New Course Proposal: Politics of the Developing Countries

1. List School, Department, course number and course title

   School: School of Liberal Arts
   Department: Politics
   Course Title: Politics of the Developing Countries
   Course Number: POL 129
   Course Level: Upper Division

2. Justification for the course

   By many accounts, the future of developing countries seems to be one of the main overriding concerns for policymakers, academics and scholars in the 21st century. Crises of poverty, starvation and civil wars have increased in frequency, intensity, and magnitude. Certainly, the devastation caused in many developing countries as a result has constituted a wake-up call to many people around the world because of the implications and spill-over effects of such crises.

   Interest in the study of the developing countries has noticeably increased. New scholarly works on the subject have been published more than ever before and many colleges and universities around the country and the world have started offering different courses in this field. The study of non-Western Politics, North-South relations and the Third World has become a growing area of inquiry and teaching in the social sciences, in general, and political science, in particular.

   Over the past few years, I have participated in several national and international conferences and expert meetings organized on the relationship between the developed and developing countries of the world. Some of my scholarly writing has been devoted to studying this area of the world, as well. As such, after consulting my Department Chair, I offered POL 122 – Politics of the Developing Countries – as a special topic course in Spring 2009 and Spring 2010. The results by far surpassed my expectations. Not only that there was a very strong interest by students in the topic, but it was also the case that the demand for enrolling in the course was higher than I could accommodate in one offering, which led me to offer the course again the following year: interest by students was stronger than before. As a result, we, as a department, feel the demand is so great that we would like to make this course available to students on a regular and permanent basis.

   This course will help our Department expand our offerings of courses in the area of international relations and comparative politics. Since the need to be better informed about the world around us is becoming more compelling, the addition of this course provides students with greater breadth of knowledge and choice and helps them tailor the major to their interest. In addition, in both instances when I taught this course, it has attracted students from other disciplines, either because they are interested in the subject matter, and/or in order to fulfill an area requirement.

2.1 Objectives of the course

Knowledge objectives:

1. To familiarize students with the impact of the growing interdependence among countries especially on the developing world.
2. To assist students to grasp the powerful effect globalization has on political and economic life in the developing world.
3. To motivate students to analyze the impact development has on the environment in "third world" countries.
4. To help students better understand the nuances of development in the "third world".
5. To provide students with the basic concepts and theoretical constructs required to understand cultures, political systems and history of the developing world.

Skills objectives:
1. To stimulate critical thinking and analysis.
2. To participate in class discussion and in the interpretation of the readings.
3. To make oral presentations on course readings, news commentaries and research topics.
4. To critically and analytically reflect on the various documentaries shown in class.
5. To encourage students to develop critical thinking skills and to enhance their problem solving techniques particularly with regard to comprehending the complex world around us.
6. To enable students to develop an appreciation for the successes and setbacks some developing countries had on their journey to development.

2.2. Describe how objectives relate to Department, School, or College Goals
A course on the developing countries helps to fulfill several of the learning objectives laid out in the course catalog. The following relate to the topic under discussion:

Students will:
- Express themselves orally and in writing
- Analyze and interpret evidence
- Relate theory to practice
- Recognize assumptions and evaluate arguments
- Draw inferences and make deductions
- Appreciate the historical and cultural context of political events
- Recognize the causes and outcomes of political conflict and cooperation
- Understand the dynamics of political behavior
- Identify political ideas and belief system
- Develop the following habits of mind:
  1. Critical and persistent reflection on questions of importance to their lives
  2. Intellectual self-confidence and maturity
  3. Appreciation of multiple perspectives and contexts
  4. Curiosity and a commitment to life-long learning
  5. Civic engagement

With respect to the School of Liberal Arts and the wider College, a course on the developing countries is supportive of the three traditions in our mission at St. Mary’s College. For example, this course focuses on the inherent value of the individual, critiquing political actors and sub-actors that influence on the rights of individuals throughout the world by subjecting them to corruption or mismanagement of resources.
In addition, the course focuses on the economic, political and social consequences of political behavior by a number of political systems, in the process addressing key questions pertaining to social justice such as the physical and moral integrity of the individual and his/her right to live with dignity and without intimidation.

With regard to the Politics Department’s learning objectives and outcomes, this course is expected to help achieve the following:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of institutions, principles and theories of American constitutional democracy, inasmuch as they relate to discussing the impact of democratization on the development and modernization of other countries.
2. Demonstrate substantive knowledge of a) dynamics of political cooperation, and b) historical and cultural contexts of political events.
3. Produce clear and effective analysis of significant political issues surrounding the discourse on the global South.
4. Demonstrate understanding of, and proficiency in, use of standard research techniques relevant to political science issues, especially as a result of writing the research paper.
5. Develop a commitment to civil engagement, particularly that the acquisition of more information about the rest of the world is expected to lead to more involvement.

2.3 Describe the kinds of assignments/tasks that will be typical of those used to evaluate the performance of students in the course. Will the pass/fail grading option be allowed?

In this course, there are usually four major requirements of students, which help evaluate their performance:

1. Participation in class discussion which is meant to keep the students engaged and always prepared with the readings. In addition, this task expects students to make short oral presentations on course readings and research papers they prepare. Most effective has been dividing students in discussion groups where they address relevant issues and topics. In effect, the course is conducted more as a seminar with some limited lecturing.
2. A midterm exam which expects students to analytically reflect on material they have studied. In essay form, the exam aims, among other things, to evaluate students critical thinking and knowledge.
3. A final exam which intends to test students ability to organize there thought processes and understanding of the material presented in the lectures and the readings. Again, this exam is conducted in essay form, where students are expected to enhance their analytical and critical thinking skills.
4. A research paper which presents students with an opportunity to develop critical synthesis and knowledge on a specifically and narrowly defined topic in the field, after consultation with the professor. In addition to learning more, students are helped refine their research skills and methodology, as the syllabus of the course provides them with comprehensive guidelines on how to write research papers following academic standards.

In this course, the pass/fail option is not considered. Already there is a strong demand for the course, and opening it to pass/fail might overload the Department.

3. **Student population**

The plan is to have the course offered once a year and it is expected to attract about 25 students. The first year the course was offered (Spring of 2009) there were 27 students. The second time it was offered (Spring of 2010) there were 19 students, keeping in mind that we, in the Department had to keep enrollment relatively low due to my health condition after an accident.

Most of the students who have taken the course in the past have been politics or social science majors, while other students, let’s say from nursing and business, have been attracted as well. Many students find a course on the developing world relevant to their concerns and interests.

4. **Relationship to present College curriculum**

Given the liberal arts nature of education at Saint Mary’s College of California, A course on the developing countries is expected to relate to several other fields of study in the curriculum. Furthermore, this course supports the integration of material from other areas, particularly psychology, economics and history. In discussing this course with at least one professor from the Economics Department, a lot of enthusiasm was shown, in that the course on developing countries could support some Economics courses while not conflicting with them.

5. **Any extraordinary implementation costs**

None whatsoever.

6. **Library Resources**
A library review is attached.

7. Course credit and grading options

The course is offered for one (1) upper division credit. Students need to spend two hours in preparation for every hour of class meeting.

8. Prerequisites, corequisites

None required.

9. Course description wording for the appropriate College catalog

This course is expected to provide a better understanding of the complex array of developing countries of the world. More specifically, this course will look at the political history, successes and setbacks of several countries and regions which can be classified as developing, so as to be better equipped to understand the cultures of the peoples and the prospects of development for some of the political systems.

10. Course content

See most recent syllabus attached below.


The first time the course was offered as a special topic, it was quite successful, as evidenced by students evaluations, the evaluation of other colleagues and by my own assessment, as well. This was the case again while the course was offered the second time. While uncertain during the first time the course was offered as to the importance of documentaries for students, the second time I became very convinced of the vitality of such media of teaching in communicating information to students about the developing world. Incorporating the visual medium of learning has, indeed, proven to be effective. So was the case with small group processes in the classroom.

Respectfully submitted,
Hisham H. Ahmed, Professor
Politics Department
COURSE OBJECTIVES

News from, about and/or of developing countries dominates the headlines on an ongoing basis. Although marginalized and often stereotyped, the developing world continues to draw the attention of the developed world: it is in the developing world where challenges persist, those which range from war, poverty, unemployment, disease and the environment. Nevertheless, it is mainly in the developing world where investment opportunities are usually sought in spite of the devastating global financial problems: the consumer oriented societies of most developing countries have created emerging markets for the industrialized world. In spite of the importance of the more than 122 developing countries with their varied cultures, backgrounds, languages, religions and political orientation, the so-called “third world” comprising these nations is often misunderstood, as it is subjected to generalizations and misjudgment.

This course is expected to provide a better understanding of the complex array of developing countries of the world. More specifically, this course will look at the political history, successes and setbacks of several countries and regions which can be classified as developing, so as to be better equipped to understand the cultures of the peoples and the prospects of development for some of the political systems.

