Spring 2017

ID 258--Special Topics: Beyond Tokenism: Indigenizing, Feminizing, Queering Development

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Beyond Tokenism: 
Indigenizing, Feminizing, Queering Development

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT
Clark University
Spring 2017

Instructor: Dr. Amber Murrey
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Class meets:
Classroom:

Course Description

International development has been an overwhelmingly white, heteronormative, and patriarchal project. That is to say, it has been informed ideologically, epistemologically, and in practice by hegemonic Eurocentric norms, priorities, and “expert knowledge.” In this course, we focus our attention on the shifting but near-permanent criticisms of normative, hegemonic development projects articulated by LGBTQ people, people of color, Indigenous scholars and activists, Pan-Africanists and African feminists, transnational feminists, Chicano/a historians, and more. We give particular attention to elucidating alternative imaginaries of “progress,” “empowerment,” and “development” for meaningful, livable futures that emphasize well-being, ecological balance, and buen vivir. In this way, the course is explicitly forward-looking as we seek to move beyond critique towards the active imagining of new horizons.

Context: The Rise of Ideologies of Inclusiveness

Powerful critiques of development as Euro-normative have occurred alongside the rising international visibility of the limitations of Euro-hegemonic approaches to human development, including widespread direct protests by dissatisfied people against development projects in their communities. In response to critiques that development unfolds within Eurocentric frameworks, the last three decades have witnessed diverse efforts to incorporate gender sensitivity and to incorporate “traditional knowledge” within development frameworks. However, these specious attempts to alter development’s deeply rooted Eurocentricism have been challenged as superficial forms of “tokenism”: little more than symbolic displays of inclusion that do not alter political or economic structures nor the power imbalances that they (re)produce.

During this course, students become familiar with critical development studies and post-development literatures as we examine the political, social, and ecological contexts in which hegemonic claims to legitimacy and authenticity based on proximity to or proficiency in "Indigenous," "African," and "local" knowledge(s) emerge. That is to say, we look at case studies in which highly publicized (gender, local, sexual) inclusiveness is
an ideological tool.

At the same time, the World Bank, DFID, USAID, and other major international development agencies are increasingly training and educating development actors based in the countries of the so-called global South. Frequent workshops and seminars cultivate particular depoliticized approaches to development, reproduce normative standards, and, while sometimes revised for local contexts, these knowledge transfer projects muddle any simplistic notion that countries of the south pursue purely “non-Western” development frameworks. The rise of BRICS likewise illustrates the limitations of binary thinking that would posit all development from the Southern countries as somehow more benevolent. Our examination will be alert to these distinctions and nuanced contexts and will avoid a romanticization of oppressed and exploited people and places. We will be attentive to dissimilar voices on the margins of development practice: women, LGBTQ, Indigenous, and differently abled people.

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of the semester, participants in this course will be able to:

- Reflect (with a high degree of analytical clarity) on and provide a critique of Euro-normativity in development studies and development practice
- Respond with lucidity and humble confidence (in both written and oral forms of communication) to questions about development epistemologies, positionality, Indigeneity, identity politics, representation, and historical shifts in development approaches
- Formulate strong and articulate arguments about the intersections between development practice and political, social, cultural, and ecological contexts
- Work collaboratively to create communities (or collectives) for engaged and sustained learning, this includes co-authoring, peer reviewing, and engaging in respectful communication
- Fulfill their own individual goal(s) for the course (established by each learner at the beginning of the semester)

**In this course, we will read sections of the following texts. All texts will be on reserve at Goddard Library throughout the semester.**

- Bond, Patrick and Ana Garcia (eds.). *BRICS: An Anti-Capitalist Critique*.

**Recommended (not required):**

York: The Guilford Press).


• Carmody, Pádraig. The Rise of the BRICS in Africa.


Course Format

1. Attendance: Guidelines to be determined collectively.

2. Readings: Guidelines to be determined collectively.

3. Participation: Guidelines to be determined collectively.

4. Assessments: 50% to be determined by the collective; 50% determined by the course leader.

The intentions of this course are to establish a collective of engaged learners who are passionate about and committed to, in various ways, the pursuit of knowledge for social justice. Inspired by critical pedagogies of bell hooks and Paulo Freire, I have tried to weave flexibility and attention to learners’ educational needs within our course structure. We will engage together and we will learn together. As such, this syllabus is a living document that will be worked and reworked throughout our time together. There will be moments when we decide as a collective to pursue new topics that were not originally scheduled and/or to drop or alter others.

Projects to decolonize knowledge are founded on the active engagement of the learners in the knowledge creation project. This involves collective and active construction of key elements of the course structure and the arrangement of our engagements in and out of the classroom. During our first couple of meetings and based on the learners’ objectives, interests, and experiences, the collective will determine 50% of the course assessments (such assessments might include a final written project or a daily diary or the filming of a short video clip or writing an original song, for example). These
additional assessments will then be posted on the course Moodle page once the collective has agreed upon the requirements.

Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Breakdown</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be determined by the collective</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation &amp; Discussion Facilitation</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Reading Reflections</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Note: Graduate learners are required to deliver two oral presentations per semester. Undergraduate learners will deliver one.

Presentation & Discussion Facilitation

Each learner will deliver one 25-minute oral presentation and facilitate the subsequent class discussion for approximately 20 minutes (graduate students will deliver two presentations throughout the semester). Presentations will address the theme for the given week and will illustrate considerable breadth and depth of reflection. Each week on the syllabus has 1 or 2 additional reading sources listed; the presenter for each week will read these additional materials, which will add substance to the week’s discussion. Presentations will introduce the theme and engage contextually and critically with it. Learners will compose two questions that will lead into the class discussion. Questions for the discussion facilitation will focus in on specific aspects of the texts for the week (rather than asking broad questions). Presentations are an opportunity for learners to lead us in our daily collective knowledge creation. I encourage learners to be innovative, discerning, and even radical in engagements with the readings. A grading rubric for presentations will be circulated and posted on Moodle.

Daily Reading Reflections

This is a reading intensive course. To encourage critical thinking and reflection upon the readings, learners will upload a 2-page (single-space, Times, 12-point font) reflection on the day’s reading by 8am on the day that the class is scheduled to meet. Learners are encouraged to address topics discussed in their reflections with the collective, when appropriate. Reflections should not be mere summations of our materials; rather, they will demonstrate original, critical thinking as the learners make connections between different authors and themes from week-to-week and interpret the readings through their various positionalities and/or engagements with social justice. These written reflections are opportunities for learners to delve into particular aspects of the readings that are of particular interest for the learner.

Exams

There will be two exams for this course. These exams will be composed of short and long written responses to questions based on lectures, discussions, and materials.
(including videos and readings). These exams are not intended to test learners’ abilities to summarize or memorize information. Rather, each exam will look at learners’ abilities to: make broad connections between themes and readings, elucidate major arguments of key texts, and articulate original ideas. Each exam will take approximately 60 minutes.

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Disabilities

If you need assistance or appropriate academic accommodations for a disability or other issue, please contact me after class or via email.

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Academic Integrity

As with each course offered at Clark, students are expected to adhere to the university’s Academic Honor Code. Be sensitive to issues of plagiarism and be sure to credit the work of others in your writing. If you have questions about citations, there are many comprehensive academic guidelines on plagiarism and how to avoid it available online.

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Course Schedule

(Subject to change upon notification)

WEEK 1 → Introduction to Core Arguments


WEEK 2 → Critiquing Development

  - In Class (film): Watch sections of John Pilger’s “War by Other Means—IMF and the World Bank.” Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79bZ71fUZRU

Presenter:


WEEK 3 ➔ “Dangerous” Development: Sovereignty, Ending Aid, Reparations
• Tandon, Yash. (2008) Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Ending Aid Dependence. Fahamu.
• Sankara, Thomas. Select Speeches. In Thomas Sankara Speaks.
  ○ In Class (film): Watch sections of “The Upright Man.”

Presenter:

WEEK 4 ➔ Hegemonic Appropriations & Ambivalences of “Indigenous Knowledge”
  ○ In Class (Lecture): Case study of the Chad-Cameroon Oil Pipeline

Presenter (choose two):

WEEK 5 ➔ Spirituality, Witchcraft, & Development

Presenter:

WEEK 6 ➔ Indigenizing the Future


*Presenter* (choose two):

WEEK 7 ➔ Feminizing Poverty, Feminizing Development: Contemporary Debates

  ○ In Class (film clip): Watch promotional video for Nike Girl Campaign

*Presenter:*

➔ Mid-Term Exam (approximately 60 minutes)

WEEK 8 ➔ Women Strike Back


**WEEK 9 ➔ Feminizing Development Futures**


**Presenter:**


**WEEK 10 ➔ Queering Development**


**Presenter:**


**WEEK 11 ➔ Queering Development Futures**

WEEK 12 ➔ LGBTQ Activism in Transnational Context

  - In Class (film): Documentary on Ugandan and Cameroonian LGBTQ community

Presenter:

WEEK 13 ➔ Problematizing the North/South Epistemic Divide: Troubling South-South Relations

- Prashad, Vijay (2015) “Does the South have a possible history?” in BRICS: An Anti-Capitalist Critique, Bond, Patrick and Ana Garcia (eds.).

Presenter (choose two):
- Panitch, Leo (2015) “BRICS, the G20 and the American Empire” in BRICS: An Anti-Capitalist Critique, Bond, Patrick and Ana Garcia (eds.).

WEEK 14 ➔ Problematizing the North/South Epistemic Divide: Hegemonic Knowledge Transfers

- World Bank and IFI training programs; look at WB websites

**Presenter:**


**WEEK 15 ➔ Daring to Invent the Future**


**WEEK 16 ➔ Final exam (60 minutes)**