

## WORLD ISSUES COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: SSC\*K210 World Issues

Course Schedule: TR 9:30 a.m. – 10:45 p.m.

Room: D215

Instructor: Prof. Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Tues and Thurs 11:00 a.m. – noon and 3:30 – 4:30 p.m., or by appointment (please always confirm with me first!)

### I. Course Description

There are a multitude of issues that can be construed as world issues that span countries in terms of their causes and consequences. Clearly one of the most fundamental global issues we face is global inequality and the persistence of global poverty in the world. Nearly 1 billion people accounting for nearly 1/7 of the world's population continue to be plagued by poverty, with many suffering from hunger and malnutrition, disease and illness, and a lack of access to clean water, health care, and education. Although global poverty is often seen as a distant problem that has little tangible connection to our country and our lives as Americans, the reality is that global poverty affects us in a variety of ways. Global poverty contributes to a number of factors that affect us and other developed countries, such as political instability and conflicts, civil wars, terrorism, immigration, and even the spread of epidemics such Ebola. In addition, moral and ethical concerns as well as issues of human

One important factor contributing to global poverty is the ongoing oppression of women around the world. Women constitute a disproportionate share of the impoverished “bottom billion”, and they are often lower in status than men economically, politically, and socially. This is because in much of the developing world, women lack the basic political, social, and economic rights that men do. As a result, women are frequent victims of sex trafficking, violence, and rape, and they receive fewer resources from their families and their societies, especially in terms of their health and education. This oppression of women also contributes to global poverty and the lack of development in many poor countries, and policy makers around the world are increasingly recognizing that improving the economic, social, and political status of women is critical to addressing global poverty and a host of other social issues.

This course will be organized around these two main and interrelated topics: global poverty and the rights and the status of women in developing countries. The first two sections of the course will focus on global poverty, various factors that contribute to it, as well as some possible solutions. The first part of the course will focus on political factors that have helped create and maintain global poverty, while the second part of the course will focus on economic factors, especially the effects of globalization and neo-liberalism. One of the key themes of both of these parts of the course concerns the role that developed countries have played in creating

and perpetuating global poverty through their economic and political relationships with these countries. While aspects of developing countries, such as cultural attitudes towards women, have contributed to the problem of global poverty, an important focus of the first two parts of the course will concern the role that developed countries have played in the creation and maintenance of global poverty. In the third part of the course, we will examine the oppression of women globally, including topics such as sex trafficking, rape and other forms of violence against women, and female genital circumcision, and we also discuss and assess some solutions for empowering women economically.

## **II. Learning Outcomes**

Learning outcomes refer to the knowledge, skills, and abilities you should develop in this course. The learning outcomes for this course are:

1. Understand and apply theoretical perspectives on economic development
2. Demonstrate knowledge of major concepts and theories in the field of international political economy
3. Demonstrate understanding of globalization and neo-liberalism and their political and economic consequences
4. Identify and explain political and economic conflicts between developed and developing countries in the world today
5. Demonstrate an understanding of gender inequalities in developed and developing countries
6. Explain cultural differences in beliefs and attitudes regarding the status of women between developed and developing countries
7. Explain how these cultural differences and other factors contribute to gender inequalities and the oppression of women globally
8. Explain how gender inequalities in developing countries contribute to global poverty
9. Demonstrate understanding of various solutions to enhance the status of women in developing countries
10. Demonstrate understanding of various solutions to global poverty
11. Analyze and synthesize original writings

## **III. Course Readings**

The required text for the class is:

- Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.

Additional required readings are available on-line as indicated in weekly course schedule. You can access these readings by clicking on the links provided or by cutting and pasting the address into your browser. **Assigned readings are to be done before coming to class.**

## **IV. Grading and Assignments**

Your final course grade will be based on:

- Two written assignments each worth 10% of your final grade
- An in-class presentation, worth 15% of your final grade
- Three take-home essay exams, one after each major section of the course, and each worth 25% of your final grade.

**Class participation will help boost your final GPA for the course.**

All assignments and exams involve written work, and poor quality writing, such as typographical errors, poor spelling, grammatical errors, and poor paragraph construction, will negatively affect your grade. At a **minimum**, you should spell check all work before it is submitted. If you want assistance with your writing skills, I strongly urge you to use I strongly urge you to use The Writing Center in room C-117. You can also contact them by email at [TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu) or by phone at 860-892-5773.

Late work will be penalized up to a full letter grade deduction depending on the severity of the infraction. Exams cannot be submitted after I have returned the graded exams, which is usually one week after the exams are due, without explicit permission from me. **Failure to complete assignments and/or exams will hurt your final grade more than submitted work that receives an F but reflects some level of effort.**

Students are expected to follow to standards of academic honesty. If there is a question about cheating or plagiarism, the college's **Academic Integrity Policy** (revised 8 January 2003) will be followed.

If you have a disability that may affect your progress in this course, please meet with Matt Liscum in Room A-119 in the Counseling and Advising Office as soon as possible. He can be reached at (860) 383-5240 or [MLiscum@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:MLiscum@trcc.commnet.edu). Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

## **V. Cell Phone Policy**

Cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class only if they are turned off or turned to a silent mode. Under no circumstances are phones to be answered in class. When there are extenuating circumstances that require that a student be available by phone or beeper, the student should speak to the instructor prior to class, so that together they can arrive at an agreement.

## **VI. Course Schedule and Readings**

### **Part I. Global Politics and Global Poverty**

Week 1: Global Poverty

Tues 8/30: Global Inequality

Thurs 9/1: Global Poverty

Readings:

- World Bank, “World Bank Updates Poverty Estimates for the Developing World”, at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:21882162~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:469382,00.html>
- Harding, “Nairobi Slum Life: Into Kibera”, 4-part series at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297237.stm>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297259.stm>; <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297265.stm>; and <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2297279.stm>

Week 2: Colonialism

Tues 9/6: Colonialism

Thurs 9/8: Film: *Winds of Change*

Readings:

- Ehiedu E. G. Iweribor, “The Colonization of Africa”, *Africana Age*, at <http://exhibitions.nypl.org/africanaage/essay-colonization-of-africa.html>
- Yale University Genocide Studies Program, “Congo Free State, 1885-1908”, at [http://www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial/belgian\\_congo/](http://www.yale.edu/gsp/colonial/belgian_congo/)
- “French Colonialism in West Africa”, *Macrohistory and World Report* at <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch14-4.htm>
- “Kenya and the British”, *MacroHistory and World Report* at <http://www.fsmitha.com/h2/ch14-africa.htm>
- J. Llewellyn, *Alpha History*, “French Colonialism in Vietnam” at <http://alphahistory.com/vietnam/french-colonialism-in-vietnam/>

Assignment 1 handed out; due Tuesday 9/15

Week 3: Post-Colonial Political Instability and Conflict

Tues 9/13: Weak States

Thurs 9/15: Racial/Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict

Readings:

- William Gumede, “Africans Inherited Corruption”, March 19, 2012, *The Sunday Independent*, at <http://www.iol.co.za/sundayindependent/africans-inherited-corruption-1.1259448#.U96DE3TD9jp>
- Mark Tutton, “Can Africa Break Its ‘Resource Curse’”, CNN, at <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/08/23/africa.resource.curse/index.html>
- Francis Deng, “Ethnicity: An African Predicament”, *The Brookings Institution*, Summer 1997, at <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ethnicity-an-african-predicament/>

- Matthew VanDyke, “Mali, Sudan, and Ethnic Conflict in Northern Africa”, The Freedom Fighter Blog, April 25, 2012, at <http://www.matthewvandyke.com/blog/mali-sudan-ethnic-conflict-north-africa/>
- Rick Brennan, Jr., “The Tortured Roots of Sectarian Violence”, The Rand Corporation, December 12, 2014, at <http://www.rand.org/blog/2014/12/the-tortured-roots-of-sectarian-violence.html>
- Andrew Hansen, “The French Military in Africa”, The Council on Foreign Relations, February 8, 2008, at <http://www.cfr.org/france/french-military-africa/p12578>
- Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, “14 African Countries Forced by France to Pay Colonial Tax For the Benefits of Slavery and Colonization”, January 28, 2014, at <http://www.siliconafrika.com/france-colonial-tax/>

Exam 1 Handed Out; Due Thurs 10/8

#### Week 4: Globalization, Neo-Liberalism, and Global Poverty

Tues 9/20: Globalization and Neo-Liberalism

Thurs 9/22: Globalization, Neo-Liberalism, and Global Poverty

Readings:

- David Driscoll, “The IMF and The World Bank: How Do They Differ?”, The International Monetary Fund, August 1996, at <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/exrp/differ/differ.htm>
- The Thistle, “The IMF and The World Bank: Puppets of the Neo-Liberal Onslaught”, Sept/October 2000, on-line at <http://www.mit.edu/~thistle/v13/2/imf.html>
- Zareen Iqbal, “African Land ‘Grabs’ and the Growing International Food Crisis”, International Institute for Justice and Development at <http://iijd.org/index.php/news/entry/african-land-grabs-and-the-growing-international-food-crisis/>
- Max Borders and H. Sterling Burnett, “Farm Subsidies: Devastating the World’s Poor and the Environment”, National Center for Policy Analysis, at <http://www.ncpa.org/pub/ba547>
- Maude Barlow, “The Globalization of Water”, Environmental Alternatives, at <http://www.enviroalternatives.com/waterglobal.html>
- Erik Sherman, “Even the IMF Sees 30 Years of Neo-Liberalism as a Mistake”, *Forbes*, June 5, 2016, at <http://www.forbes.com/sites/eriksherman/2016/06/05/even-the-imf-sees-30-years-of-neoliberalism-as-a-mistake/#80e506f1a043>

#### Week 5: Globalization, Neo-Liberalism, and Global Poverty Continued

Tuesday 9/27: *Life and Debt*

Thursday 9/29: Discussion

Readings: None

Exam 1 handed out; due 10/6

## **Part II: The Status of Women and Global Poverty**

### **Week 6: Women's Rights and Patriarchy**

Tues 10/4: Women's Rights

Thurs 10/6: Patriarchy

Readings:

- Kristoff and WuDunn, Introduction, pp. 149-160;
- Human Rights Watch report summaries (handout);
- "Sahara Women Relish Their Rights", BBC News, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/3227997.stm>

Assignment 2 handed out; Due 10/13

### **Week 7: Sex Trafficking and Prostitution**

Tues 10/11: Sex Trafficking and Prostitution

Thurs 10/13: Child Labor

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 3-60

### **Week 8: Violence against Women**

Tues 10/18: Rape and Domestic Violence

Thurs 10/20: Honor Killings and Dowry Deaths

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 61-92

### **Week 9: Women's Health Issues**

Tues 10/25: Female Genital Circumcision

Thurs 10/27: Maternal Mortality and Women's Health

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 93-148, 161-165

### **Week 10: Solutions for Gender Equality**

Tues 11/1: Education

Thurs 11/3: Microfinance

Readings:

- Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 167-252

Exam 2 handed out; due 11/10

### Part III. Sustainable Development

#### Week 11: Sustainable Development

Tuesday 11/8: Sustainable Development

Thursday 11/10: Carrying Capacity and Population Growth

##### Readings:

- Damian Carrington, “World population to hit 11bn in 2100 – with 70% chance of continuous rise”, *The Guardian*, September 18, 2014, at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/sep/18/world-population-new-study-11bn-2100>
- George Gao, “Scientists more worried than public about world’s growing population”, Pew Research Center, June 8, 2015, at <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/06/08/scientists-more-worried-than-public-about-worlds-growing-population/>
- John Bongaarts and Steven Sinding, “A Response to Critics of Family Planning Programs”, *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 35, 1, March 2009, at <https://www.guttmacher.org/about/journals/ipsrh/2009/03/response-critics-family-planning-programs>
- Nicholas Kristof, “The Birth Control Solution”, *The New York Times*, November 2, 2011, at [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/03/opinion/kristof-the-birth-control-solution.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/03/opinion/kristof-the-birth-control-solution.html?_r=0)

#### Week 12: Global Warming

Tuesday 11/15: Film: “An Inconvenient Truth”

Thursday 11/17: Addressing Global Warming

##### Readings:

- Pew Research Center, “Global Warming Seen as a Major Problem Around the World Less Concern in the U.S., China and Russia”, December 2, 2009, at <http://www.pewglobal.org/2009/12/02/global-warming-seen-as-a-major-problem-around-the-world-less-concern-in-the-us-china-and-russia/> P-176, 1998, at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/issue\\_papers/IP176/index2.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/issue_papers/IP176/index2.html)
- Wikipedia, “2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference”, at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015\\_United\\_Nations\\_Climate\\_Change\\_Conference](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2015_United_Nations_Climate_Change_Conference)
- John D. Sutter, Joshua Berlinger and Ralph Ellis, “Obama: Climate Agreement ‘Best Chance We Have’ to Save the Planet”, CNN, December 14, 2015, at <http://www.cnn.com/2015/12/12/world/global-climate-change-conference-vote/index.html>
- John Carey, “Calculating the True Cost of Global Climate Change”, *Yale Environment 360*, at [http://e360.yale.edu/feature/calculating\\_the\\_true\\_cost\\_of\\_global\\_climate\\_change/2357/](http://e360.yale.edu/feature/calculating_the_true_cost_of_global_climate_change/2357/)
- Dana Naticelli, “Citi report: slowing global warming would save tens of trillions of dollars”, *The Guardian*, August 31, 2015, at

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/climate-consensus-97-percent/2015/aug/31/citi-report-slowing-global-warming-would-save-tens-of-trillions-of-dollars>

Week 13: Sustainable Agriculture

Tuesday 11/22: Industrial Agriculture

Thursday 11/24: No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday

Readings: (Readings About the Green Revolution)

Week 14: Sustainable Agriculture Continued

Tuesday 11/29: Film: “Food, Inc.”

Thursday 12/1: Sustainable Agriculture and Developing Countries

- Francis Moore Lappe, Joseph Collins, and Peter Rossett, “The Myth Scarcity: Scarcity. The Reality: There IS Enough Food”, The Food First Institute for Food and Development Policy, at [https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/BK5\\_1-Spring-1998-Vol-5-1-The-Myth-Scarcity.pdf](https://foodfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/BK5_1-Spring-1998-Vol-5-1-The-Myth-Scarcity.pdf)
- Anthony Faiola, “Where Every Meal is a Sacrifice”, *The Washington Post*, April 28, 2008 at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/story/2008/04/27/ST2008042702198.html>
- Raj Patel, Eric Holt-Jimenez, and Annie Shattuck, “Ending Africa’s Hunger”, *The Nation*, September 21, 2009, reprinted at <http://bolekaja.wordpress.com/2009/12/19/ending-africas-hunger/>
- Evaggelos Vallianatos, “Cash Crop Colonialism and the Attack on African Agriculture”, Pambazuka News, November 17, 2011, at <http://www.pambazuka.org/food-health/cash-crop-colonialism-and-attack-african-agriculture>
- Ronald Aminzade, “Does Africa Need a New Green Revolution?”, *Inquiry*, August 28, 2014, at <http://inquiry.research.umn.edu/2014/08/28/does-africa-need-a-new-green-revolution/>

Week 15: Student Presentations

Tuesday 12/6: Student Presentations

Thursday 12/8: Student Presentations

Week 16: Conclusion

Tues 12/13: Concluding Remarks: The Road Forward

Final exam handed out; due **Monday 12/19** by 9:00 a.m.