As such, this course intends to achieve the following objectives:

6. To familiarize students with the impact of the growing interdependence among countries especially on the developing world.
7. To assist students to grasp the powerful effect globalization has on political and economic life in the developing world.
8. To motivate students to analyze the impact development has on the environment in “third world” countries.
9. To help students better understand the nuances of development in the “third world”.
10. To provide students with the basic concepts and theoretical constructs required to understand cultures, political systems and history of the developing world.
11. To encourage students to develop critical thinking skills and to enhance their problem solving techniques particularly with regard to comprehending the complex world around us.
12. To enable students to develop an appreciation for the successes and setbacks some developing countries had on their journey to development.
REQUIRED TEXTS


In addition to the texts, some documentaries will be shown in class as needed. Such documentaries are expected to stimulate discussion on relevant issues pertaining to developing countries. In the event major developments take place, the reading assignments may be slightly revised to address new questions. Such changes will certainly be announced well in advance in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. 20% Attendance and Participation

Students are required to come to class regularly and on time. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class, and a record will be kept throughout the semester. Arriving late or leaving class early is discourteous and disruptive, and will therefore be noted on your record (except with prior permission from the professor). Missing classes could jeopardize one's standing in the course: more than two absences will lower your grade.

On the other hand, students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussions. Students can make comments they deem relevant to the discussion and they can raise questions they consider to be pertinent. No student should feel shy to make any comment or raise any question: the only bad comment/question is one which is never made.

This course will be conducted, more or less, as a seminar: it will depend on both lecture and discussion of the readings and of current events pertaining to the developing world. Accordingly, you are expected to keep up with news coverage in at least one leading U.S. newspaper, such as, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post, the LA Times, the Boston Globe, the San Francisco Chronicle, etc. Most of these papers are available free online.

In effect, active participation will count toward your grade. Students are therefore expected to think critically and analytically. They are encouraged to incorporate their fields of interest in class discussion.

Thus, students are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the office hours indicated by the professor on your syllabus. It is part of the professor's responsibility to provide students with guidance and contribute to problem solving. If the office hours indicated by the professor conflict with your schedule, you should not hesitate to ask for an appointment at a mutually convenient time.
In addition, it should be noted here that reasonable and appropriate accommodations, that take into account the context of the course and its essential elements, for individuals with qualifying disabilities, are extended through the office of Student Disability Services. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Services Coordinator at (925) 631-4164 to set up a confidential appointment to discuss accommodation guidelines and available services. Additional information regarding the services available may be found at the following address on the Saint Mary's website: [http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html](http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/academic-advising-and-achievement/student-disability-services.html)

2. 30% Written assignment

There is only one written assignment required for this course. This is a 12-15 typed, double-spaced page original, analytical research paper. You are required to select a case study of a developing country and examine the main dynamics leading to development in your country of choice. In this paper, you are expected to study the various dynamics of development as well as the extent to which the political system in your country of choice has contributed to this endeavor. Furthermore, in writing your paper, you are required to apply some of the theoretical constructs studied in the course, so as to be able to provide an analytical framework for your study. Your specific case study is to be selected and approved only after consultation with the professor. The objective of this paper is to motivate students to keep abreast with the details surrounding issues pertaining to development and modernization in the “third world”. Hence, students are expected to search for different analyses, commentaries, and critiques as a first step before writing their paper. The paper should be critical and analytical and should reflect a comprehensive understanding of how much development was achieved in your chosen country. This paper is due on the tenth week of class (Monday, April 12).

In writing your paper, you should consult a style manual for this purpose. Detailed instructions will be given in class.

However, in writing your paper, you should observe the following guidelines:

1. Your paper should have a title page indicating the topic, your name, title and number of the course, professor's name, and the date of submission. All inside pages should be numbered, and the paper should be stapled without any binding.

2. Your writing should be coherent and free of spelling, typographical and grammatical mistakes.

3. Academic Integrity: Plagiarism of any kind is prohibited. Do not "borrow" ideas or words from any source, written or oral, without giving proper attribution. Honesty and academic integrity is a strong value at St. Mary's College. The Honor Code at the College requires all students, on their honor, to do their own
work, unless required by the professor to do otherwise. Please read the Honor Code of Saint Mary's College carefully. Please be advised that your professor might tolerate almost any mishap, but certainly, not dishonesty.

(4) When footnoting is required, use the following format:

**BOOKS:**

Author's last name, author's first name, *title of the work*, (city of publication: publisher, date), page number(s).

**PERIODICALS:**

Author's last name, author's first name, "*title of the article," title of the publication, vol., no., date, page number(s).

