

## WORLD ISSUES COURSE SYLLABUS

Course: SSC\*K210 World Issues

Course Schedule: TR 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Room: D215

Instructor: Prof. Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Tues and Thurs 9:00 – 11:00 a.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

- There will be two written assignments each worth 12.5% of your final grade.
- There will be three exams, one after each major section of the course. Each exam will count for 25% of your final grade. The exams will be take-home exams in essay format, and the last exam will **not** be cumulative.
- **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 a Disability Service Provider (DSP) as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations cannot be provided until you provide written authorization from a DSP.

<b>TRCC Disabilities Service Providers</b> Counseling & Advising Office Room A-119	
<b>Matt Liscum</b> (860) 383-5240	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical Disabilities</li> <li>• Sensory Disabilities</li> <li>• Medical Disabilities</li> <li>• Mental Health Disabilities</li> </ul>
<b>Chris Scarborough</b> (860) 892-5751	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning Disabilities</li> <li>• ADD/ADHD</li> <li>• Autism Spectrum</li> </ul>

## 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 9/1: Global Poverty

Thurs 9/3: Perspectives on Economic Development

#### 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>
- Sharmila Joshi, “Theories of Development: Modernisation vs. Dependency”, InfoChange News and Features, January, 2005, at <http://infochangeindia.org/defining-development/theories-of-development-modernisation-vs-dependency.html>
- Carlos Martinez-Vela, “World Systems Theory”, at <http://web.mit.edu/esd.83/www/notebook/WorldSystem.pdf>
- “World Systems Theory”, at <http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Wallerstein/Presentation/Wallerstein.pdf>

#### Week 2: Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

Tues 9/8: Colonialism

Thurs 9/10: Neo-Colonialism

#### 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 9/22

### Week 3: Post-Colonial Instability and Conflict

Tues 9/15: Post-Colonial Political Instability and Conflict

Thurs 9/17: Film: *Winds of Change*

Readings:

- Barbara Slaughter, “How Britain Crushed the “Mau Mau Rebellion”, September 15, 1999, World Socialist Web Site at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/sep1999/mau-s15.shtml>
- 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/>
- Joel Ribnick, Review of Westad, Odd Arne, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. H-Soz-u-Kult, H-Net Reviews. April, 2008, at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=21432>
- 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>

### Week 4: Weak States and Political Problems

Tues 9/22: Weak States

Thurs 9/24: Predatory Behavior and “The Resource Curse”

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>
- Jeffrey Gettleman, “Africa’s Dirty Wars”, *New York Review of Books*, March 8, 2012, at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/mar/08/africas-dirty-wars/>
- Helen Epstein, “Murder in Uganda”, *New York Review of Books*, April 3, 2014, at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/apr/03/murder-uganda/?pagination=false>

### Week 5: Racial/Ethnic and Sectarian Conflict and Democracy

Tues 9/29: Racial and Ethnic Nationalism  
Thurs 10/1: Democracy

Readings:

- James Bingham, “How Significant Is Nationalism as a Cause of War?”, E-International Relations Students, June 19, 2012, at <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/06/19/how-significant-is-nationalism-as-a-cause-of-war/>
- Francis Deng, “Ethnicity: An African Predicament”, The Brookings Institution, Summer 1997, at <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/06/19/how-significant-is-nationalism-as-a-cause-of-war/>
- 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>

Exam 1 Handed Out; Due Thurs 10/8

## II. Globalization and Global Poverty

Week 6: Globalization

Tues 10/6: Globalization  
Thurs 10/8: Trade

Readings:

- 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>
- David Bacon, “Globalization and NAFTA Caused Migration from Mexico”, Political Research Associates, October 11, 2014, at <http://www.politicalresearch.org/2014/10/11/globalization-and-nafta-caused-migration-from-mexico/#sthash.k31R6KqC.dpbs>
- Maude Barlow, “The Globalization of Water”, Environmental Alternatives, at <http://www.enviroalternatives.com/waterglobal.html>

Week 7: The IMF, The World Bank, and the Debt Crisis

Tues 10/13: The IMF and The World Bank  
Thurs 10/15: The Debt Crisis and Debt Relief

Readings:

- The Bretton Woods Project, “What are the Bretton Woods Institutions”, at <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/item.shtml?x=320747>
- The Bretton Woods Project, “What are the Main Concerns and Criticisms about the World Bank and the IMF?”, August 23, 2005, at <http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/2005/08/art-320869/>
- “Debt Relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative” at <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/hipc.htm>
- H. O. Kaya, “The Debt Crisis and Its Effect on African Women and Children”, Pambazuka News, March 10, 2005, at <http://pambazuka.org/en/category/features/27189>
- William Easterly, “Think Again: Debt Relief”, *Foreign Policy*, November 1, 2001, at [http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2001/11/01/think\\_again\\_debt\\_relief](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2001/11/01/think_again_debt_relief)

Week 8: Neo-Liberalism and Global Poverty

Tuesday 10/20: *Life and Debt*

Thursday 10/27: Discussion

Readings:

Week 9: Foreign Aid

Tues 10/27: Foreign Aid

Thurs 10/29: Foreign Aid

Readings:

- Nicholas D. Kristof, “Aid: Can It Work?”, *New York Review of Books* at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2006/oct/05/aid-can-it-work/>
- Jeffrey D. Sachs, “How Aid Can Work,” *New York Review of Books* at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2006/dec/21/how-aid-can-work/>
- William Easterly, “The White Man’s Burden”, *New York Review of Books* at <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2007/jan/11/the-white-mans-burden/>
- Diana Jeater, “Parasites of the Poor”, Pambazuka News at <http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/comment/75588>
- Tina Rosenberg, “The Benefits of Cash Without Conditions”, *The New York Times*, August 28, 2013, at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/08/28/the-benefits-of-cash-without-conditions/?hp>

Week 10: Rural Poverty

Tues 11/3: Hunger and Malnutrition

Thurs 11/5: The Green Revolution

Readings:

- 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 <http://foodfirst.org/the-myth-scarcity-the-reality-there-is-enough-food/>
- 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://allafrica.com/stories/201111180989.html>
- 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/>

Exam 2 handed out; due 11/12

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

#### Week 11: Women’s Rights and Patriarchy

Tues 11/10: Women’s Rights  
Thurs 11/12: 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 11/6

#### Week 12: Sex Trafficking and Prostitution

Tues 11/17: Sex Trafficking and Prostitution  
Thurs 11/22: Child Labor

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 3-60

#### Week 13: Violence against Women

Tues 11/24: Rape and Domestic Violence  
Thurs 11/26: No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 61-92

#### Week 14: Violence against Women (cont’d) and Women’s Health

Tues 12/1: Female Genital Circumcision  
Thurs 12/3: Maternal Mortality and Women's Health

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

#### Week 15: Solutions for Gender Equality

Tues 12/8: Education  
Thurs 12/10: Microfinance

Readings:

- Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 167-252
- “The ‘Keepers of Seed’: The Impact of the ‘Green Revolution’ in Africa on Female Farmers”, Consultancy Africa Intelligence at [http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=780:the-keepers-of-seed-the-impact-of-the-green-revolution-in-africa-on-female-farmers&catid=59:gender-issues-discussion-papers&Itemid=267](http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=780:the-keepers-of-seed-the-impact-of-the-green-revolution-in-africa-on-female-farmers&catid=59:gender-issues-discussion-papers&Itemid=267)

#### Week 16: Conclusion

Tues 12/15: Concluding Remarks: The Road Forward

Final exam handed out; due Monday 12/21 by 9:00 a.m.