

“Resisting Development:” Foreign Aid, the Environment, and Collective  
Action in the Global South - CRN 22756  
Winter 2013 Syllabus

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**Instructor:** Kaitlyn Grigsby

**Office:** Columbia 47C

**Office Hours:** Wednesday 12 - 2 PM  
and by appointment

Tuesday and Thursday, 12 - 1:50 PM

**Class Location:** Columbia 142

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**Course Description:** What role does foreign aid play in solving (or creating) environmental and social problems in the Global South? Should the American government contribute money to “develop” poor countries? What is the impact of development programs on the people and environments of the Global South? In this course, we will be discussing both conventional and radical theories of social and economic development, with a focus on the writings of activists from the Global South. We will also debate the merits of both peaceful and violent collective action in resisting development and the ways in which Northern environmentalists can more effectively assist in combating global environmental degradation.

**Course Goals:**

- Conduct a broad overview of the conventional theories of international development and the role of development ideology in the formation of aid agencies
- Identify both positive and negative impacts of official *development* assistance (foreign aid) on the governments, people, and environments of the Global South
- Discuss alternative theories of development (sustainable development, participatory development, post-development, and anti-development theories) and evaluate their impact and efficacy in promoting the alleviation of poverty in the Global South
- Address ways in which individuals have, through collective action, challenged the dominant paradigms of development and inspired local, regional, national, and international change
- Understand the successes and challenges of grassroots organizations and collective action in the Global South and the ways in which Northern environmentalists can assist Southern environmental organizations
- Describe the organization, ideology, and activity of specific grassroots environmental organizations in the Global South

**Attendance and Participation:** Students are permitted two unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence beyond two will lower a student’s attendance grade by two percentage points. I expect students to be active participants in class discussion.

**Classroom Etiquette and Academic Integrity:** During lectures and class discussions please refrain from activities that may distract your classmates and me. Please turn off your cell phone before class. Please do no text message or hold side conversations during class and please limit computer activity to note taking. With your cooperation, everyone will have the advantage of a classroom environment conducive to learning. I will follow the University’s formal procedures when I

suspect cheating, plagiarism, or any other violation of the University's academic integrity policy. Feel free to talk to me if you have any questions about plagiarism or other academic issues.

**Absences, Make-ups, Late Papers, and Incompletes:** Please attend class. Late papers will be docked half a letter grade if turned in late on the due date of the assignment and an additional half a letter grade for each additional day late. Incompletes will only be given in the rarest of circumstances. Incompletes must be arranged and paper work filed prior to the end of the term.

**Disability Services:** The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability related barriers to your participation, please notify me as soon as possible. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center (Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155, [uoacc@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoacc@uoregon.edu), or at [aec.uoregon.edu](http://aec.uoregon.edu).

### **Grading:**

Attendance and Participation 10%

Discussion Questions/Blog Responses 10%

Reading Responses 15% (5% each)

Midterm Exam 25%

Group Project Presentation 10%

Final Paper 30%

**Assignments: *Discussion Questions/Blog Responses:*** To facilitate class participation, each student is responsible for writing and posting a response to an assignment/question that I will announce on Blackboard at least 48 hours before we meet. Students will respond at least 12 hours before class (midnight Monday, midnight Wednesday) to the appropriate blog on the class Blackboard page. There is a sample blog question and response on Blackboard under "Blog Responses." For some classes, I will ask students to write discussion questions for use during class. Questions should be open-ended and should prompt discussion. Here are a few sample questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with the author's thesis?
- What is useful, significant, or original about this article? What are some dilemmas raised by this article?
- Are there problems of overgeneralization in this chapter?

***Reading Responses:*** Each student will submit three reading responses. These papers, which should be between two and four pages, double-spaced, will reflect your critical thoughts about the readings for that class. I will provide a handout with more information about this assignment. Please turn in a hard copy of your reading response at the beginning of class.

***Final Paper Group Project:*** I will split the class into groups of five based on individual research interests. Each group has a general theme in which you will focus your group and individual research. Each group will conduct research on their theme and identify relevant and important aspects of their general topic. As a group, students will prepare an approximately 15 minute presentation that highlights their research. In addition, each student will individually write an eight to ten page research paper on a sub-topic within the group's general theme. You will receive more details on this assignment in the future.

## Course Outline:

Date	In-Class Topic	Readings/Assignments
8 January	Introduction to course and syllabus	
10 January	What is development? Classical and neoliberal development theories	Skim <i>Theories of Development</i> Chapters 2-3
15 January	Development as modernization, development in practice	<i>Theories of Development</i> Chapter 4, <i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapter 22
17 January	Foreign aid - Its structure, purpose, and successes / How does aid perpetuate the idea of development as modernization?	Skim <i>Foreign Aid</i> Chapters 2-3, USAID website excerpts
22 January	Development as "discipline"	<i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapter 8, Foucault excerpts
24 January	Poststructuralism, Postdevelopmentalism and Alternatives to Development	<i>Theories of Development</i> Chapter 6
29 January	Foreign aid, debt, and dependency	<i>Dead Aid</i> Chapters 3-4, <i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapters 9, 20
31 January	Foreign aid and epistemic violence	<i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapters 3,11, 16, 18
5 February	Foreign aid and environmental worldviews	<i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapters 4-5, 15, 23
7 February	Feminist Theories of Development	<i>The Women, Gender, and Development Reader</i> Introduction to Part 1
12 February	<b>Midterm Exam</b>	
14 February	Can development be sustainable and equitable? Critical postdevelopmentalism	<i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Afterword; <i>Making and Unmaking</i> Foreword
19 February	Why do individuals form social movements? - Theories of collective action	Dwivedi article; <i>Liberation Ecologies</i> excerpts; <i>Environmental Politics</i> excerpts
21 February	Grassroots development and collective action	<i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapters 27-28, 37
26 February	Rejecting development?	<i>The Post-Development Reader</i> Chapters 29, 32
28 February	Women and collective action	<i>The Women, Gender, and Development Reader</i> Chapters 8, 21, 32
5 March	Case studies of Southern grassroots environmental movements	Obi article; Saro-Wiwa excerpts
7 March	Case studies of Southern grassroots environmental movements	<i>Trouble in Paradise</i> Chapter 6, Additional reading TBA

12 March	Discussion of <i>The Challenge for Africa</i> In class time to work on group projects	<i>The Challenge for Africa</i> excerpts
14 March	Reflection and discussion - Our role	
Final Exam Period	Group Presentations	<b>Final Paper Due</b>

Please note that all students should purchase *The Post-Development Reader*, edited by Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree. This book is available at the Duckstore and on Amazon. All remaining readings will be available on Blackboard. All readings are subject to change at my discretion.