information on Stud.IP):

6 CP:
Alternative 1: 4 excerpts (1 page, non-graded) & research paper (c. 5000 words, 100% of grade).
Alternative 2: 2 excerpts (1 page, non-graded) & presentation (15 minutes, including written synopsis, c. 600 words, 50% of grade) & short paper (c. 2000 words, 50% of grade).

3 CP:
2 excerpts (1 page, non-graded) & presentation (15 minutes, including written synopsis, c. 600 words, 100% of grade).

Non-graded “Scheine”: It is possible to acquire a non-graded “Schein”. However, this has to be clearly stated before you present or submit coursework.
23 October Introduction: What is Development?

Discussion on the meaning of “development”: What is it? What is it for? What is specific about it as a political idea and practice? Which histories and imaginations are connected to it? Is there a future for development?

Seminar aims and requirements; literature overview; selection of presentations.

Material:

30 October Development as Modernization

In this session, we discuss the historical context in which the term “development” was coined. We specifically reflect on ideas of modernization inherent in development as a concept.

Reading:

Presentation: Cold warriors' modernist development conceptions

6 November Experts to the Rescue: Development as a Scientific Field

The emergence of development as an international challenge coincided with the rise of science in the 20th century.

Reading:

Presentation: Science and development in the late colonial period

13 November Development of Underdevelopment? Dependency Theory

Born in Latin America, but soon popular throughout the global South, Dependency Theory fundamentally challenged liberal beliefs about modernization. Dependency theory argues that underdevelopment, rather than development, is the outcome of uneven modes of exchange in the post-colonial capitalist world.

Reading:
**Presentation:** Varieties of Neo-Marxist Theories on Under/Development


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**20 November Development in Crisis: The End of Modernity?**

The belief in state-managed progress towards a better future has been increasingly questioned from the 1970s onwards. Are states capable of managing orderly, purposive change?

**Reading:**


**Presentation:** About a book: James Scott's *Seeing Like a State*.


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**27 November Market-based Development? Neoclassic Economics and Structural Adjustment**

The neololiberal or neoclassic economic perspective spread the belief that states are incapable of steering development. Development, instead, can be achieved only by getting markets right. This view has been implemented through Structural Adjustment Programs.

**Reading:**


**Presentation:** The "Washington Consensus"


**Presentation:** Economic liberalisation and political democratisation


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**4 December Dies Academicus – NO CLASS**

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**11 December Structural Adjustment and Democracy**

The era of neo-liberal restructuration coincided with the spread of electoral democracy in large parts of the Global South. While liberal economies and democratic institutions may sometimes be fitting partners, what happens when electorates disagree with the liberalization of the economy?

**Reading:**

Presentation: Development vs Democracy?

Presentation: Development vs Politics?

18 December Post-Development
The failure of just so many development policies, plans and projects led from the 1980s to a new kind of critique. Post-development concepts posit to understand development not as a solution, but a problem.

Reading:

Presentation: Romantic delusion or democratic alternative?

8 January Development as a Project
“The project”, a temporary organization for the management of change, is still the preeminent form of how development is done. We read an ideal-typical depiction of power relations and different agendas in a classic rural development project, and discuss who legitimately decides about a project’s course of action.

Reading:

Presentation: The contradictions of “ownership” and participation

15 January Developmental States: Back to the Future?
The industrialization of some countries in East Asia seems to prove wrong the criticism of both state-led and market-based development. We discuss aspects of the lively debate about the drivers of change, from dedicated technocrats to geostrategic threats and opportunities.

Reading:

Presentation: Varieties of Developmentalism
21 January, 10-12h (Tuesday!) Development as Welfare: The New Social Assistance Programs

Place: InIIS, Unicom, Mary-Somerville-Str. 7, room 7.2210

Substitute session for 16 October

After the structural adjustment era, international development cooperation has been increasingly oriented towards the poorest straddles of society in the global South. Social assistance programs, meant to benefit these groups, have become increasingly popular among some academics, national governments, and international development organizations.

Reading:

Presentation:

22 January Welfare as Development: The Ethics of Social Assistance Programs

Yet what are these social assistance programs: A platform to turn the absolute Poor into entrepreneurs? A form of global re-distribution? Or alms to soothe moral indignation and looming revolts?

Reading:

Presentation:

29 January Now, Do White Elephants Give Man a Fish?

In the concluding debate, we again discuss our opening questions: What is development (for)? What is specific about it as a political idea and practice? Which histories and imaginations are connected to it? Is there a future for development?

Reading:

Presentation: