

COURSE SYLLABUS: WORLD ISSUES

Course: SSC*K1210

Course Title: World Issues

Course Schedule: TR 9:30 – 10:45

Instructor: Prof. Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Mon 2:00 – 3:30; Wed 10:00 – 11:30; or by appointment

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. Much of the world's population continues to be plagued by poverty, disease and illness, malnutrition, and frequently living in politically unstable and strife torn areas. This “bottom billion”, as Paul Collier describes them, constitutes 1/6 of the world's population is disproportionately located in Africa. They are in dire need of attention and solutions.

Women constitute a disproportionate share of the impoverished “bottom billion”. 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 contributes to global poverty and the lack of development, in part by contributing to the problem of AIDs and population growth.

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 section of the course will focus on global poverty, while the second will focus on the status of women. The emphasis of the course will be on Africa, where problems with global poverty are most severe. Each section of the course will examine various aspects of the problem, as well as potential solutions and their pitfalls. In the course of discussing these issues, we will also examine a number of other global issues, such as globalization and neo-liberalism, racial and ethnic genocide, political conflict and corruption, hunger and malnutrition, population growth and family planning, sex trafficking, migration, and AIDs.

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) **Critical Thinking:** To analyze and evaluate argumentation and persuasion in order to improve, refine, and refute it.
 - Read and critique original writings on global poverty
 - Critically assess solutions to global poverty and the status of women
- 2) **Global Awareness:** To examine the effect of historical and contemporary national and international events and trends on social, political and cultural institutions.

- A) Explain the causes and consequences of global poverty and inequality
- Discuss the meaning and measurement of the concepts poverty and development
 - Discuss different theoretical perspectives on development
 - Explain globalization and neo-liberalism and analyze their effects on developing countries
 - Understand and analyze political processes in developing countries
 - Critically assess solutions to global poverty
- B) Explain the causes and consequences of patriarchy and the subordinate status of women in developing countries
- Explain the basis and nature of patriarchy in developing countries
 - Explain the relationship between the patriarchy and various issues facing women in developing countries
 - Explain the relationship between the subordinate status of women and problems of poverty and global inequality
 - Critically assess solutions to improving the status of women globally
- C) Identify different cultural perspectives and explain how these perspectives influence how people see, experience, and act in their world.
- 3) Communication: To understand and convey ideas using reading, writing, speaking, and listening
- 4) Information Literacy: To assess what information is needed to answer questions and solve problems and to retrieve, evaluate, and use that information effectively.
- 5) Responsible Citizenship: To understand how individual attitudes and behaviors affect societies and to use that understanding for ethical decisions and actions in personal, professional, and social life.
- See one's self as an active participant in society with a strong commitment and responsibility to work with others.
 - Understand the impact of individual attitudes and behaviors on social institutions and society as a whole.

I. Course Readings

The required texts for the class are:

- Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*, New York: Penguin Books, 2005.
- 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 may be assigned during the course. **Assigned readings are to be done before coming to class.**

II. Grading and Assignments

- There will be three written assignments each worth 10% of your final grade.
- There will be two 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.
- You will also write a 5-6 page research paper and give a 10-12 minute class presentation based on your research paper. The research paper and presentation will together count for 20% of your final grade.

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 The Writing Center in the Shop Wing building on the Mohegan campus. You can contact them by email at TRWritingCenter@trcc.comnet.edu or by phone at 860-892-5773.

Late work will be penalized accordingly. 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. Class participation can help boost your final GPA for the course.

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.

III. Cell Phone Policy

Students are notified that cellular phones and beepers are allowed in class or in the Learning Resource Center 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.

IV. Weekly Outline and Readings

Part I. Global Poverty and Economic Development

Week 1: Global Poverty and Development

Tues 8/30: Defining Global Poverty and Development
Thurs 9/1: Perspectives on Development

Readings: Sachs, pp. 1-50; York and Bradshaw handout

Week 2: Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism

Tues 9/6: Colonialism and Neo-Colonialism
Thurs 9/8: Film: *Black Gold*

Readings: Sachs, pp. 51-89; World Socialist Web Site, “Belgium’s Imperialist Rape of Africa”, at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/sep1999/king-s06.shtml>; World Socialist Web Site, “How Britain Crushed the “Mau Mau Rebellion”, at <http://www.wsws.org/articles/1999/sep1999/mau-s15.shtml>

Assignment 1 handed out; due 9/15

Week 3: Globalization and Neo-Liberalism

Tues 9/13: Film: *Life and Debt*

Wed 9/15: Globalization and Its Impact

Readings: Sachs, pp. 148-209

Week 4: The Debt Crisis, the IMF and the World Bank

Tues 9/20: The Debt Crisis

Wed 9/22: The IMF and The World Bank

Readings:

Week 5: Political Problems

Tues 9/27: Weak States, Political Conflict, and the Natural Resource Curse

Thurs 9/29: Film: *Winds of Change*

Readings: French, *A Continent for the Taking*, pp, chapters 2, 6 and 7, pp. 25-47; 111-149

Assignment 2 handed put: due 10/6

Week 6: Racial and Ethnic Conflict

Tues 10/4: Racial and Ethnic Conflict

Thurs 10/6: Darfur

Readings: TBA

Week 7: Foreign Aid

Tues 10/11: Sachs’ Proposal

Thurs 10/13: Criticisms of Aid

Readings: Sachs, pp.210-266; 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>

Week 8: Hunger and Malnutrition

Tues 10/18: Hunger and Malnutrition
Thurs 10/20: The Green Revolution

Readings: Readings: Sachs, pp. 266-328

Exam 1 handed out; due 10/27

Part II: The Status of Women

Week 9: Women and Development

Tues 10/25: Women's Rights
Thurs 10/27: Patriarchy

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, Introduction, pp. 149-160; Human Rights Watch report summaries (handout)

Assignment 3 handed out; due 11/3

Week 10: Globalization, Neo-Liberalism, and Women

Tues 11/1: Globalization and Women
Thurs 11/3: Neo-liberalism and Women (NOW Film)

Readings: TBA

Week 11: Other Gendered Issues

Tues 11/8: Sex Trafficking and Prostitution
Thurs 11/10: Conflict and Rape

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 3-92

Week 12: Development Issues

Tues 11/15: Population Growth and Population Control
Thurs 11/17: AIDS

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

Week 13: More Development Issues

Tues 11/22: Women and Agriculture
Thurs 11/24: No Class—Thanksgiving Holiday

Readings: TBA

Week 14: Solutions for Gender Inequality

Tues 11/29: Microfinance, Education, Women's Health, and Clean Water
Mon, 11/31: Gender and Development

Readings: Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 167-252; *The Weekly Standard*, "What Third World Women Want", at http://www.weeklystandard.com/articles/what-third-world-women-want_574825.html

Week 15: Student Paper Presentations

Tues 12/6: Round I
Thurs 12/8: Round II

Final exam handed out; due 12/15 by 5:00 p.m.