

**Development and Its Critics**  
**ANS 361 – Unique 32234**  
**University of Texas at Austin – Spring 2019**  
**RLP 0.122**  
**Tuesday and Thursday 5-6:30**

**Professor Heather Hindman**

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Office Hours: Tues/Th 12:45 - 1:45 -- Other times by appointment

**Course Description**

This class approaches particular aspects of the contemporary state of international aid and development. While people have been seeking better methods of doing good in hopes of improving their own lives and those of their community for a long time, this isn't development, at least as we will discuss it in this class. In the post-colonial era (thus after about 1950), nation-states have created new methods and logics behind their support of/by other nation-states. While governments were long central to the operation of international aid, businesses and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) have gained prominence in recent years, and it can often be difficult in the present era to disentangle public/private or governmental/non-governmental dimensions. Increasingly (and perhaps especially because of the critique of colonialism), individuals and groups wonder if development is even a good idea, and instead promote ideas of social entrepreneurship or other forms of revenue-generating "aid programs." The result is an extremely complex landscape behind even the most basic goal of aid - "fewer people starving, suffering and dying." Beyond this goal, there is little agreement. Rather than approaching the unreasonable goal of deciding what good aid and bad aid is (*read this twice - we will not be solving the problem of the right way to do development*), we will be looking at two particular aspects of aid: the imbrication of aid into nation-state goals and development as a distinctive type of industry. At the conclusion of the class, students will have a better idea about the decision making that takes place within the development industry and the scope of aid as a economic and social force in the contemporary world.

**Texts and Readings**

Two books have been ordered as **required reading** for this class:

Alexander, Jessica. 2013. *Chasing Chaos: My Decade in and out of Humanitarian Aid*. New York: Broadway Books.

Bornstein, Erica. 2012. *Disquieting Gifts: Humanitarianism in New Delhi*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

These books are available at the UT Co-op bookstore, but also via on-line booksellers.

Our other readings are from assorted journals, books and edited collections will be available on Canvas.

Please check Canvas regularly – syllabus updates and additional information will often be posted there. You should bring the relevant text to class each day as we will be discussing the texts in class and that will be facilitated by you having something to remember the ideas.

Readings listed for a given class day should be completed BEFORE coming to class to enable your active participation in discussion. If you are not able to do the readings, come to class anyway – but I anticipate this will only happen once or twice during the semester. (If student preparation becomes a problem, I reserve the right to introduce in-class quizzes as an enforcement mechanism.)

### Assignments

There are six components to how your performance in this class will be evaluated. NOTE: On the syllabus all assignments are listed in **Bold**.

(#1) Class participation in this course is highly valued. (Perhaps needless to say, but attendance is an element of this – participating in class is difficult if you are not in class. Attendance is thus also a significant part of your participation grade.) Participation is more than ‘talking a lot’ – instead it is being an enthusiastic, prepared and considerate member of a learning community. To this end, coming to class prepared with notes and questions is often useful. Given that not everyone feels comfortable speaking in class, there are other ways you can participate. If you wish to contribute, but feel more comfortable writing, please feel free to send me an email with your thoughts on recent reading or to post a note on Canvas. I also encourage you to discuss in readings you encounter about development outside the class or issues raised by the course material that relates to other classes, but also remember: **Discussion is not a situation where more is not better – quality over quantity.**

In this class we will be talking about divisive, controversial and important issues – sex, religion, race, etc. – I expect students to show respect to themselves and other members of the learning community in these discussions. Please be considerate of one another. All opinions are welcome in this course if presented with civility and scholarly rigor.

(#2) There are six (6) response assignments that are designed to get you organizing your thoughts, to get in good writing habits and to generate conversation in class. These responses are due on Canvas 11:59 AM (NOON) the day BEFORE the class where we will discuss them. The submissions to Canvas are necessary to formulate the discussion for class the next day. I may call on individual students to share their responses. I might offer some comments on the papers, especially at the beginning of the semester, to be sure you are on track with the readings. A good response will connect the reading to news events or other assignment, ask probing questions of the text or offer comments on the nature of the argument. Responses should get beyond “I liked/didn’t like” it and should offer open ended questions, rather than fact-based queries. You will be given a handout on responses that will go into more detail - responses should be about 500 words. Importantly, these are texts to be used, thus cannot be turned in late.

(#3) Each student will look at one NGO or government aid organization in depth, examining the funding structure, employment practices and projects engaged by the organization. There will be a set of data that every report will need to include, but students are encouraged to go beyond this requirement. An assignment sheet with further details will be required. This assignment will require substantial research, but likely not a substantial number of pages (1,000 words).

(#4) Towards the end of the course, small groups of students will be asked to present to the class a brief examination of a development problem and their discussion of how they might seek to

solve this. A second group of students will act as potential funders or analysts, looking at potential problems with the project, both from a local context perspective and from the point of view of the headquarters. All students will serve as both project proposers and critics.

