SI 657/757:
Information Technology and Global Development

School of Information, University of Michigan
Fall 2013

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This class has no prerequisites and is open to students from all departments

OVERVIEW:

In a rapidly globalizing world, information studies students are increasingly likely to find themselves in a work environment involving new cultures and geographies where an appreciation of contemporary and historical issues in international studies can be very valuable. This is especially true for the developing world, which is rapidly seen through not just an emerging market for goods and services from the industrialized world, but as an active partner, producer, and participant in the international technology economy and information society.

This course will provide an intensive introduction to the field of information technology and global development, in its historical, policy, and design dimensions. Part one offers an overview of key historical and contemporary debates in international development, and an introduction to recent theoretical works on technology and development including. We explore a broad range of work from historical academic literature on development to contemporary commentary on issues such as economic growth, urban and infrastructural change, culture, environment, humanitarian issues, healthcare, and quality of life.

Part two explores the growing literature on technology and development. Through readings, discussions, and course assignments, students will gain an understanding of several of the key issues being faced in the developing world, and examine the role of technology in these. Through geographically focused project and discussion groups, students will also develop specific regional or country-level knowledge and experience.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

This is fundamentally a development studies class, and meant to introduce students to international issues that impact the use and deployment of technology. This course is preparatory for an ICTD course that goes into a lot of actual applications of technology in the developing world. The goal here is to leave students with a good footing into the contemporary issues being faced in the developing world, to understand if and how technology fits in as a solution or a complexity.

By the end of SI 657/757, all students are expected to be able to:

- **Identify** some of the key issues in international development, and the various theoretical and conservative, moderate, and liberal political perspectives on these from the range of readings discussed.
- **Understand** transnational economic, institutional, and political factors shaping the nature and use of ICTs in developing country settings;
- **Discuss** the key policy positions, interests, and strategies of major stakeholders in the information policy field;
- **Analyze** and **contribute** to current theoretical and practical debates in IT and global development policy; and

These learning objectives will be met through a combination of readings, lectures, discussion, and individual and small group assignments, as described below.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS AND READINGS:

The following book is recommended for purchase:


We’ll be reading numerous pieces out of the Roberts and Hite book in the early weeks of class, the book is available for roughly $35 online, however relevant articles will be posted to the Ctools site. Copies of the book will also be placed on 4-hour reserve in the library.

The class is very reading intensive, but a significant part of the readings are popular commentary readings that are quicker to go through than some of readings from scholarly sources. The first couple of weeks will give you a good idea of what kind of weekly time commitment you can expect to put in.

Each class will have one readings that the entire class does, indicated in **bold** letters in the syllabus, and a remainder of a number of readings students get to choose from.
VIDEOS:

The films we see in this class are an interesting mixed bag of material ranging from the broad orientalist work on development to the contemporary documentary, fiction, or personal accounts of people in the developing world. Much of the audio-visual material is important for the same reasons that we include a lot of popular literature on development in this class. For a subject like international development, it is really important for us to engage with the range of discourses around the subject, and these are frequently reflected in the popular media. All the video material will be made available on ctools, and in general, we will be sticking to material that is either available freely online or whose copies are owned at umich libraries. If you prefer to rent out the material from either the screen arts collection or Hatcher, please let me know and I can reserve copies accordingly. Some of the films will also be shown during the break in class. Films include archival material shot during the colonial period, old newsreels, propaganda films, documentaries, clips from popular films, advertisements, and short non-fiction films by international agencies.

MSI REQUIREMENTS:

Since this is a reading-heavy class, our goal is to minimize the project burden and ensure that following the readings is adequately recognized in determining your grade.

Readings and class discussion: 50%
Midterm Paper: 20%:
Class Project/Paper: 30%

Reading and Video Notes: (50%)
To appropriately recognize the importance of class readings for this course, the readings have a very significant weight in your overall grade for the class. Each week after the first carries 4 points for your reading notes (12 * 4) plus 2 points as a general bonus for completing all your readings. In each class you will hand in at least 4 reading reviews, at least 2 of the readings cannot be from the “Quick Readings” list. Each reading review is a single point, each video review counts for half the points of a reading review, you can mix and match as needed, based on a first-come-first serve pick of the articles or videos from the class wiki. I will clarify concerns about this in class.

For each reading, you need to upload a ‘review’ of 100-200 wds very briefly summarizing the reading and expressing the key questions that a reading raised for you. Each review needs to be submitted first into your dropbox before the start of each class, and uploaded to the wiki after each class (for one, because your reviews often change after you discuss the reading in class, and second because the material on the wiki will be made public at the end of the class so you can choose accordingly to be anonymous if you prefer).
Midterm Paper: (20%)

All midterm papers need to be timestamped as submitted into your dropbox by 11.59 PM EST on October 22. Midterm assignments will be given at the end of the Oct 13 class, and will require a theoretical paper that uses a theoretical framework you have discussed in the classes thus far and apply it to your understanding of a specific historical or contemporary global issue. We will discuss this further in class. The word limit for the paper is 1500 words, not including references.

