Political Science 390, Section 1 (Spring term, 2012)

The Political Economy of Global Poverty

Instructor:
Dr Frederick Bird
HH 348, ext 38359
<fbird@uwaterloo.ca>

Course Description

This course will provide an overview regarding the extent and character of poverty in the world today in both developing and industrialized countries. It will focus especially on poverty in the least developed countries as well urban poverty and rural poverty in both developed and industrialized countries. The course will review the history of poverty and examine in particular the impact of industrialization on the extent and character of poverty. It will examine the interrelations between the growth of wealth and the persistence of poverty. It will examine the major efforts to address and reduce the extent of poverty through economic growth, the development of modern social welfare institutions, international humanitarian aid, and various programs and projects from microcredit, local agricultural projects, the entitlements of land and housing holdings, to local producer cooperative.

Assignments and Activities

1) Quizzes (30%)
   There will be two short quizzes.
   a) During the class on May 22nd, covering the readings through May 15th.
   b) During the class on June 11th, covering the reading from May 22nd through June 11th.

2) Two presentations: (30%)
   One, a presentation based on required readings. Each student will make one presentation based on the required readings. In the presentation the student is expected both a) to identify what s/he regards as the most important features of the reading and b) identify what s/he regards as the most important lessons one might draw from the reading in relation to the major themes for the week.
   Another student will be expected to respond to the presentation in the form of comments and/or questions.
   Two, a presentation based on other related readings. Each student will be expected to make one additional presentation based upon one of several sources: These include selections from the recommended readings; selections from unassigned parts of the books used for the assigned readings; readings related to poverty in a particular area or the poverty of a particular group (chosen by the student making the presentation), such as, for example, poverty among the indigenous peoples in Canada or in other countries; poverty in Ontario; child poverty in Canada; poverty in a country like Angola, Uganda, Bangladesh, Russia, Indonesia, Bolivia, Mexico, India, etc.
   Another student will be expected to act as a respondent.
3) Term paper: (40%)
   15 page (14 – 18 pages)
   Focus: examine historically and comparatively poverty and poverty reduction in a particular area or country or population. Students will pick a topic in consultation with the instructor.
   Initial statement of paper topic due by May 15th: Two page statement with outline and bibliography due by May 28th.
   Term Paper Due: June 18th.

Books and Readings

Paul Collier (2007) The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are failing and what can be done about it (Oxford University Press)
Mike Davis (2006) Planet of Slums (New York: Verso)
Courseware: Packet of Readings

Course Outline:

Part One: Various Accounts of Global Poverty in the Contemporary World

May 1, 2012: Introductory
   We will review a number of contemporary accounts of global poverty.
   Readings:
      Banerjee and Duflo Poor Economics: Chaps 1 and 2
      Paul Collier “Falling Behind and Falling Apart: The Bottom Billion” The Bottom Billion, chapter 1, pages 3-13.

   Recommended Readings:

   (students will be expected to have looked at these required readings by May 7th)

May 7, 2012: Poverty Traps and Global Inequality
   We will review Jeffrey Sach’s arguments regarding poverty traps and Banerjee and Duflo’s account of the relationships between poverty and lack of good health We will review Milanovic’s analysis of global inequality.
   Readings:
      Banerjee and Duflo, Poor Economics, Chp 3

Recommended Readings:

May 8, 2012: More on Poverty Traps
We will review Collier’s analysis of poverty traps

Readings:

May 14, 2012: Urban Poverty: The Problem of Slums; Poverty and Education
While not ignoring the extent and problems of rural poverty, we will especially examine the growing problem of urban poverty and slums. We will also review studies on the relation between poverty and education.

Readings:
Banerjee and Duflo Poor Economics Chapter 4

May 15, 2011: Poverty and Population; Poverty and Risk; Poverty and Gender
We will look at global poverty in relation to population growth, risk, and gender.

Readings:
Banerjee and Duflo, Poor Economics, chapters 5 and 6

Recommended Readings:

Part Two: Historical Perspectives

May 21: Victoria Day
May 22, 2012: Poverty in the ages before industrialization

First Quiz on Readings for classes from May 1 through May 15

We will then review evidence regarding the extent and character of poverty in the ages prior to industrialization

Readings:

Recommended Readings:

May 28, 2012: The Great Divergence

We will examine how as the industrialized countries industrialized, the economic conditions of many of the countries that did not industrialize became worse.

Readings:

Recommended Readings:
Andre Gunder Frank The Development of Underdevelopment
Emmanuel Wallerstein World Systems Theory

Part Three: Contemporary strategies to reduce and eradicate poverty

May 29, 2012: Microcredit, Small Scale Farming projects, Legal reforms, etc

We will review a variety of promising initiatives, including micro-financing schemes and small scale farming projects. (In addition, we will review micro-insurance initiatives as well as efforts to grant legal title to land and household holdings of poor people)

Readings:
Banerjee and Duflu, Poor Economics, chp 7
June 4, 2012: Economic Development

We will review various attempts to reduce global poverty through efforts to foster economic development.

Readings:
- Banerjee and Duflo, Poor Economics, chps 8 and 9

Recommended Readings:

June 5, 2012: The Promises and Disappointments with International and Humanitarian Aid

We will review various aid programs and projects as well as some of critiques of these initiatives.

Readings:
- Paul Collier (2007) “Aid to the Rescue?” and “Military Interventions” The Bottom Billion, chapter 7 and 8, pages 99 – 134
- Jeffrey D. Sachs (2005) “On the Ground Solutions for Ending Poverty” and “Making Investments Needed to End Poverty” The End of Poverty, Chapter 11 and 12, pages 226 – 265 (Course Readings)

Recommended Readings:
- Mike Davis (2006) Planet of Slums, chapters 4, 5 and 7 “Illusions of Self-Help,” “Haussmann in the Tropics,” and “SAPing the Third World”


**June 11, 2012: Millenium Development Goals: Poverty and Politics**

We will review the status of the Millenium Development Goals, Collier’s final proposals, and debates about political development and poverty.

Quiz on readings May 22 through June 11

Readings:
- Paul Collier “Agenda for Action” *The Bottom Billion*, chapter 11, pages 175 – 192
- Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*, chap 10
- Any version of MDGs

Recommended Readings:

**June 12, 2012: Summing Up**

Students will present synopses of their term paper projects

Readings:
- Banerjee and Duflo, “In Place of Sweeping Conclusions” *Poor Economics*

Recommended Reading:
- Frederick Bird “The Practices of Global Ethics and Global Poverty” *Electronic File*

**Academic Integrity:**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm)
**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, [http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):** [http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (University):** [http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/](http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/)

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.