(#5&6) There is a midterm and a cumulative final for the course. The midterm will be more fact-oriented as the initial section of the course seeks to place us all on the same page and introduce terms. The final will cover some of the concepts that have proven challenging but also ask for more creative and analytical responses.

**The numbers...**

Participation/Attendance	15%
Reading Responses	25%
NGO Analysis	10%
Project Pitch	10%
Midterm	15%
Final	25%

An insight into the mind of your professor: I dislike the grading aspect of teaching and am far more enthusiastic about talking about how you are doing in the course than arguing over letters and numbers. Having a conversation **before** an assignment is due about the learning process and how each individual can improve is more useful than looking at “A”, “B” or “C” at the top of your paper.

An insight into this class: I have been writing about and researching development for nearly 20 years and continue to find the topic challenging and troubling. Poverty, environmental degradation, poor infrastructure and human rights violations are rampant and disturbing. And yet, most (maybe the majority) of development projects do a poor job of addressing these very real and troubling issues. It will be a challenge for all of us to avoid cynicism. These problems are real and the work we are doing in this class is meaningful - potentially world-changing.

January 22 - Introducing topic, students, professor

January 24 - **Introduction to the Class**

“The Development Game” - Leonard Frank

**Part One - Setting the Stage:** This section of the class is working to put forward a few key ideas and history of development. While at times dull, these are shared assumptions that are necessary to future readings. Often, I will be lecturing about topics beyond the reading, but assume you are keeping up with the assignments before the class. Any questions you have about the material is welcomed.

January 29 - **Development’s History**

“Introduction: The Anthropology of Development and Globalization” - pp 1- 21.

January 31 “The Rise and Fall of Development Theory” - Leys

“The History and Politics of Development Knowledge” Cooper & Packard

February 5     **Culture as a Barrier**

“An Intellectual Heritage of Development” - Crewe  
(Reading Response due Feb 4 at Noon)

February 7 - **Give and Take**

“Muddy Labor” - Watanabe

12 - **Aid Work as Work**

“Introduction” - Hindman & Fetcher

**Part Two - Scales and Styles of Gaze:** This section of the class looks from the point of view from a humanitarian aid worker, Jessica Alexander, at the same time students will begin exploring the scholarly and policy approach to development and humanitarian aid.

February 14 - **Chasing Chaos** - pages 1- 68

February 19 - **Chasing Chaos** - pages 68 - 141

February 21 - **Chasing Chaos** - pages 141 - 219  
(Reading Response due Feb 20 at Noon)

February 26 - **Chasing Chaos** - pages 220-304

February 28 - **Chasing Chaos** - pages 305-377

**Part Three - Doing Good, Better:** Humanitarian and development work comes (nearly always) from a intention to “do good” - but often falls short, whether in efficiency or actually creating new problems. This section of the course explores some examples of these challenges

March 5 - **Domestic Development: Katrina**

Grewal - “American Humanitarian Citizenship”

Adams - “The Other Road to Serfdom”

March 7 **Social Entrepreneurship and BOP Development**

Schwittay - “The Marketization of Poverty”

Dolan - “The New Face of Development”

(Reading Response due March 6 at Noon)

March 12 **Voluntourism**

Butcher and Smith - “Making a Difference”

Sinervo - “Independent Industries and Ethical Dilemmas”

March 14-     **Midterm**

SPRING Break

**Part Four - The Poisoned Gift:** This section looks at Indian practices of aid, particularly for orphans, and connects pre-existing practices of *dan*, or gift, with new or international ideas of how good development and aid can be and should be done. This also looks at the important issue of transparency; how do donors know their money is well-utilized.

March 26- Start Bornstein

March 28 - Continue Bornstein

April 2 - Continue Bornstein  
**(Reading Response due April 1 at Noon)**

April 4 - Continue Bornstein

April 9- Continue Bornstein  
***NGO Review Due***

**Part Five - Topics:** This section of the class examines some recent, and promoted an innovative, approaches to development. These themes can be changed depending upon the interests and experience of the students.

April 11 - **Microfinance and Women-centered Development**  
Karim - “Demystifying Micro-Credit”

April 16 **The Green Revolution and Agricultural “Best Practices”**  
IFPRI - “Green Revolution”  
Shiva - Introduction to *Violence of the Green Revolution*  
**(Reading Response due April 15 at Noon)**

April 18 **China in Africa**  
Brautigam “China in Africa: Seven Myths”  
Niu - “China’s development and its aid presence in Africa”

April 23 **Disasters and Disastrous Aid**  
Schuller - “Seeing Like a ‘Failed’ NGO”  
Tamang - “Dangers of Resilience” (online)  
Warner, Hindman and Snellinger - “Aftershocked” (online)  
**(Reading Response due April 22 at Noon)**

April 30 **Anthropologists on Development**  
Escobar - “The Making and Unmaking of the Third World Through Development”  
Ferguson - “Global Disconnection”

May 2            **The Techno-fix**  
Citrin and online assignments

May 7            **Pitching your Project**

May 9 - Final Review - Last Class

**The final will occur on the day our final is assigned by the registrar.**