Final Paper: (30%)

Unless you have an existing source of data that you wish to work with for a final paper project (this can also be an applied project or a business plan), all final papers will be critical examinations of an idea within technology and development contextualized to the range of readings we have been through in class. All final paper ideas need to be discussed with me in person. The word limit for the final paper is 3000 words, not including references.

Late Assignments

All late assignments get docked for half the value of the assignment for class readings. For the midterm or final, you lose 5 points for being late.

Make-up Assignments and compensatory points

Some of the classes have “Extra Readings” these are specifically intended for make-up readings. In general, these readings are either more lengthy or more advanced reading than the regular class readings. Missed assignments can be made up through make-up assignments. Also, if you wish to skip doing a midterm altogether, you have the option of doing additional readings each class. An additional 20 points through the entire course of the class is sufficient to skip the midterm altogether. I can also work with you to build a larger reading list specifically for you if you prefer to pursue one or another aspect of international development.

Laptops in class

The aim is to give you a quality classroom experience that is engaging for you and your classmates, and sadly the distractions on laptops can be rather detrimental for a class like this which relies heavily on exchange from the students. As a general rule, we will use no laptops in class. If you have concerns, I am happy to discuss.

Accessibility
If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; http://www.umich.edu/sswd/) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. I will treat any information that you provide in as confidential a manner as possible.

**DOCTORAL REQUIREMENTS:**
Doctoral students will need to meet me in person to discuss additional requirements.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE:
NOTE, THIS INCLUDES BOTH THE REQUIRED AND THE OPTIONAL READINGS,
READINGS ARE SELECTED ON A BIDDING PROCESS

Week 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
• Rostow, W.W. “Marx was a city boy or, why Communism may fail” Harper’s Magazine, Feb 1955, Pg 25-30
• “The Failed States Index” Foreign Policy, July/Aug 2010, Pg 77-80
• Hochschild, A. and Bleasdale, M. “Blood and Treasure: Why one of the world’s richest countries is also one of its poorest” Mother Jones March/April 2010 Pg 53-65

VIDEO
• Our Shrinking World (1946) Produced by Young America Films (Available online on archive.org)
• The End of Poverty (2008) Directed by Philippe Diaz, Produced by Cinema Libre Studio (available online free on hulu.com)
• No Reservations: Cambodia - Excerpt, (2011) Season 7, Episode 2 Written by Anthony Bourdain, Produced by Tom Vitale, Travel Channel (Clips available on travelchannel.com)

Week 2: HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENT
• W.W. Rostow, “The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto”
• Harr, J. “Lives of saints” New Yorker, Jan 5, 2009
• Cassidy, J. “Enter the Dragon” New Yorker, Dec 13, 2010
• Banerjee, A., Duflo, E. “More than 1 Billion people are hungry in the world” Foreign Policy; May/Jun 2011
• Collier, P. "The Bottom Billion: Introduction" (THIS COUNTS AS TWO READINGS)
• Gunder-Frank, Development of Underdevelopment
• Russell, Thaddeus, Arab Spring 3.0: What's more revolutionary in the Middle East: Facebook or Porn?, Reason; May 2012; 44, pg. 59 http://reason.com/archives/2012/04/23/arab-spring-30/print
• Finnegan, W. “The countertraffickers” New Yorker, May 5, 2008

VIDEO
• Congo: the Brutal History BBC Four Documentary
• The Making of ‘The No. 1. Ladies Detective Agency'
• Wheels Across Africa (1936) by Armand Denis /Dodge Automobiles
Week 3: MODERNIZATION AND STRUCTURAL AID

- Huntington, S. "The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics
- Walzer, M. “On Humanitarianism: Is helping others charity, or duty, or both?” Foreign Affairs
- Tan, J. “Infrastructure Privatization: Oversold, Misunderstood and Inappropriate” Development Policy Review
- Corbridge, S. 2011. The (im)possibility of development studies, Economy and Society Volume 36 Number 2 May 2007: 179  211

VIDEO

- BBC HARDtalk Paul Kagame (Paul Kagame on International Aid) President Kagame gets grilled on BBC
- The Colony (2010) Al Jazeera video on Chinese migration into West Africa
- Risking it all: Brazil (2010) Brazilian children risk their lives to sell jams

