IR/GE 304: Environmentally Sustainable Development

Lecture: Monday and Wednesday, 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm, CAS B20
September 7, 2016 – December 12, 2016

Professor: Julie Michelle Klinger, PhD
Email: jklinger@bu.edu
Office Hours: 152 BSR #G04D, Mondays 9:00 – 10:30 am and Tuesdays 10:30 am – Noon
Make your appointment at: https://professorklinger.youcanbook.me

Teaching Assistant: Erika Beidelmann
Email: erikatb@bu.edu, Office: CAS 130
Discussion Sections:  B1: Tuesdays 11:00 am – 12:00 noon, CAS B20
September 13, 2015 – December 6, 2015
B2: Wednesdays 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm, STH B22
September 14, 2015 – December 7, 2015
B3: Fridays 12:00 noon – 1:00 pm STO 453
September 16, 2015 – December 9, 2015

Course Description and Objectives

The sustainable development project is in crisis. Across the globe, policy-makers and activists have dismissed sustainability as an empty buzzword, while post-development and neoliberal critics have proclaimed the ‘death of Development.’ Yet abandoning the cause is untenable: the last year alone has seen a significant re-investment in the concept, with influential economist Jeffrey Sachs and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon declaring the present to be the Age of Sustainable Development, and the UN unveiling the Sustainable Development Goals.
Dramatically conflicting opinions such as these indicate that critical evaluation is due: Why, after decades of sustained global efforts, billions of dollars of aid and investment, and wars, revolutions, and summits staged in the name of development, has global poverty and inequality intensified? Following the year by which the Millennium Development Goals were meant to be achieved and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals were unveiled, it is especially important to examine the history of the development project, the issues at the heart of the global mandate to achieve sustainability, and successes and failures from diverse cases and sectors.

The objective of this course is to enable students to contextualize and explain the current issues in environmentally sustainable development policy and practice by connecting present concerns with deeper histories. It is meant to: introduce students to major debates and developments that define the field; equip students with the broad critical thinking and deliberative skills that are vital to formulating, designing, evaluating, and hopefully one day transforming sustainable development initiatives. Accordingly, the course is organized into four parts. Part I begins with an overview of the histories and definitions of environmentally sustainable development. Part II examines the key issues and institutions that enable or constrain sustainable development policies and practices. Part III examines case studies of successes and failures of a range of sustainable development initiatives. The course concludes with Part IV, which concerns the question of ‘getting to work’ on the task of sustainable development.

The terrain of sustainable development is shifting rapidly and many of the assumptions that guided policy and practice even a few years ago are now being called into question. This is an exciting and challenging time to be taking Environmentally Sustainable Development!

Required Readings

All other readings are posted on Blackboard or available in electronic form through the library. In many cases, the URLs are also listed in the syllabus.

Course Requirements

This is a challenging course, but the requirements for success are simple: Read the assigned readings. Attend lecture and section. Complete all assignments on time. Take pride in your work. Be respectful. Listen to each other. Take notes. If at any point you are concerned about your grade or any other aspect of the course, bring it up with your Professor or your Teaching Assistant.

The course has five components: lectures, two papers, discussion section, and a final exam. Your grade consists of the following:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation in lecture and discussion section</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Papers: Two papers worth 20% each</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
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Participation (20%): Your attendance and preparation are important to achieving the greatest possible learning outcomes for you and your peers. In lecture, this means not only completing readings before lecture and arriving punctually to class, but also turning in a daily notecard (see instructions below). If you do not turn in your notecard, you will be marked absent. In both lecture and section, participation is evaluated based on your attendance, engagement, preparation, and completion of all in-class assignments and activities.

Attendance: Students may have two absences without affecting their participation grade. Emergency situations and religious holiday observances do not count as absences. Students are responsible for keeping up with all material and announcements covered in all lectures and discussion sections.

Engagement: Attendance is more than being physically present. You must be mentally present, too. If you are prone to distraction, sit in the front of the class. Your phones must be off and out of sight for the duration of lecture and section. You must also engage with each other. Learn each other’s names, and take notes when your classmates are speaking.

Preparation: All assigned readings must be completed prior to the lecture for which they are assigned. If you struggle with the volume of reading material, take some time at the beginning of the course to organize reading or discussion groups with your colleagues. Learn how to skim and how to take good reading notes to help you retain your newly acquired knowledge. Effective skimming and knowledge retention are vital professional skills. For resources, see for example Active Reading: Comprehension and Rate. Available at: http://www.dartmouth.edu/~acskills/success/reading.html

It is not only acceptable but expected that some readings will challenge you as you proceed through the course. That is, after all, the point. Bring your questions and quandaries to class, present them in a respectful way, and we will work through them together.

Note card requirement: At the beginning of each class turn in a 3 x 5 note card with your name and the date on one side. On the other side of the note card, include the following from the day’s readings: (1) One quotation, noting the author and page number, and (2) one comment on why that quotation is important to you. Your writing must be legible. You may not turn in a note card if you do not attend class, nor may you turn in someone else’s card, under any circumstances. Note cards will be returned to you at the end of the course. Each will be recorded as satisfactory (check) or good (check plus) according to how carefully and thoughtfully it was done. This is a central part of your lecture participation grade.

Papers (40%)

1. Paper and Poster Presentation (20%). Students will write a commodity chain analysis of a commodity of their choice, and they will present their findings in a poster
session to be held in section. Assignment details and criteria will be handed out in discussion section during the week of September 19.

2. Paper and Peer Review (20%). Students will write a development profile on a country of their choice, submit it for peer review, and revise it prior to final submission. Assignment details and criteria will be handed out in section during the week of October 31.

Final Exam (40%)

The final exam is cumulative, and will draw on material covered in the readings, lectures, and discussion sections. The purpose of the final exam is to assess and reinforce your grasp of the concepts covered in the course. Therefore the final exam will consist of essays and short answer questions with an optional extra credit question. A review session will be held during the final week of discussion sections.

Grading Concerns

Grades are assigned according to the work completed. In other words, a grade is something you earn, not something that is given to you. If you are concerned about your grade, discuss it with your professor at any time.

Accommodations

Documented Need: If you have a documented need for any academic accommodations, inform your professor in writing within the first full week of the course, or within three days of receiving documentation.

Ad hoc: Should you experience personal hardship that endangers your academic performance, your professor will work with you to complete your course requirements within the timeframe of the semester, so long as you promptly communicate your situation. No extenuating circumstances will be considered after the final class meeting.

Code of Conduct

It is expected that you will maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity in all of your work related to this course. Should you conduct yourself otherwise, there will be consequences. What this means for you as a student at Boston University is spelled out in the Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures. Of particular relevance to this course are violations A and B from the Academic Conduct Code:

“Cheating on examination. Any attempt by a student to alter his of her performance on an examination in violation of that examination’s stated or commonly understood ground rules.

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1 Academic Conduct Code: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/)
2 Disciplinary Procedures: [http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/](http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/)
“Plagiarism. Representing the work of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following: copying the answers of another student on an examination, copying or restating the work or ideas of another person or persons in any oral or written work (printed or electronic) without citing the appropriate source, and collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution. Plagiarism can consist of acts of commission-appropriating the words or ideas of another-or omission failing to acknowledge/document/credit the source or creator of words or ideas (see [Academic Conduct Code] for a detailed definition of plagiarism). It also includes colluding with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution, using audio or video footage that comes from another source (including work done by another student) without permission and acknowledgement of that source.”

It is your responsibility to know the Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures in their entirety. Please feel free to raise any questions or concerns in class, section, or during office hours. You may also find the FAQs about Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism\(^3\) helpful.

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\(^3\) FAQs about Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: [http://www.bu.edu/cgsnow/academics/plagiarism-academic-misconduct/](http://www.bu.edu/cgsnow/academics/plagiarism-academic-misconduct/)
Reading, Lecture, and Assignment Schedule

Part I: Histories, Debates, and Definitions

Wednesday, September 7 – Course Introductions and Opening Discussions
Lecture: It's the End of the World As We Know It! Or is it?

Monday, September 12 – What is Sustainable Development?
Lecture: Navigating the Sustainable Development Debate

Sachs 2015, Chapter 1: Introduction to Sustainable Development, pp. 1 – 44

Veltmeyer 2011, Module 11: The Global Collapse by Walden Bello, pp. 60 - 64

Wednesday, September 14 – What is ‘Development’?
Lecture: Where did ‘Development’ Begin?


Monday, September 19 – What is ‘Development’?
Lecture: “Development” according to whom? Toward what ends?
Section: Assignment for Paper #1 given in section

Sachs 2015, Chapter 4: Why Some Countries have Developed while Others have Stayed Poor. Pp. 101 – 138.


Recommended reading:


Wednesday, September 21 – What is ‘the Environment’?
Lecture: Who determines what part of ‘the Environment’ is worthy of protection, by whom, and towards what ends?


