Course Description

Analysis of contemporary issues within and amongst developing nations. Examines various institutions, political processes, and public policy debates in some or all of the following regions: Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, or Asia.

Student Learning Objectives

1. Student can demonstrate competence in basic social science research skills (through the research paper).
2. Students can critically evaluate arguments found in the literature on foreign aid (through the in-class discussions).
3. Students can identify root causes of chronic underdevelopment (through the readings)

Major Course Requirements

Class Participation and Attendance (30%)

This course is a seminar, not a lecture series. It is your responsibility, as well as mine, to come to class prepared to discuss the information and claims found in the readings and explore related research possibilities. If any of us shirk, we all lose. I expect no absences in the course, and I encourage you to discuss any circumstances with me that will preclude you from attending class. I also expect you to arrive on time. If you do need to miss class, please contact me ahead of time to let me know that you will not be able to attend and to make arrangements to complete an alternate assignment. A large portion of my overall evaluation of your performance in the course will depend on the quality of your seminar participation.

Grades for participation (including discussion questions and attendance) will be assigned at the end of the semester, but you may ask for feedback on your performance at any time. If you have concerns about the quality and quantity of your participation in the course, I hope you will speak to me. Remember, this is a seminar, so just showing up to class is not enough. You must come to class prepared to participate in an informed discussion of the issues raised by the weeks readings. If you just show up
to class every week, but never say a word, you can expect to receive a D or lower for class participation (30% of your grade).

The following general grading scale will be used for participation and preparation:

• A: The student made a very strong contribution to the course. Class discussion, comments, and presentations reflected understanding and analysis of the material, and were constructive. Constructive means that a student does not simply identify a weakness or problem. Rather, constructive comments identify a problem and offer suggestions for how to address the weakness or problem.

• B: The student contributed meaningfully to the course. Class participation and/or presentations went beyond repeating the assigned material, perhaps identifying weaknesses in the current literature, but did not make many constructive suggestions about how weaknesses might be overcome or how the literature might be usefully extended in the future.

• C: The student did not contribute meaningfully to the seminar. Class participation and/or presentations were limited to repeating the assigned material rather than making connections or extensions.

• D or lower: The student attended class, but did not participate in discussions or present meaningful questions for academic debate.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the seminar is to engage in informed group discussion: we are not interested in uninformed opinion. This means that students should closely and critically read each book or article on the reading list, and spend time thinking about what each contributes to the topic that week and to conflict studies in general. Class discussion will focus on such issues as the theoretical arguments being made (both explicitly and implicitly), the empirical evidence that is marshaled to test these arguments, weaknesses of the work, and potential directions for future study.

Finally, because we will engage in vigorous academic debate during class, classroom etiquette is vital. Please work to ensure that you make comments in ways that invite discussion. Our classroom contains members with various life experiences, divergent perspectives, varying levels of experience with political science research, and different strategies for defending their views. Please state your opinions constructively and respectfully, listen carefully when your colleagues are speaking, and speak to me if you are offended by something that is said in class. If you do not follow these guidelines, your participation grade will be adversely affected.

**Research Paper (40%)**

Another requirement is an original research paper. This paper will be devoted to a case study of a recipient of U.S. foreign assistance. The following should be addressed:

- The history of the donor-recipient relationship
- The nature of the donor-recipient relationship (Was it coercive? Humanitarian? Bilateral? Multilateral?)
- The political goals of both the donor and recipient
- The short and long term impact of aid provision
- Was U.S. policy beneficial for the recipient?
- How did providing aid benefit the U.S.?

Quantitative methods can be employed if desired, and depending on the student’s methodological training, but the general structure of the paper is still case study. In any case, it must be analytical and theoretical in nature rather than strictly descriptive. The final paper must be 15-20 pages in length, and should be comparable to an academic journal article in style. Please note that this must be an original paper for this course, and cannot overlap in any substantial way with a paper written for another course; if there is any question please talk to me about it and bring me a copy of the other paper.

The research paper will be due May 11th, at 11:00 AM, in the regular classroom.

Feedback Essays (30%)

Two essays, worth 15% of the final grade each will be assigned this semester. They will be response essays following the viewing of two films in class.

Essay on The Corporation due: April 7th

Essay on Globalization is Good due: May 3rd

Required or Recommended Readings

All readings will be available on Blackboard. No textbook.

Academic Integrity/Plagiarism:

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in an F in the course.

Dropping a Class

I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must
initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 8th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Classroom/professional behavior** (either this or below strongly suggested):

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Academic Advising:**

The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Disability Services:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816 or visit the office in Corpus Christi Hall #116.

**Grade Appeals Process:**

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office Grade Appeals*

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of
Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Course Calendar**

| Date     | Event                                                                 |
|----------|                                                                      |
| Jan 21   | Course Intro                                                        |
| Mar 15-17| Spring Break (No Class)                                              |
| Mar 22-24| Film: The Corporation                                                |

**Essay on The Corporation due April 7th in class**

| Date     | Event                                                                 |
|----------|                                                                      |
| Apr 12-14| Film: Globalization is Good                                           |


May 3 Conclusions

**Essay on Globalization is Good due May 3rd in class**

**Final Paper Due: May 10th, 11:00 AM**