Week 4: GLOBALIZATION, POVERTY, AND MARGINALIZATION

- InfoDev Omnibus (REQUIRED)
- Finnegan, W. Slow and Steady: Letter from Madagascar, The New Yorker87. 45
- Delingpole, J. “Diamond Geezers” Spectator, Jun 2, 2001 Price, T. “Exiles of the Kalahari” Mother Jones, Jan/Feb 2005  (THIS IS TWO PAPERS, but one is very short. the two go together, it counts for one point)
- Khanna, P. “United they fall: Why only Bill Clinton can save the UN” Harper’s Magazine, Jan 2006, Pg. 31
- Spence, M. “The impact of globalization on income and employment: The downside of integrating markets” Foreign Affairs, Jul/Aug 2011 90(4) Pg.28
"Google Public Data" http://www.google.com/publicdata/ Website review Do a review of the google public data website. come up with a few interesting visualizations or ideas for further exploration. At least one of the visualizations would be something that would be worthwhile discussing in class

**Week 5: CRISIS**

- Sen, A. "Development as Freedom" Selections
- Jeffrey Sachs, The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time
- Epstein, E., "Have You Ever Tried to Sell a Diamond?", The Atlantic, February 1982
- Andersen, R. “How multilateral development assistance triggered the conflict in Rwanda” Third World Quarterly
- Oxfam Report "From Controversy to Consensus? Lessons learned from government and company consultations with indigenous organizations in Peru and Bolivia" September 2012

**VIDEO**

- Unreported World: The Real Mobile Phone War (2001) http://watchdocumentary.com/watch/congo-the-real-mobile-phone-war-video_b884cad32.html Directed by Elizabeth Jones, Produced by Mentorn Barraclough Carey

**Week 6: CRISIS**

- Chen, S.; Loayza, N.; Reynal-Querol, M.; "Aftermath of Civil War" World Bank Policy Series WPS4190 (Browse this piece before you decide to pick it, you will need to make basic sense of the appendices)
- Grann, D. “A murder foretold” New Yorker, Apr 4, 2011. 87(7) Pg. 42
- Quart, A. “The child soldiers of Staten Island” Mother Jones, Jul/Aug 2007 32(4) Pg. 22
- McClelland, M. and Falise, T. “For us surrender is out of the question” Mother Jones, Mar/Apr 2010 Pg 36-50 and Ghosh, A. “Burma: Reporter at Large” New Yorker, Aug 12, 1996, Pg 38 (this is two articles - the two count as a single reading)
- Ali, N. “Books vs bombs? Humanitarian development and the narrative of terror in Northern Pakistan” Third World Quarterly 31(4) Pg 541-559
- Stillman, S. “The invisible army” New Yorker, Jun 6, 2011 87(16) Pg. 56
• Gause, F.G., “Why Middle East Studies missed the Arab spring: The myth of authoritarian stability” Foreign Affairs Jul/Aug 2011. 90(4) Pg 81
• Hamid, S., Brooke, S. “Promoting Democracy to Stop Terror, Revisited” Policy Review, Feb/Mar 2010, Pg. 159

VIDEO
• Double video (you have to watch BOTH for 0.5 credit) Somalia's Missing Millions http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uceZi2h9hFk&feature=related PBS Newshour: Pirates of Somalia, Ray Suarez in conversation with Jay Bahadur http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDelbAJbCVQ
• The Diary Of Angelina Jolie And Dr. Jeffrey Sachs, (2005) Directed by Andrew Huang, from the TV Series “Diary” (Clips available on mtv.com)

Week 7: CULTURE
• Goldberg, J. “The Hunted” New Yorker, Apr 5 2010, 86(7), Pg. 43
• Tara, S. and Ilavarasan, P. "I would not have been working here!": Parental support to unmarried daughters as call center agents in India, Gender, Technology and Development
• Gourevitch, P. “Climbers” (On Rwanda's bicyclists) New Yorker, Jul 11, 2011 87(20) Pg. 66
• Xu, G. and Feiner, S. “Meinu Jingji / China’s beauty economy: Buying looks, shifting value, and changing place”
• Karnani, A. “Doing Well by Doing Good, Case Study: Fair & Lovely Whitening Cream”
• Thomas, S. “A globalized God: Religion’s growing influence in international politics” Foreign Affairs Nov/Dec 2010 89(6) Pg. 93
• Sharlet, J. “Straight Man’s Burden” Harper’s Magazine, September 2010, Pg 38
• Phillips, J. “The Beach Boys of Barbados: Post-colonial Entrepreneurs” From Transnational Prostitution: Changing Patterns in a Global Context, eds Thorbek, S. and Pattanaik, B. Ch. 3. Pg.44
• Sharlet, J. “Junkets for Jesus” Mother Jones, Nov/Dec 2010, Pg. 58

