DEVS 340: Theories of Development

Fall Term, 2009
Instructor: Dr. Marcus Taylor
Office Hours (Mac-Corry A404): Wednesdays 10-12 (or by appointment).
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Lecture: Tues 11:30 – 13:20, Jeff 126

Tutorial Slots:
- Tues 13:30 MC-C508
- Tues 13:30 ELL-333
- Tues 16:30 MC-E202
- Wed 8:30 MC-D122

TAs: Jeff Barbeau
     Karl Hardy

Course Description:

This course introduces students to various theories that attempt to explain what ‘development’ is, how it occurs (or why it does not occur) and to whose benefit. Despite the frequent use of the term ‘development’ in academic, policy and journalistic writings, there is little consensus on what it actually entails – or even if some discernable process exists at all. For example, while modernisation theory suggests that development is a sequence of structural changes that all societies eventually go through; post-development theories argue that the notion of ‘development’ is merely a rhetorical device that reproduces power relations between the West and the rest. To begin to understand these debates – and the political issues at stake – we survey several broad areas of development theory including classical political economy, modernisation theory, dependency theory, neoclassicism, neo-institutionalism, Marxism, post-colonialism, post-development, feminist theories and theories of sustainable development. On completing the course it is hoped that students will have a clear grasp of:

- The contested meanings of the term ‘development’
- The distinct implications for policy, academic work and social activism that different theories of development imply
- The power relations – local, national and global – that shape the creation and propagation of different theories of development

Readings:

There is a course pack that contains all the required readings, except for a few that are online sources, where the URL is provided instead. Please do the required readings before coming to class – it will help your understanding of the lecture and improve discussion. Additionally, I have provided further readings each week for those looking to broaden their understanding of particular themes. Beyond these, the following four texts
provide an overview of issues raised in the course. They are not set texts, but are highly recommended reference works:


**Evaluation:**

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1. The **midterm exam** comprises twenty percent of your final grade and will be comprised of two essay-style questions. The test will occur in the first half of class on **October 20th**. **Do not miss this test**. You will forfeit the marks unless you contact me before the test and then provide official documentation explaining your absence (use this form for illness - http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/facstaff/guidelines/academic/medical.htm).

2. **Tutorial participation** is an important aspect of this course and accounts for twenty percent of your final grade. Discussion will focus on the set readings – what are their main points? How are their arguments constructed? How do they relate to the other readings? And are they convincing? You are being graded on the overall quality of your contributions to the discussion, not simply for being present. This does not mean you need to talk non-stop during tutorials, but does mean that you should make good, well thought-out interventions in the discussion when appropriate (i.e. quality not quantity). Do note, however, that some quantity is necessary on order to deliver the quality! Evidently, having read the weekly readings prior to attending the tutorial is essential.

3. **Written assignment:** This essay will develop a critical account of one of the theories that we have looked at in class (your choice). You can limit your paper to a critical examination of one particular author’s theory – e.g. Frank’s theory of dependency and underdevelopment; Marx’s theory of primitive accumulation, etc. You will need to identify the circumstances in which it the work was produced (i.e. why did this theory emerge at that particular time); highlight its relationship to different strands of thought within the theory; analyse its strengths and weaknesses. The paper will be handed in on the last day of class (December 1st). It is worth 30% of your final grade.
4. The final exam will be worth 30 percent of your final grade. It requires students to answer a selection of essay-style questions on the major issues covered in the second half of the course (i.e. topics examined since the mid-term).

A Note On Academic Integrity:

Here we are talking about plagiarism. When you write papers, it is not acceptable to take other people’s ideas without referencing them. It is even less acceptable to take full sentences, paragraphs, or more from books/articles/the internet and pass them off as your own. Departures from academic integrity also include the use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university. Ignorance of the rules and regulations is not an excuse. Please familiarize yourself with the University guidelines on this subject:

http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/integrity/instructor/education.html

And if you have any questions simply ask myself or a TA prior to submitting work. Once again, pleading ignorance after the fact is not acceptable – it's part of your role as a student to understand the obligations and responsibilities of producing academic work.

Course Outline

Tuesday, September 15th

Introduction
The first class provides an opportunity to talk over the general themes and content of the course. The reading by Rist provides an account of the milestones in the evolution of a notion of development in Western philosophy. Storey’s article provides an indication of the lack of agreement between theorists on what development is and how it might be measured.

Required Reading:
Theory 1: Markets and the Division of Labour

The notion of development is closely related to those of progress and civilisation that emerged most articulately during the period of the enlightenment in Europe. This was a period of pronounced social change across much of Europe, with the beginnings of urbanisation, capitalist development and expanded colonialism. In many respects the classical political economists, writing in the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, were the first theorists of capitalist development. They attempted to explain the complex processes of social change ongoing in Europe at that time and were acutely aware that their different theories had distinct implications for government policy. While there are many important works, we survey that of Adam Smith because of its central role in influencing debates past and present. Smith related development to changes to the division of labour and the expansion of markets within society, which he saw as the driving forces of wealth creation. Smith is often noted as the ‘father’ of modern economics, and his description of the process of economic development – although he did not use that term – is still at the heart of contemporary debates. We will see it emerge again in modernisation theory and in neoliberalism.

Required Reading:

Further Reading:

Theory 2: Capital Accumulation / Primitive Accumulation

Following Smith’s account of capitalist development, which has become a tenet of standard liberal theories of development, we examine two of his critics. First, we look at the work of economic-anthropologist Karl Polanyi. This author critiques Smith (and others) for having a distorted understanding of economic history. For Polanyi, the establishment of the self-regulating market that Smith celebrates as a natural unfolding of society’s inner urge to trade, represented a great rupture with the past and was only imposed by force. Polanyi suggests that most societies throughout history have attempted to limit market mechanisms owing to their destructive consequences for social order. Central to Polanyi’s theory is the notion that capitalism requires a process of removing land, labour and money (‘fictitious commodities’) from alternate systems of social provisioning and enforcing them to become commodities within a market system. This process is sometimes called *primitive accumulation*. 
We then turn to Karl Marx, who offered a detailed theoretical critique of classical political economy in general. Marx is perhaps the most important theorist of capitalist development to emerge in the nineteenth century. Leaving aside for the moment the political implications of his work, we focus here on Marx’s analysis of capital accumulation: in particular the first section of the Communist Manifesto in which Marx describes global capitalist development in a way that is strikingly similar to some contemporary accounts of globalization. For Marx, in contrast to Smith, capital accumulation does not just produce wealth, but produces misery among wealth, poverty among plenty, instability and conflict. In a world of growing inequalities, does Marx’s theory still have relevance? N.B. To get a better handle on the theories of Marx and Polanyi, you are encouraged to read the supplementary readings, in particular Sayer’s erudite introduction to Marx’s thought; Clarke’s reading of Smith’s relationship to Marx; and Lacher’s take on Polanyi.

**Required Reading:**

**Further Reading:**
- Clarke, Keynesianism, Monetarism and the Crisis of the State, chapters 2 and 3.

**Tuesday, October 6th**

**Theory 3: Modernisation**

An ‘age of development’ was pronounced following the culmination of the Second World War when various colonies achieved their independence. In the two decades that followed new theories were created to try to explain the likely socio-economic futures of these now-independent countries of the South. A guiding theory in North American academia and policy making was modernisation theory, which suggested that all countries would evolve through successive stages of development so long as certain cultural and political conditions were in place. Rostow’s “The Stages of Economic Growth” is the most renowned work in the cannon of modernisation theory; Cooper’s chapter provides a useful overview of thinking on the nature of modernity.
Tuesday, October 13th

**Theory 4: Structuralism and Dependency**

Whereas modernisation theory predicted a rosy picture of all countries evolving towards an advanced industrial future, its critics were keen to emphasise how global economic relations, including the structure of international trade, credit and production, served to frustrate development aspirations in the South. Structuralist theory – typified by the contributions of Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer – emphasised how a reliance on raw material exports in the former colonies would lead to a widening income gap between North and South. Dependency theorists – based mainly but not exclusively in Latin America – went beyond this and argued that the structure of the global economy allowed the countries of the core to develop at the expense of those in the periphery. The countries of the South, according to dependency theory, could only develop in so far as it was helpful to the economic development of the core – hence they remained in a status of ‘dependent development’ leading to underdevelopment.

**Required Reading:**


Further Reading:


Tuesday, October 20th

**Midterm Exam**

Do not miss this exam! (N.B. no tutorials this week).

