I. Course Description:
This course aims to unpack the relationships between our everyday constructions of poverty, development, and gender, theories of development and gender produced in academic and policy circles, and the everyday lives of the world’s poorest. We will focus on understanding and applying a “gender lens” to concrete issues of development, developing a unique set of analytic tools for grappling with the complexities of development questions. To this end, the readings will emphasize theory at the beginning of the course and focus on concrete topics later in the course, but we will always tie these two aspects together during our time in class. This course privileges a sociological perspective on development over a purely economic one, and thus privileges on-the-ground ethnographic scholarship over quantitative studies. Still, this course maintains a focus on the centrality of the economic and material aspects of everyday human lives.

The course is divided into four sections. In the first section, we will build our “toolkit.” We will become acquainted with dominant development paradigms and their critiques, and begin to forge an understanding of how a “gender lens” offers us a dramatically new perspective. In the second section of the course, we bring to the fore the notion of “empowerment,” a keyword in newly dominant paradigms of gender and development. Using a gendered, transnational view, we will problematize “empowerment” as a concept and as a development goal, with reference to specific case studies. As we include a view of the global economy in this section of the course, we also problematize the divide between “developing” and “developed” nations. In the last part of the course, we hone our skills of gendered critique to focus upon the specific topic of microfinance as a development strategy, reading a range of both critical and laudatory texts. We will aim to expose the presumptions that underpin microfinance programs, and I will engage the class in my own research on the subject. Finally, we conclude the course with an examination of transnational strategies that imagine creative and equitable visions of development worldwide.

II. Grading and assignments:
Students will be graded on the following assignments:

1) Weekly reading responses (<300 words): In these assignments, you will reflect upon the readings for the week and connect them with material covered earlier in the class. These are not summaries, but it will be useful for you to state the key concept/contribution of the reading in your response. Mainly, the responses should focus on what stood out to you about the readings and what it made you think about. Each student must post one response to the appropriate Sakai forum topic per week and I encourage you to read one another’s responses.
2) **Participation/Attendance:** Discussion, exchange, and participation are critical components of this class and class time will be important in facilitating your understanding of the readings. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. More than two absences during the course of the term will dramatically affect your participation grade. Tardiness is not acceptable; if you are more than 10 minutes late to class, it will count as an absence. If you are consistently late by a few minutes, this will affect your participation grade as well.

Attending class is always your choice. In general, there is no need to contact me to “excuse” your absence. If you are absent **more than twice** during the term for medical or other personal reasons, then please keep me informed. I expect that everyone will have once or twice in the semester when they cannot come due to sickness or an important appointment. More than that, however, and you’re missing out on class!

3) **Exams:** There will be two take-home exams covering material presented in the readings and discussion. These exams are to be completed individually. You may refer to any and all course materials in preparing the exam. The second exam will be cumulative in scope, but both exams will be the same length and weighed the same in the grading.

**Exam format:** Exams will include several identifications (to be described in a 1-3 sentences), short essays (outlining the key aspects of a specific topic in a paragraph), and one essay (an analytical question that will ask you to draw upon the readings to analyze a specific issue in 2 pages).

4) **Oral Book Review:** After week 3, a group of students will present to the class a monograph related to the week’s readings at the end of our classtime each Thursday (or Monday in the cases that a topic concludes on a Monday). I will provide you with a choice of books for each weekly topic. The goal of this assignment is to make students aware of current scholarship in the field and connect this work with our work in class. Details about format and requirements to follow.

5) **Analytical Paper:** Students will be required to develop a topic of interest over the course of the semester and turn in a short (5-7 page) paper demonstrating your ability to effectively analyze a specific topic through a “gender lens” by the end of the course. Your paper may build upon the work you have already done for the book review, thus offering you the opportunity to develop a special area of interest within the field of gender and development, and allowing you to work alongside students who share your interest. More details on the requirements of the paper to follow.

Your final grade will be computed as follows:

- Participation/Responses: 20%
- Exams: 40%
- Oral Book Review: 15%
- Analytical Paper: 25%

*A note about grading: I grade work according to quality, effort, and a demonstrated understanding of the key concepts of the course/assignment. A grade of “B” indicates good work. It means that you have made adequate effort, have shown that you understand the main ideas, and have met the expectations of the class. To get a grade in the “A” range, your work must surpass those*
expectations. In short, “A’s” are for work at an excellent level. Grades of “C” or below indicate that you have not fulfilled the expectations of the coursework, either by not completing the assignment or by not putting in the required time and effort.

III. Course Materials:

Most of the readings for this course are available either through Sakai resources or electronically through the Wellesley library. In addition, we will be reading the following books. As many of these are available through ebrary, it is up to you whether you wish to purchase them for use in our class. Make sure that you have access to the book by the time we read it in class and are able to access a copy of the reading while in class:


IV. Outline of Course:

September 6th: Introduction and outline of the course

**PART I: Development & Poverty, Gender & Culture**

September 10th: Development and Poverty as Narrative


September 13th: Development as (Solvable) Economic Problem

September 17th-20th: Gendering Development I: Cultural Considerations


September 24th-27th: Gendering Development II: Economic Considerations

- SIGN UP FOR BOOK REVIEW GROUPS BY SEPTEMBER 27th

**PART II: Gendere  d Empowerment as Development Paradigm**

October 1st-4th: States and NGOs


NO CLASS October 8th (Fall break)

October 11th-18th: The Contradictory Sites of the Global Service Sector

October 22nd - 25th: Global Factories as Sites of Empowerment
  • Plankey-Videla, Nancy. 2012. *We are in this Dance Together: Gender, Power, and Globalization at a Mexican Garment Firm* (selections TBA, on Sakai resources)

October 29th: Review for Exam I

November 1st: EXAM I DUE IN CLASS
  • Group work for Analytical Paper

**PART III. Analyzing Microcredit as Development Strategy**

November 5th-November 8th: Critiques of Bangladesh
  • Film: *Small Change, Big Business: The Women’s Bank of Bangladesh 10 Years Later* (accessible through Sakai resources)

November 12th-15th: Developing a Gendered Critique of Microfinance
  • Anthony, Denise and Christine Horne. 2003. “Gender and Cooperation: Explaining Loan Repayment in Micro-Credit Groups.” *Social Psychological Quarterly.* Vol. 66(3) 293-302 (online)

November 19th: Training Women to Be Good Borrowers
  • In-class lecture and activity, *Sankalp* video (Ujjivan)

NO CLASS NOVEMBER 22nd (THANKSGIVING BREAK)
PART IV: Looking outward: Feminism in motion

November 26th-29th: Transnational Possibilities


December 3rd - Feminist Translations and World Travels


December 6th: Review for Exam II

December 10th: EXAM II DUE IN CLASS

- Wrap-up/conclude in class

ANALYTICAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 21st, 4PM.