**WORLD ISSUES COURSE SYLLABUS**

Course: SOC\*K218 World Issues

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

Room: D221

Instructor: Prof. Steven Neufeld

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Office Hours: Wednesday 9:00 – 11: 00 a.m.; before and after class; or by appointment (please always confirm with me first!)

1. **Course Description**

This course surveys social issues confronting the people of the United States and other nations due to ever-increasing global interdependence. Topics vary from semester to semester depending on current concerns and interests, but often include global poverty, economic globalization, sustainability, population growth, global health issues, the survival of indigenous peoples, and women’s rights as human rights. Attention is paid to both the underlying social patterns giving rise to world problems, and to solutions proposed by actors on the world scene, including elites, grassroots movements, and international organizations such as the United Nations.

1. **Course Overview and Learning Outcomes**

There are a multitude of issues that can be construed as world issues that span countries in terms of their causes and consequences. This course will be organized around three main and interrelated topics: global poverty, the rights and the status of women in developing countries, and the challenge of food production. In the course of addressing these topics, we will discuss a variety of other global issues, such as colonialism, political conflict, globalization, sex trafficking, rape and violence against women, female genital mutilation, population growth, and global warming. After each section of the course, there will be a take home essay exam.

One of the most fundamental global issues we face is the persistence of global poverty. Nearly 1 billion people accounting for nearly 1/7 of the world’s population continue to live in extreme poverty, with many people 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 by contributing to political instability and conflicts, terrorism, immigration, and even the spread of epidemics such Ebola. The first section of the course will focus on understanding global poverty, including how it was created by colonialism as well as the political and economic factors that have helped to maintain global poverty in the post-colonial period. A key theme is that developed countries have played in creating and perpetuating global poverty through their economic and political relationships with these countries.

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. In the second part of the course, we will examine the oppression of women globally. We will attempt to understand patriarchy in developing countries, and how it contributes to problems such as sex trafficking, rape and other forms of violence against women, female genital circumcision, and problems of maternal mortality. We will also discuss and assess some solutions for empowering women educationally and economically.

A third crucial challenge is feeding a growing global population, and doing so in a sustainable manner that protects and maintains the environment. Although global population growth is slowing, continued population growth is expected, at least for some time. Challenges of producing food are being compounded by global warming, which is likely to impact agriculture in developing countries in particular. Modern industrial agricultural techniques have increased food production globally, but they have also come with a variety of social, economic, and environmental consequences. In the final part of the course, we will examine the problem of feeding the world in a sustainable manner, especially given ongoing population growth and global warming. We will examine some of the social, economic, and environmental consequences of modern agricultural techniques and consider how necessary they are, as well as other possible options.

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

1. Explain and apply theoretical perspectives on economic development
2. Explain the causes of political conflict in developing countries
3. Demonstrate understanding of globalization and neo-liberalism and their political and economic consequences
4. Demonstrate an understanding of patriarchy and gender inequalities in developed and developing countries
5. Explain how patriarchy and other factors contribute to gender inequalities and the oppression of women globally
6. Demonstrate understanding of various solutions to enhance the status of women in developing countries
7. Explain global population trends
8. Explain the impact of global warming on agriculture, especially in developing countries
9. Explain some of the social, economic, and environmental costs of modern agricultural techniques
10. Explain challenges addressing the problem of global warming
11. Explain and apply theoretical perspectives regarding sustainable development

**III. Course Readings**

Required readings for the course include a book that is available in the TRCC bookstore as well as numerous on-line readings as indicated in the course schedule below. The required book for the class is:

* Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide,* New York: Vintage Books, 2010.

On-line readings can be accessed by clicking on the links provided or by cutting and pasting the address into your browser.

Each week you will have to write a short reaction paper to two of the of the required readings for the week. These reaction papers should highlight key points in the reading, as well as your reactions to it. **Assigned readings are to be done before coming to class.**

**IV. Grading and Assignments**

Your final course grade will be based on:

* Written responses to the weekly readings will count for 15% of your final grade
* Two written assignments each worth 10% 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 writing, including typographical errors, poor spelling, grammatical errors, and poor paragraph construction, will negatively affect your grade. 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 Poverty**

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Tuesday 8/27: Introduction to the Course

Readings: None

Thursday 8/29: Global Poverty

Readings:

* 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>
* Kate Hodal, “Nearly half all children in sub-Saharan Africa in extreme poverty, report warns”, The Guardian, October 4, 2016, on-line at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/05/nearly-half-all-children-sub-saharan-africa-extreme-poverty-unicef-world-bank-report-warns>
* Susan Rice, “The National Security Implications of Global Poverty”, The Brookings Institution, October 20, 2005, on-line at <https://www.brookings.edu/on-the-record/the-national-security-implications-of-global-poverty/>

Week 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Global Poverty

Tuesday 9/3: Modernization Theory and Dependency Theory

Readings:

* “Modernization Theory”, Revise Sociology, on-line at <https://revisesociology.com/2017/09/19/modernization-theory/>
* “Dependency Theory”, Revise Sociology, on-line at <https://revisesociology.com/2015/10/17/dependency-theory/>

Thursday 9/5: World Systems Theory and Sachs’ Theory

Readings:

* “Summary of Wallerstein on World System Theory”, Modern History Sourcebook, on-line at <https://resources.saylor.org/wwwresources/archived/site/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/HIST321-6.1.2-Summary-of-Wallerstein-on-World-System-Theory.pdf>
* “World Systems Theory”, at <http://www.faculty.rsu.edu/users/f/felwell/www/Theorists/Wallerstein/Presentation/Wallerstein.pdf>

Week 3: Colonialism

Tuesday 9/10: 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 <https://eyaharriet.weebly.com/uploads/1/1/0/6/11068133/imperialism_in_the_congo_-_article.pdf>
* “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>
* Mawuna Remarque Koutonin, “14 African Countries Forced by France to Pay Colonial Tax For the Benefits of Slavery and Colonization”, January 28, 2014, at <https://www.africanevents.com/14-african-countries-forced-by-france-to-pay-colonial-tax-for-the-benefits-of-slavery-and-colonization/>

Thursday 9/12: Colonialism Continued

Readings:

Assignment 1 handed out Tuesday 9/10; due Tuesday 9/17

Week 4: Post-Colonial Political Problems

Tuesday 9/17: “The Winds of Change”

Readings:

* William Gumede, “Africans Inherited Corruption”, March 19, 2012, *The Sunday Indpendent*, at <http://www.iol.co.za/sundayindependent/africans-inherited-corruption-1.1259448#.U96DE3TD9jp>
* Ana Naomi de Sousa, “Between East and West: The Cold War's legacy in Africa”, Al-Jazeera, February 22, 2016, at <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2016/02/east-west-cold-war-legacy-africa-160214113015863.html>
* Atomic Heritage Foundation, “Proxy Wars During the Cold War: Africa”, on-line at <https://www.atomicheritage.org/history/proxy-wars-during-cold-war-africa>
* 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>
* Nick Turse, “The US Military’s Best-Kept Secret”, November 17, 2015, The Nation, at <https://www.thenation.com/article/the-us-militarys-best-kept-secret/>

Thursday 9/19: Assignment 1 Discussion

Readings:

* 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/>

Week 5: Post-Colonial Economic Problems

Tuesday 9/17: Globalization

Readings:

* “Globalization: Africa”, Encyclopedia.com, 2005, at <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/globalization-africa>
* Knowledge@Wharton, “How Globalization Works – and Doesn’t Work – in Africa”, Wharton School of Business, January 14, 2005, at <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/how-globalization-works-and-doesnt-work-in-africa/>
* Ian Fletcher, “Free Trade Isn’t Helping World Poverty”, The Huffington Post, on-line at <https://www.huffingtonpost.com/ian-fletcher/free-trade-isnt-helping-w_b_837893.html>
* Max Borders and H. Sterling Burnett, “Farm Subsidies: Devastating the World’s Poor and the Environment”, National Center for Policy Analysis, at <http://circle.org/jsource/farm-subsidies-devastating-the-worlds-poor-and-the-environment-by-max-borders-and-h-sterling-burnett/>
* Voxxi Voxxi, “Mexican Farmers Affected By Agricultural Subsidies From NAFTA, Other International Agreements”, HuffPost, July 28, 2014, at <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mexican-farmers-agricultural-subsidies_n_2457845>

Thursday 9/19: The Debt Crisis

Readings:

* International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity, “How Did the Debt Crisis Come About? What Was Its Impact on Poor Countries?”, on-line at <https://www.worldhunger.org/articles/global/debt/caritas2.htm>
* DW.com, “The IMF Comeback in Africa”, at <https://www.dw.com/en/the-imf-comeback-in-africa/a-45489734-0>
* 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>
* Marcelo Giugale, “Does Debt Forgiveness Work? Ask Africa”, HuffPost, July 13, 2014, on-line at <https://www.huffpost.com/entry/does-debt-forgiveness-wor_b_5318764?guccounter=1>

Week 6: Post-Colonial Economic Problems Continued

Tuesday 10/1: Film—“Life and Debt”

Thursday 10/3: “Life and Debt” Discussion

Readings:

Exam 1 handed out; due 10/10

Assignment 2 handed out; due 10/15

**Part II: Global Gender Issues**

Week 7: Women’s Rights and Patriarchy

Tuesday 10/8: Women’s Rights

Thursday 10/10: 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>

Week 8: Violence against Women

Tuesday 10/15: Sex Trafficking and Prostitution

Thursday 10/17: Rape and Domestic Violence

Readings: Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 3-92 (and watch video)

Week 9: Women’s Health Issues

Tuesday 10/22: Reading Day—No Class

Thursday: Female Genital Circumcision and Women’s Health

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

Week 10: Solutions for Gender Equality

Tuesday 10/29: Education

Thursday 10/31: Microfinance

Readings:

* Kristoff and WuDunn, pp. 167-252

Exam 2 handed out 10/31; due 11/7

**Part III. Sustainable Development and Global Agriculture**

Week 11: Challenges for Agriculture

Tuesday 11/5: Population Growth

Readings:

* Natalie Wolchover, “How Many People Can the Earth Support?”, LiveScience, October 11, 2011, on-line at <https://www.livescience.com/16493-people-planet-earth-support.html>
* 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>
* 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>

Thursday 11/7: Global Warming and Other Challenges

Readings:

* Gabe Bullard, “See What Climate Change Means for the World’s Poor”, National Geographic, December 1, 2015, on-line at <https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/12/151201-datapoints-climate-change-poverty-agriculture/>
* Claire Provost, “Climate change could drive 122m more people into extreme poverty by 2030”, The Guardian, October 17, 2016, on-line at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/oct/17/climate-change-could-drive-122m-more-people-into-extreme-poverty-by-2030-un-united-nations-report>
* Damian Carrington, “Huge reduction in meat-eating ‘essential’ to avoid climate breakdown”, The Guardian, October 10, 2018, at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/oct/10/huge-reduction-in-meat-eating-essential-to-avoid-climate-breakdown>

Week 12: Sustainable Development and the Ecological Modernization Perspective

Tuesday 11/12: Sustainable Development

Readings:

* Aragon Research, “Sustainable Development: Meaning, Concept and Policies | Ecology”, at <http://www.biologydiscussion.com/sustainable-development/sustainable-development-meaning-concept-and-policies-ecology/70876>
* Damian Carrington, “Survival of natural world is in balance, says wildlife chief”, The Guardian, June 24, 2019, at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/jun/24/survival-of-natural-world-is-in-balance-says-wildlife-chief>

Thursday 11/14: The Ecological Modernization Perspective

Readings:

* Council of Academies of Engineering and Technology Sciences, “The Role of Technology in Environmentally Sustainable Development”, June 21, 1965, at <https://www.nap.edu/read/9236/chapter/1>
* Sharon Beder, “The Role of Technology in Sustainable Development”, IEEE Technology and Society Magazine 13(4):14 – 19, at <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/3226564_The_Role_of_Technology_in_Sustainable_Development>
* Kimberly Amadeo, “Pigouvian Taxes, Their Pros and Cons, and Examples”, The Balance, June 25, 2019, at <https://www.thebalance.com/pigouvian-tax-definition-and-examples-4157479>

Week 13: Industrial Agriculture

Tuesday 11/19: Film—“Food, Inc”

Readings:

* Industrial farming to support meat-based diets hurting biodiversity at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/05/vast-animal-feed-crops-meat-needs-destroying-planet>
* Bibi van der Zee, “Why factory farming is not just cruel – but also a threat to all life on the planet”, The Guardian, October 4, 2017, at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/04/factory-farming-destructive-wasteful-cruel-says-philip-lymbery-farmageddon-author>
* Olivier de Schutter and Emile Frison, “Modern agriculture cultivates climate change – we must nurture biodiversity”, The Guardian, January 9, 2017, on-line at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/jan/09/modern-agriculture-cultivates-climate-change-nurture-biodiversity-olivier-de-schutter-emile-frison>

Thursday 11/21: “Food, Inc.” Discussion

Readings: None

Week 14: The Green Revolution

Tuesday 11/26: The Green Revolution

Readings:

* Daniel Zwerdling, “India's Farming 'Revolution' Heading For Collapse”, Rhode Island Public Radio, April 13, 2009, at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=102893816>
* Daniel Zwerdling, “'Green Revolution' Trapping India's Farmers In Debt” Rhode Island Public Radio, April 14, 2009, at <http://www.npr.org/2009/04/14/102944731/green-revolution-trapping-indias-farmers-in-debt>
* Daniel Pepper, “The Toxic Consequences of the Green Revolution”, U.S. News, July 7, 2008 at <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2008/07/07/the-toxic-consequences-of-the-green-revolution>
* International Food Policy Research Institute, “Green Revolution: Curse or Blesing”, 2002, at <https://oregonstate.edu/instruct/css/330/three/Green.pdf>
* Tina Rosenberg, “A Green Revolution, This Time for Africa”, The New York Times, April 9, 2014, at <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2014/04/09/a-green-revolution-this-time-for-africa/?hp&rref=opinion&_r=0>.
* 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/>

Thursday 11/28: Thanksgiving Holiday—No Class

Week 15: The Political Economy Perspective

Tuesday 12/3: The Political Economy Perspective

Readings:

* 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/>
* Land grabs used for cash crop could end hunger and malnutrition at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jun/27/land-grabbing-food-biofuels-crops>
* 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/>
* Anuradha Mittal, “Indian land grabs in Ethiopia show dark side of south-south co-operation”, The Guardian, February 25, 2013, at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2013/feb/25/indian-land-grabs-ethiopia>
* Small farms being squeezed out by large corporations, threatening production and food security at <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/may/28/farmland-food-security-small-farmers>
* Andrea Stone, “Family Farmers Hold Keys to Agriculture in a Warming World”, National Geographic, May 3, 2014, at <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/05/140502-climate-change-agriculture-family-farm-science/>

Thursday 12/5: Land Reform

Readings:

* Anastasia Moloney, “Latin America has most unequal land distribution, Colombia fares worst: charity”, Reuters, November 30, 2016, at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-latam-landrights/latin-america-has-most-unequal-land-distribution-colombia-fares-worst-charity-idUSKBN13P2NX>
* “Fact Check: the truth about land reform in South Africa”, The Week, August 20, 2018, on-line at <http://www.theweek.co.uk/95925/fact-check-the-truth-about-land-reform-in-south-africa>
* Richard Calland, “Now, even the World Bank thinks land reform is a priority for South Africa”, Quartz Africa, June 18, 2018, at <https://qz.com/africa/1307987/land-expropriation-world-bank-says-south-africa-land-reform-is-a-priority/>

Final exam handed out 12/5; due **Thursday 12/12 by noon.**