COURSE OVERVIEW

This course examines the evolution of discourses of development and their relationship to western (Anglo-American) notions of progress and modernity. Taking a political economy approach we will examine the economic and social conditions under which wealth and value are created within the capitalist world economy and the environmental outcomes of those processes in places considered to be part of the ‘third world’. Throughout the course we will pay particular attention to the role that current neoliberal development theories and practices are playing in the changing human-environmental interactions in the global South. By examining the emerging patterns of uneven development in the cultural and physical landscapes of the third world, we will take the opportunity to re-examine deeply held concepts such as progress, civility and modernity that continue to govern how, and what, we value as humans. Drawing on case studies we will examine the impacts of contemporary policies on development issues such as poverty, food security, climate change, as well as income, race and gender inequalities. In each case we will examine the relationship between the contemporary functioning of the world capitalist system, local patterns of uneven development and human-environmental interactions.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To provide a critical understanding of key concepts related to capitalism, modernity, development, justice and environment in the global South
- To examine the role of neoliberalism (the mobilization of state power in the extension of market rule) in creating and sustaining inequalities
- To provide a set of analytical skills to evaluate the social, economic and political relationships that structure these concepts
- To explore the ways that ‘common sense’ /’taken for granted’ understandings of development and environment shape how the assets and rights of particular groups are regarded, articulated and mobilized

COURSE TOPICS

Development as progress and the role of Nature; Locating the ‘3rd’ world; Modernization theories; Dependency theories; Neoliberalism, Accumulation by dispossession and uneven development; Climate change; Disaster capitalism; urbanization and poverty; Ethnicity, Gender and Uneven Development, Human-Environmental Interactions; Social movements and agrarian Reform; Food insecurity and crisis, Resource curse; Development beyond Neoliberalism; the Post-Washington Consensus.

SELECTED COURSE READINGS

Klein, N. 2014. This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate. New York Simon & Schuster.