Week 8: TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT
• Prahalad, C. “Fortune at the bottom of the pyramid” Strategy+Business, Issue 26, First Quarter 2002
• Lodge, G. and Wilson, C. “A corporate solution to global poverty: how multinationals can help the poor and invigorate their own legitimacy” Chapter 2/3: pp 20-42
• Agrawal, A. “Dismantling the divide between indigenous and scientific knowledge” Development and Change 26 (1995) Pg 413-439
• Ramani, S., Sadre-Ghazi, S., Duysters, G. “On the delivery of pro-poor innovations: Managerial lessons from sanitation activists in India”
• Anderson, J.L. “Gangland” New Yorker 2009 13:385
• Hourcade, J., Bullock-Rest, N. 2011 HCI for Peace: A Call for Constructive Action

VIDEO
• Ghana: Digital Dumping Ground (2010) Reported by Peter Klein, Produced by the Univ. of British Columbia (available online on pbs.org)
• Nicholas Negroponte: One Laptop Per Child, Two Years on, (2007) TedX talk (Clips available on youtube.com on the TED talks online channel)

Week 9: THE PRIMARY SECTOR

2. Thurow, R. “The fertile continent: Africa, agriculture’s final frontier” Foreign Affairs, 89(6) Pg. 102
3. Paarlberg, R. “Attention Whole Foods shoppers” Foreign Policy, May/Jun 2010 (179) Pg. 80
6. McKinsey and Co. "From Oxcart to Walmart" and "Four Lessons to Transform African Agriculture"

VIDEOS
• Gross National Happiness (2010) Reported by Andrew Clark http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXJwNSkdTH0
• Design like you give a damn (2008) Produced by Charlotte Buchen and Joe Rubin
Week 10: URBAN RURAL DIVIDE

- Gessen, K. “Nowheresville” New Yorker
- Packer, G. “The Megacity” New Yorker
- Smith, P. (2007) "Climate Change, Weak States and the "War on Terrorism" in South and Southeast Asia" Contemporary Southeast Asia, Volume 29, Number 2, August 2007, pp. 264-285

Week 11: DESIGN AND EVALUATION 1

- Khanna, S., Ratan, A., Davis, J., Thies, W., (2010) "Evaluating and Improving the Usability of Mechanical Turk for Low-Income Workers in India" ACM-SIGDEV2010
- Panjwani, S. and E. Cутrell (2010). Usably secure, low-cost authentication for mobile banking, ACM.
- Sey, A. "'We use it different, different': Making sense of trends in mobile phone use in Ghana" New Media & Society May 2011 vol. 13 no. 3 375-390

Week 12: DESIGN AND EVALUATION 2

• Lexander, K. (2011) "Texting and African Language Literacy" New Media & Society 13(3) 427–443
• Kumar, A., S. K. Agarwal, et al. (2010). The spoken web application framework: user generated content and service creation through low-end mobiles, ACM.
• Hourcade, J., Bullock-Rest, N. 2011 HCI for Peace: A Call for Constructive Action
• Underwood, H., Sterling, S., Bennett, J. "The Design and Implementation of the PartoPen Maternal Health Monitoring System"

Week 13: ISSUES AHEAD IN DEVELOPMENT

• Schumacher, EF. (1970) Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered. (Selections)
• Blumenstock, J. "Divided We Call: Disparities in Access and Use of Mobile Phones in Rwanda" Information Technologies and International Development, Volume 8, Number 2, Special Issue, 1–16
**ADDITIONAL VIEWINGS**

- Bamako (2006), Abderrahmane Sissako
- The Chinese are Coming, Directed by Robin Barnwell, Produced by BBC Productions (available free on youtube.com)
- PBS Global Voices Series (most videos available free on youtube.com or pbs.org)
- Exandas Documentary Series (Greek television series, most available free online)
- Channel One News Series on Sierra Leone and Qatar by Jessica Kumari
- Costa Rica: The Road To Equality
- Defending the secret slave state: Suriname
- Psychological Operations in Support of Internal Defense and Development Assistance (1968) Produced by the US Army Pictorial Center on behalf of the US Army Materiel Command

**ADDITIONAL/ALTERNATE READINGS (TBD)**

- Ng, C. and S. Mitter (2005). "Valuing Women's Voices–Call Centre Workers in Malaysia and India." Gender and the Digital Economy–Perspectives from the Developing World
- Ramachandran, D., M. Kam, et al. (2007). “Social dynamics of early stage co-design in developing regions”
- Mark Graham, Warped Geographies of Development: The Internet and Theories of Economic Development, Geography Compass 2/3 (2008): 771–789
- Swiss Academy of Sciences, Cooperating for Success: Benefits of Research Partnerships With Developing Countries (November 2009).


