Poverty, Inequality and Globalisation: theories, concepts and policies

Spring 2008 – Syllabus

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Office Hours: Mondays 5-6; Tuesday 8-9
Class schedule: Mondays 6-7.50

Course description

Does opening up to global markets help or hurt poor workers and poor countries? Does the value chain empower or exploit women workers? Questions like these are studied by economists and social scientists to inform policy makers as they design economic, social and governance reform policies. There is much that we know and that we do not know; some points of consensus and many points of disagreement. This course is an introduction to these debates about poverty and inequality, particularly as they relate to globalisation. The focus is on policy choices and the empirical analyses that underpin choices. The course will cover economic and human-centered theoretical and conceptual frameworks (key concepts, definitions, measures); analyses of trends which come to opposing conclusions; and policy approaches to reducing poverty and inequality within and between countries. The course focuses on broad national and international policy issues, and on poverty and inequality within countries, as well as inequality between countries in the global context. The aim is to familiarize students with the current state of the debate on the issue, and in general help students develop critical perspectives and the ability to analyse empirical material to argue their own case.

Pre-requisites
There is no formal prerequisite but the course builds on Comparative Development Experience. This course is designed as a follow-on to CDE and builds on the introductory material presented in that course. While CDE is about development, this course focuses on poverty and inequality as an aspect of the development process.

**Grading and Requirements**

Grading will be based on meeting three requirements:

- Classroom participation (25% of grade): Participation is an important part of this discussion based class. Students are expected to attend all classes, having done the required reading, and to contribute to classroom discussion. Five one page notes on readings and one presentation will be assigned.

- Short paper (25% of grade): a paper of at least 2000 words.

- Long paper (50% of grade): a paper of at least 6000 words. Papers are expected to reflect analysis, use of theoretical frameworks, organisation of material and information, and coherent presentation.

The course will include 14 regular classes. In addition, if you do not feel comfortable with the use of development indicators, you are also strongly urged to attend the data clinic offered for CDE.

Plagiarism is taken very seriously in accordance with GPIA policy and will result in a failing grade.

**Communications and resources:**

- Email: The class will communicate by the New School email address. Please look at your New School email account regularly.

- Reading resources: reading resources will be accessible on the web or posted on the Blackboard.

- Announcements: The Blackboard will be used for announcements.

- Readings will be made available on the Blackboard unless available on-line.

**Website sources:**
The course readings draw from original references.

In addition to assigned sources, the following websites provide up-to-date research, data and debates.

Data websites:

- World Bank, World Development Indicators (accessible at NYU library)
- WIDER (UN World Institute for Development Economics Research)
  http://www.wider.unu.edu
- UN Millennium Development Goals Indicators Data base
  http://millenniumindicators.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_goals.asp
- World Bank Inequality Around the World page
  http://www.worldbank.org/research/inequality

Policy websites:

- Emma Aisbett – overview of sources
  http://are.berkeley.edu/~harrison/globalpoverty/index.html
- Action Aid: http://www.actionaid.org
- Center for Global Development: http://www.cgdev/section/topics/globalization
- Globalization and Inequality Group hosted by the Brookings Institution and the Center for Global Development
  http://www.brookings.edu/gs/researchprojects/glig/glig_hp.htm
- Oxfam   http://www.oxfamorg/eng
- World Bank Globalization page
- UNDP Poverty Center  http://www.undp-povertycentre.org/
- Institute of Economics
  http://www.petersoninstitute.org/research/researchareas.cfm
- ODI (Overseas Development Institute) London  http://www.odi.org.uk/
IDS (Institute of Development Studies), UK [http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/](http://www.ids.ac.uk/ids/)

UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development), Geneva. [http://www.unrisd.org](http://www.unrisd.org)

UNWIDER (UN World Institution on Development Economics Research), Helsinki [http://unwider.org](http://unwider.org)

Week 1: Introduction

- Course organization
- Overview of course
- Lecture: Globalisation, neoliberalism, poverty and inequality – and the international development agenda

**Required reading**


Week 1a: Special lecture

Ha-Joon Chang, University of Cambridge: *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism*

Tuesday, January 29th 6pm-8pm
Theresa Lang Center, 55West 13th Street 2nd Floor

**Part I What is poverty? What is inequality? How are they defined and measured?**

Week 2: Concept, definition and measures of poverty and inequality – comparing diverse conceptions of poverty, definitions and measurement (income based, capability based, human rights based)

**Required reading**


Course hand out: “Measuring development, poverty and inequality: mapping indicators”

Additional references


Week 3: Inequality and equity (not poverty): concept, definitions and measures;


**Part II: Poverty and inequality within countries**


**Required reading**


**Supplemental readings**


**Week 5: Within country poverty and inequality - Why are people poor and why? Is it lack of income, education or political voice?**

*Required reading*

www.worldbank.org

http://www.brookings.edu/Views/Papers/200611moser.pdf


**Week 6: Does democracy empower people?**

*Required reading*


Week 7: Globalization and poverty within countries – does the global value chain empower or impoverish women?

Guest lecturer: Jenny McGill, Columbia University

Required reading


Kider, Thalia and Kate Raworth, ‘Good jobs’ and hidden costs: women workers documenting the price of precarious employment, *Gender and Development* Vol. 12, No. 2, July 2004


OR

[http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/economic/bhagwji.htm](http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/economic/bhagwji.htm)


Part III: Globalisation and global inequality

Week 8: Global inequality: debates over empirical trends

Literature review

OR


Optimists:


Pessimists


Supplementary references


Week 9: Globalization and developing countries

**Required reading**

Birdsall, Nancy. 2005. ‘The World is not Flat: Inequality and Injustice in our Global Economy’ *CEDEV working paper, WIDER* lecture (wider website, CGDEV website)


**Supplementary reading**


Week 10: Trade openness, growth and inequality within countries

Guest lecturer: Kamal Malhotra, UNDP
Week 11: Global governance


Part IV New dimensions

Week 12: Poverty, inequality and civil war – cause of consequence?

Required reading


Supplemental reading


Week 13: tbd

Part V Summing up and student presentations

Week 14: student presentations