



Department of  
Community Sustainability

**MICHIGAN STATE**  
**UNIVERSITY**

College of Agriculture  
and Natural Resources

**CSUS 215**  
**International Development and Sustainability**

Spring 2017  
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:20 to 11:40  
118 Farrall Ag Eng Hall

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**Catalog Course Description:** Theories, concepts and themes in international development and sustainability.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Differentiate between economic growth and sustainable development
- Apply critical thinking, analysis and research skills to evaluate the credibility of policy positions and scientific arguments.
- Develop skills to work in developing countries.
- Appreciate the importance of being open minded when thinking about international development.
- Think in a complex way about international development.

These course outcomes support the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies of critical thinking, systems thinking, and ethics. Students can learn more about the Department of Community Sustainability undergraduate program competencies at [http://www.csus.msu.edu/undergraduate/sustainability\\_core](http://www.csus.msu.edu/undergraduate/sustainability_core). In addition, this course supports Michigan State University's Undergraduate Learning Goals of analytical thinking and integrated reasoning. More information about MSU's Undergraduate Learning Goals is available at <http://learninggoals.undergrad.msu.edu/>.

**Course description**

This course will provide an overview of the major issues developing countries face in trying to balance development and sustainability. The emphasis of the course is on understanding what are the main challenges and problems developing countries face, and the possible solutions to these problems. The course will be divided into two parts. In the first half of the semester we will explore the concepts of “development” and “sustainability” to understand how sustainability goals can shape international development. We will begin the course by studying the origins of the idea of development, and how it was conceptualized in its origins as a problem of economic growth and modernization, then went on to become a concept that includes economic and social justice, empowerment and human rights, and the environment among other things. Then, we will look at the multidimensional aspects of poverty, and

different ways to measure it. We will then discuss the concept of sustainable development. Finally, we will explore some critiques of development and alternative ways to look at development.

During the second half of the semester, we will cover major issues (through papers, case studies and documentaries) related to development and sustainability relevant in developing countries: international aid, gender and development, agriculture, famines and food access, the commons, natural resources --specifically fisheries, and biodiversity. Our attempt to explore these issues will improve our understanding of how societies work (and don't work), and will also be a crucial foundation for practical solutions. During the course we will also discuss the role of outsiders working on international development and the "culture shock" outsiders may encounter when starting to live and work in a new country.

For each of the subjects we cover, we will try to understand why these issues are problematic, for whom they are problematic and we will explore possible 'solutions' under the rubric of sustainable development. To explore these issues in some depth, we will use case studies from Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and South Asia. These variations will allow us to comprehend international development in all its complexity.

In addition, throughout the course, students are expected to follow current affairs in news sources. This means that they need to make it a habit to read the news on a daily basis and search for stories related to the topics that we discuss in class. I recommended sources like the New York Times and the Economist, which have better writing and reporting than other sources.

### **Required Text**

There is no text required. But there are readings from different sources for each class. All the readings will be posted in D2L.

### **Grading:**

Grading Scale: Grade Percentage

4.0	93 - 100%
3.5	87.5 - 92.9%
3.0	82.5 - 87.4%
2.5	77.5 - 82.4%
2.0	72.5 - 77.4%
1.5	67.5 - 72.4%
1.0	62.5 - 67.4%
0.0	under 62.4%

### **Course Requirements**

For all classes you are supposed to come prepared and to have done the readings for each class. Below you will find a list of all the readings week to week. Please note that some readings are subject to change and I will let you know when that happens.

Requirements for the course include 3 focus country mini essays, in addition of final paper about that country, two exams, a group presentation, reading responses and participation.

Mini- essays focus country (10% each)	30%
Final paper	15%
First Exam	12%
Second Exam	15%
Group presentation	13%

Reading responses	10%
Participation	5%

Each student will choose a **focus country** from the developing world, which will be the focus of the mini-essays. The selection of the country will be on a first-come-first-served basis, and no two students can have the same country. Every month you will turn in a 800-1000 word mini-essay on development issues based on specific questions presented for each submission and related to topics that we are covering in class. Writing is a critical skill that you will need to master to be successful in this class and in whatever profession you choose to pursue; therefore, it is a primary focus of this course. All mini-essays should be submitted via D2L.

**Before January 19**, submit in D2L the country you want to focus on. The instructor will authorize it before you can go ahead with that country.

For all these assignments, the questions asked are part of the big theme that I want you to address in that mini- essay. The assignment is not only to answer the questions I mentioned; those questions should guide how to structure your assignment. Each assignment should have in between 800-1000 words, without counting the bibliography. For all the assignments make sure you include a bibliography with the different sources that you are citing. Be creative: you could include tables, maps, figures, etc, as soon as you include your sources, but those do not count in the word count.

**February 16, Focus country mini essays 1:** Why did you choose this country? Where is the country located? Find the GDP (what are the most important sectors in that GDP), the Gini coefficient, HDI and HPI of your focus country, and compare those with the ones of neighboring countries. How have these indicators change over time? What can you say about the indicators for your focus country?