(5) After finishing the writing of your paper, put it aside for at least one day in order to reflect on it. Then proofread it carefully, critiquing yourself in the process.

(6) On the deadline date indicated, turn your paper in, electronically as well as in paper form, confident that you have done your best.

**Important:** Although better late than never, tardiness in turning in written assignments will not be excused. One third of a grade will be deducted for each day the work is late. Computer and/or printer problems are not acceptable excuses for turning your work late.

3. **20% - Mid-term exam**

   It covers all reading material and lecture notes studied up until the exam is held. The student is expected to have developed his/her analytical skills with regard to the topics discussed prior to the exam. Hence, the exam will be in essay form, and grading will depend on cogency, organization, precision, analyses and demonstrated knowledge of the material. Your writing style will also play a role in determining your grade.

4. **30% - Final exam**

   While it will mainly cover material handled after the mid-term, it nonetheless expect students to be familiar with major concepts employed earlier in the course. The same criteria as that of the mid-term will be applied for grading. No make-up exams will be given. Exceptions are only permitted upon written proof of a medical emergency or other extreme hardship.

**GRADING**

93-100 = A
90-92 = A-
87-89 = B+
COURSE SCHEDULE

Students should carefully read all assigned readings BEFORE coming to class.

Week 1: Politics and Development

M Feb. 8: Welcoming Remarks and Introduction to the Course

F Feb. 12: Concepts and Definitions
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.1 pp.3-23
- Weatherby: Ch.1 pp.1-17
- Wiarda: Ch.1&2 pp.1-46

Week 2: Interdependence and Development

M Feb. 15: Economic and Environmental Interdependence
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.2 pp. 27-34

F Feb. 19: Culture and Development
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.2 pp. 35-40

Week 3: Religion and Development

M Feb. 22: Islam and Politics
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.3 pp.43-52
- Weatherby: Ch.8 pp.240-289

F Feb. 26: Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Politics
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.3 pp.53-65
- Weatherby: Ch.9 pp.290-329

Week 4: Nationalism and Development

M Mar. 1: Colonialism as an Impediment
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.4 pp.67-73
- Weatherby: Ch.2 pp.18-48

F Mar. 5: India, Ghana and Brazil as Case Studies
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.4 pp.74-83
- Weatherby: Ch.5 pp.98-146

Week 5: Economics and Development

M Mar. 8: Poverty and Inequality
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.5 pp.85-93

F Mar. 12: Causes and Remedies
Week 6: Theories of and Obstacles to Development

M Mar. 15: Theories of Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.6 pp.105-114

F Mar. 19: Obstacles to Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.6 pp.115-129
   - Wiarda: Ch.6 pp.115-135

Week 7: The Cost of Development (Mid-Term Week)

M Mar. 22: Mid-term

F Mar. 26: The Various Costs of Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.7 pp.131-149

Week 8: Spring Break

- No Class

Week 9: Women, Democracy and Development

M Apr. 5: No Class (Spring Holiday)

F Apr. 9: Women and Democracy and Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.8 pp.162-168
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.9 pp.187-195
   - Weatherby: Ch.4 pp.79-97
   - Wiarda: Ch.5 pp.87-113

Week 10: Leadership, Bureaucracy and Development

M Apr. 12: Political Leadership and Development
   - Research Paper Due
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.10 pp.199-214

F Apr. 16: Bureaucratic performance and Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.10 pp.215-222

Week 11: Conflict and Development

M Apr. 19: Ethnic Conflict and Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.11 pp.227-232
   - Weatherby: Ch.6 pp.147-184

F Apr. 23: Case Studies on Ethnicity and Conflict
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.11 pp.233-247
   - Weatherby: Ch.6 pp.185-209

Week 12: Migration, International Relations and Development

M Apr. 26: Migration and Development
   - Payne & Nassar: Ch.12 pp.251-265
**F Apr. 30:** Foreign Policy and Development  
- Payne & Nassar: Ch.13 pp.280-290

**Week 13: Successes and Critique of Development**

**M May 3:** Success Stories of Development  
- Wiarda: Ch.3 pp.47-66

**F May 7:** Critique of Development  
- Wiarda: Ch.4 pp.67-86

**Week 14: Globalization, Development and the Future**

**M May 10:** What’s Wrong and What’s Right with Globalization  
- Wiarda: Ch.7 pp.137-157

**F May 14:** Development and the Future  
- Wiarda: Ch.8 pp.159-168

**Week 15: Final Exam Week**

**W May 19:** Final Exam Time 2:00-4:00pm