**Monday, September 26 -- What is ‘the Environment’?**

Lecture: *Who is allowed to live sustainably off the land? Who determines this? How is this enacted and enforced?* 


**Recommended reading:**


**Wednesday, September 28 – In-Class Film: *The Symphony of the Soil***

**Monday, October 3 – What is Sustainability? Origins of Sustainable Development**

Lecture: *Forty years of Sustainable Development. In-class exercise. Bring your laptops.*

Section: *Paper #1 peer review*


**Peruse:**


**Wednesday, October 5 – Sustainable Development Presentations**

*Lecture: Student-led presentations on the evolution of sustainable development*


**PART II: Issues and Institutions**

**Monday, October 10 – NO CLASS: Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day**

**CLASS MEETS TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11 – Indigenous Peoples**

*Lecture: Reckoning with the Past to Save the Future: Indigenous Peoples and Sustainable Development*


**Wednesday, October 12 - Slavery**

*Lecture: How and why slavery happens, and what it has to do with sustainable development.*


**Monday, October 17 – Global North and Global South**

*Lecture: The issues and institutions that make the North and South*

*Section: Paper #1 due at the beginning of section; poster sessions!*


*Recommended viewing:* *Life on the Line*

*Recommended reading:*


**Wednesday, October 19 – The Bretton Woods Institutions**
*Lecture: The Relationship between the Bretton Woods Institutions and Environmentally Sustainable Development*


**Monday, October 24 – In-Class Film: *Life and Debt***

**Wednesday, October 26 – Globalization in the West**
*Lecture: Global Trade I: Reagan, Thatcher, and Deng: Deregulation*


**Monday, October 31 – Globalization in the East: China**
*Lecture: Global Trade II: China from Revolution to Reform. Film: Mardi Gras made in China*

Assignment for Paper #2 given in section


*Recommended reading:*


**Wednesday, November 2 – Oil and Automobiles**
Lecture: Oil, Development, and Security


Monday, November 7 – Climate Change: The Science
Lecture: The State of Contemporary Climate Science


Wednesday, November 9 – Climate Justice
Lecture: Navigating Climate Politics


Recommended Viewing: The Island President

PART III: Successes and Failures

Monday, November 14 – Millennium Development Goals
Lecture: An Appraisal of MDGs and Related Projects
Section: Paper Peer Review


Recommended reading:
United Nations. 2015. Millennium Development Goals Report 2015. Available at:  

Black, Richard and Howard White. 2004. Targeting Development: Critical Perspectives on the  

**Wednesday, November 16 – Free Trade vs. Fair Trade**  
Lecture: International Trade 101  


**Monday, November 21 – Ecotourism**  
Lecture: Choose Your Own Adventure: A Brief History & In-Class Activity  
Section: Paper #2 due at the beginning of lecture

Monarch Butterfly Reserve of Mexico. Environment, Development and Sustainability 5(2003):  
371 – 382.

Devine, Jennifer A. 2014. Counterinsurgency Ecotourism in Guatemala’s Maya Biosphere  

**Wednesday, November 23 – NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**Monday, November 28 – Ecosystem Services**  
Lecture: Whose ecosystem provides services to whom?  

Sachs 2015, Chapter 13: Saving Biodiversity and Protecting Ecosystem Services, pp. 447 - 480

Cohn, Roger. 2012. Putting a Price on The Real Value of Nature. Yale 360: Reporting,  
Analysis, Opinion & Debate. Available at:  
http://e360.yale.edu/feature/putting_a_price_on_the_real_value_of_nature/2481/  

Conniff, Richard. 2012. What’s Wrong with Putting a Price on Nature? Yale 360: Reporting,  
Analysis, Opinion & Debate. Available at:  
http://e360.yale.edu/feature/ecosystem_services_whats_wrong_with_putting_a_price_on_nature/2583/  

**Wednesday, November 30 – Food**  
Lecture: The Paradoxes of Plenty


Recommended reading:


Monday, December 5 – Water
Lecture: Water is life. And money. And power.


Peruse: The Blue Planet Project www.blueplanetproject.net

PART IV: Getting to Work

Wednesday, December 7 – Local vs. Global scales
Lecture: Scale: What is it and why does it matter to sustainable development?

Ackerman, Frank. 2014. Your iPhone Causes China’s Pollution. The World Post. 13 February 2014.


Monday, December 12 – Aspirations and Ideals: Inclusion, Participation, Freedom
Lecture: Aspirations in Practice: Two Tales from Himalaya


Tuesday, December 13 – Thursday December 15: FINAL EXAM STUDY PERIOD

FINAL EXAM DATE/TIME TBD. STAY TUNED FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CLASS.