**March 16, Focus country mini essay 2:** Look at reports describing how your focus country did with respect to the different indicators measured in the millennium development goals. What are the biggest challenges ahead? What are their goals for the sustainable development goals?

**April 6, Focus country mini essay 3:** In this mini essay you should focus on the rural area and the natural resources of the country. Some questions that you may investigate are : What is the rural development situation for your focus country? Or/and are there any positive experiences you can show about rural development in that country? What are the biggest environmental problems in rural areas your focus country is facing? Or/and are there any positive experiences you can show about resource management in that country?

By the end of the semester you will hand in a **final paper** of 2000 words summarizing what you think are the biggest problems related to development that country is facing, and realistic solutions to the question: If you were a consultant in that country, what solutions would you recommend? In order to do the *focus mini-essays* and the *final paper* you will need to do research on your own, and follow the news of that country during the semester. Things can change rapidly in developing countries. Final paper should be submitted in class the day of the final, on May 4<sup>nd</sup>.

### First exam

The midterm will be on March 2nd. This exam will cover all material (including readings, class presentations and documentaries) covered up until the class previous to the exam (February 28st). The exam will be a mix of short-answer questions, true and false questions and multiple-choice questions. I will provide last year's exam as an example of the type of questions that you can expect.

## **Second exam**

The second exam will on April 20th. This will cover all material (including readings, class presentations and documentaries) covered up from March 14 until the class previous to the exam (April 18). The exam will be a mixture of short-answer questions, true and false questions and multiple-choice questions. I will provide last year's exam as an example of the type of questions that you can expect.

## **Group Presentation**

**Students will organize in groups of 3** to present an issue of development relevant for a region or for a particular country (for example the construction of dams in the Mekong, food security in East Africa, megacities in China, mining in a determined region or country, etc). For this presentation it is necessary to show how different actors (i.e political actors, or different groups) may perceive or are affected by that issue because in general different actors have different views of the problem or development initiatives and projects. Students are required to create their groups and suggest a topic by March 16 in D2L. Then they will meet with the instructor to discuss the approach they will take. This assignment will imply doing research about the topic and to work in groups. Final presentations are due on the last week of classes. Each group is going to have 15 minutes to do their presentation.

## **Reading responses**

For some readings, activities and documentaries students will be expected to answer a question in 2-3 sentences, or with other type of questions. Sometimes I will use the reading responses at the beginning of the class based on the readings for that day, or at the end of the class based on the presentation and the readings.

## **Participation**

You are expected to be in class every time. It is impossible to fulfill this requirement of the course if you do not complete the readings and do not come to class. Attendance will be taken in each class. Students who have three absences or fewer will receive full grade for participation. If you anticipate problems complying with this requirement, *notify the instructor as soon as you become aware of the problem!*

Michigan State University is committed to ensuring that the bereavement process of a student who loses a family member during a semester does not put the student at an academic disadvantage in their classes. If you require a grief absence, you should complete the "Grief Absence Request" web form (found at <https://www.reg.msu.edu/sitemap.aspx?Group=7>) no later than one week after knowledge of the circumstance. I will work with you to make appropriate accommodations so that you are not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

## **Cellphones**

While in class, students are expected *to turn off their cellphones*. If you have an emergency or are expecting a very urgent call, please communicate that to the instructor. You are not supposed to be texting or sending emails during class. This is a collective action problem, calls, texts and emails only "benefit" you, but cause a big discomfort on others. So please don't.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at [rcpd.msu.edu](http://rcpd.msu.edu). Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to an instructor during the second week of class and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

**Academic Integrity:**

[Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the Academic Freedom Report states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, the Department of Sustainability adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the [www.allmsu.com](http://www.allmsu.com) Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Instances of **plagiarism** constitute academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in which plagiarism occurs. See <https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html> for a definition and discussion of plagiarism.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course. This course is overseen by the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Class activities and Guest Speakers.
Week 1	January 10	Introduction to the course		
	January 12			Movie: Germs, Guns and Steel
Week 2	January 17	Development and its origins	The companion to development studies. Second edition. V. Desai and R. B. Potter. London, Hodder Education chapters 1.1 and 1.2 (pages 5-15)	
	January 19	Development, the colonial experience and theory	Haslam, P. A., J. Schafer, et al., Eds. (2012). Introduction to international development: Approaches actors and issues. Second edition. Don Mills Ontario, Oxford University. Press. Chapter 2 (pages 28-42)	
Week 3	January 24	Development and, economic growth	The companion to development studies. Second edition. V. Desai and R. B. Potter. London, Hodder Education chapters 1.5 and 1.6 (pages 25-33)	
	January 26	Measures and poverty	Haslam, P. A., J. Schafer, et al., Eds. (2012). Introduction to international development: Approaches actors and issues. Second edition. Don Mills Ontario, Oxford University. Press. Chapter 1 (pages 3-25)	
Week 4	January 31	Measures and poverty	Not always with us. The Economist. June 1st 2013. Jerven, M. (2013). Poor numbers: how we are misled by African development statistics and what to do about it. Cornell University Press. – Pg. 8-32.	
	February 2	Development and ethics	The companion to development studies. Second edition. V. Desai and R. B. Potter. London, Hodder Education chapters 1.12 and 1.10 (pages 47-50)  Chambers, R. (1997) Whose Reality Counts?: Putting the First Last. Intermedia Technology. Chapter 3	
Week 5	February 7	Sustainable development	Elliot, J. (2006) Introduction to Sustainable Development. Chap. 1 (8-31)	
	February 9	Sustainable development	Elliot, J. (2006) Introduction to Sustainable Development. Chap. 1 (32- 55)	