Tuesday, October 27th

**Theory 5: Neoliberalism and Neo-Institutionalism**

The socio-economic upheavals of the 1970s and the debt crisis of the early 1980s created a rupture in development strategies and provided the impetus for new theories of development to guide policy practice. Neoclassical economics became the touchstone for mainstream development thinking in the subsequent two decades. Drawing heavily on the legacy of Adam Smith, it provides the theoretical rationalisation for many existing policies, including free-trade, market expansion and lean states. Here we examine the theory of development implicit through a reading of Milton Friedman, Deepak Lal and the World Bank. Friedman, an economics professor at the University of Chicago, was one of the foremost proponents of the neoliberal agenda and in this reading outlines some of the underlying theoretical tenets. Deepak Lal critiqued the state-centric forms of development common throughout the developing world in the post-colonial era and the theories of development economics that supported them. He suggests that, owing to the failures of state intervention to ameliorate market imperfections, the ‘invisible hand’ of the market should replace this ‘state dirigisme’.

The implementation of policies based on orthodox neoclassical foundations, however, resulted in mixed results in the South. To attempt to overcome the limitations of neoclassicism as a theory underpinning development practice, many economists decided they needed to look at the social and institutional context in which economic relations take place. This led to a new emphasis on creating the correct institutions for market activities to achieve the results that the neoclassical theory would predict. The New Institutional Economics developed as a theory of institutions to supplement – or even supplant – neoclassical economics and led to a new spin on development theory whereby development is the process of institutional change leading to increasingly efficient institutional contexts in which economic activities can take place.
Required Reading:


Further Reading:

**Neoliberalism**


**Neo-Institutionalism**


Tuesday, November 3rd

**Theory 6: Urban Growth, Property Rights and Development**

Initially, development theory tended to see the growth of cities as a hallmark of development: poverty being a rural phenomena overcome by the migration of people to the urban realm where they would be incorporated into formal, modern, industrial employment. However, one of the most dramatic social phenomena witnessed across the global South over the past two decades has been the rapid spread of urban slums that are
reservoirs of poverty. The UN estimates that over 850 million people now live in slums of various types and this may reach 1.5 billion by 2020. These vast expanses of human habitation are characterised by informality – that is, residents overwhelmingly do not own the land upon which their houses are built. Moreover, slums often suffer from a lack of public services from electricity to water, schools to healthcare. And their residents are often tenuously incorporated into informal employment that reproduces their marginalisation. How does development theory understand the growth of the slums? Are their inhabitants a surplus humanity that is representative of the failures of development, or are the slums the inevitable product of uneven development on a global scale? And is the solution to formalise their existence by giving them property rights for their dwellings, allowing them to use their property as a form of capital to lever their way out of poverty? The latter is a key argument of influential economist Hernando de Soto and we will examine his theory in detail.


Further Reading:


Tuesday, November 10th

Theory 7: Post-Development

Post-development and post-colonial theorists emphasise how certain characteristic “Western” ways of talking about and representing the non-West are better understood as ideological projections than as scientific knowledge about people and places in the formerly colonized countries. To these theorists, the ways of conceiving and representing development that are closely bound to Western development agencies reveal more about the self-affirming ideologies of the West than insights into the peoples of the rest of the world. Leading theorists in this tradition, such as Arturo Escobar, argue that the codification and rationalisation of knowledge about ‘development’ is an expression of and tool for the political domination and cultural hegemony of the West over the rest.

Required Reading:

Further Reading:


Tuesday, November 17th

**Theory 8: Male Bias**

Feminists have focused their critiques of development theory on the ‘male-bias’ of development, which refers to the way in which the categories used to understand socioeconomic transformation – and on which basis policies are formed – make invisible the work performed by and burdens placed upon women. As such, they argue that much development policy reinforces and depends upon structures and processes through which women are subordinated to men (patriarchy). The latter includes the double burden of women’s work in the home and the (in)formal economy, which has become increasingly prevalent as a result of structural adjustment policies.

**Required Reading:**


**Further Reading:**

Tuesday, November 24th

**Theory 9: Uneven Ecological Exchange**

Environmental issues have frequently been ignored in development theory, with the assumption that ecological issues do not impede social change in any meaningful way. Given the existing ecological and resource challenges facing global society, this position has become untenable and ecological issues are increasingly being brought into development theory. However, a key question that resurfaces in debates over sustainable development is to what extent and in what manner can ecological considerations be allowed to supersede orthodox development objectives? Moreover, to what extent has the legacy of development in the West been founded upon the ecological degradation of the rest? We overview some important debates in this field, including the notion of ‘uneven ecological exchange’ which suggests that current consumption patterns of the West are based on an uneven appropriation of the ecological resources of the rest of the world.

**Required Reading:**


**Further Reading:**


Tuesday, December 1st

Course Review

This week reviews the material that will be on the final exam and is an opportunity to ask any remaining questions. N.B. your final paper is due at this class.