Week 5	February 14	Environment and Development	Kingsbury, D., McKay, J., Hunt, J., McGillivray, M., & Clarke, M. (2012). <i>International development: Issues and challenges</i> . Palgrave Macmillan. Chapter 11 (271-296)	
	February 16	Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development goals	Haslam, P. A., J. Schafer, et al., Eds. (2012). Introduction to international development: Approaches actors and issues. Second edition. Don Mills Ontario, Oxford University. Press. Chapter 13  Griggs, D., Stafford-Smith, M., Gaffney, O., Rockström, J., Ohman, M. C., Shyamsundar, P., ... Noble, I. (2013). Policy: Sustainable development goals for people and planet. <i>Nature</i> , 495(7441), 305–7. doi:10.1038/495305a	
Week 6	February 21	Degrowth	Degrowth. A vocabulary for the new era.(2014) Edited by Giacomo D'Alisa, Federico Demaria and Giorgos Kallis. Routledge Introduction and Buen Vivir. (pages 1-17 and 201-204)	
	February 23	Degrowth	TBA	Guest speaker: Kyle Metta.
Week 7	February 28, 2016	Synthesis first part of the course.	Green, Duncan. <i>From poverty to power: How active citizens and effective states can change the world</i> . Oxfam, 2012. Introduction (3-14)	Documentary: The End of Poverty?
	March 2	First exam		
Spring Break				
Week 8	March 14	Agriculture	TBA	Guest Speaker: Timothy Silberg
	March 16	Famines and Food Access	The companion to development studies. Second edition. V. Desai and R. B. Potter. London, Hodder Education chapters 4.3 and 4.4	Guest Speaker: Udit Sanga
Week 9	March 21	Agriculture: case study Coffee	TBA	
	March 23	Gross National Happiness	Revkin, Andrew C. "A new measure of well-being from a happy little kingdom." <i>New York Times</i> 4 (2005): Burns, G. W. (2011). <i>Gross national happiness: A gift from Bhutan to the world</i> . (pp. 73-87). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands. doi:10.1007/978-90-481-9938-9_5omist March 4, 2010.	<a href="http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com">http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com</a>

Week 10	March 28	International Aid	Gibson, C., Andersson, K., Ostrom, E. and S. Shivakumar (2005). The Samaritan's Dilemma: The Political Economy of Development Aid. Oxford University Press. Part I.	Documentary : "Life and Debt"
	March 30		The worldwide war on baby girls. The Economist. March 4, 2010 Gendercide. The Economist. September 21, 2013 Haslam, P. A., J. Schafer, et al., Eds. (2012). Introduction to international development: Approaches actors and issues. Second edition. Don Mills Ontario, Oxford University. Press. Chapter 5	
		Gender and Development		
Week 11	April 4	The commons	Sustaining the commons. John M Anderies and Marco Janssen. Published by Center for the Study of Institutional Diversity. Arizona State University. Section 1 (3-11), section 2 (13-23)	
	April 6	Manage the commons		Guest speaker: Aldo Gonzalez
Week 12	April 11	The commons	Sustaining the commons. John M Anderies and Marco Janssen. Published by Center for the Study of Institutional Diversity. Arizona State University. Section 4 (39-47) and Section 5 (51-62)	
	April 13	Natural Resources: Fisheries	Andrew et al (2007) "Diagnosis and management of small-scale fisheries in developing countries" Béné et al. (2010) "Not by rent alone: Analyzing the pro-poor functions of small-scale fisheries in developing countries." Development Policy Review, 28(3): 325-358.	Guest speaker: Laura Castro
Week 13	April 18	Biodiversity	Timmer & Juma (2005) "Biodiversity Conservation and Poverty Reduction Come Together in the Tropics. Lessons from Equator Initiative" Environment 47(4) Adams et al. (2004) "Biodiversity Conservation and the Eradication of Poverty" Science , vol. 306	
	April 20	Second Exam		
Week 14	April 25	Group Presentations		
	April 27	Group presentations		