

PIA5001: THEORIES AND APPROACHES IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Effective Term

Semester A 2026/27

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Theories and Approaches in Development Studies

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

5001

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

AIS5001 Theories and Approaches in Development Studies

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course delves into the fundamental concepts, historical evolution, and key proponents of major development theories, aiming to foster critical thinking and analytical skills in the field of international development. Throughout the course, students will delve into a range of development paradigms, each offering unique perspectives on what development entails. The exploration of these theories will involve in-depth discussions of their underlying assumptions, methodologies, and implications for global societies on topics such as gender, sustainability, and urbanization. Students will gain insights into how different development theories interpret the dynamics of progress, social change, and economic transformation. This course is suited for postgraduate students interested in development studies, offering a framework to understand the theoretical underpinnings that shape international development discussions.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify and critically evaluate the main theoretical perspectives in development studies		x	x	x
2	Identify key development theories actors and dilemmas related to development processes and development practice		x	x	x
3	Apply theoretical perspectives to practical cases		x	x	x
4	Describe the latest issues and trends within development studies		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Readings	Each week, students are required to read carefully selected articles and/or book chapters that are highly relevant to the topic being discussed	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Lectures	The instructor will present concepts, theories, and factual data on international development	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	Participation	Each lecture includes in-class discussions, and students are required to actively participate and contribute	1, 2, 3, 4	

4	Documentary screening	Students are required to watch a selected documentary on international development and complete an in-class written reflection that identifies key development issues, applies relevant theories and concepts, and critically reflects on the documentary's perspectives and implications	1, 2, 3, 4	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class participation	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	Yes
2	Quiz 1	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	No
3	Quiz 2	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No
4	Documentary Analysis and Reflection	1, 2, 3, 4	20		No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class participation

Criterion

Active and informed participation in class

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent demonstration of active and informed participation in class

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good demonstration of active and informed participation in class

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate demonstration of active and informed participation in class

Marginal (D)

Limited demonstration of active and informed participation in class

Failure (F)

Poor demonstration of active and informed participation in class

Assessment Task

Quizzes

Criterion

Quality of argument

Structure of argument

Evidence of subject knowledge

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Excellent analysis, excellent use of contemporary events and theories, clear structure, extensive and high-quality sources incorporated into responses, little spelling or grammatical mistakes

Good (B+, B, B-)

Good analysis, good use of contemporary events and theories, clear structure, good range and quality of source materials incorporated into answers, some spelling or grammatical mistakes

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Adequate analysis, adequate use of contemporary events and theories, reasonable structure, reasonable range and quality of source materials incorporated into answers, some spelling or grammatical mistakes

Marginal (D)

Limited analysis, limited use of contemporary events and theories, unclear structure, limited range and low quality of source materials incorporated into answers, many spelling or grammatical mistakes

Failure (F)

Poor analysis, minimal or no use of contemporary events and theories, poor structure, limited range and low quality of source materials incorporated into answers, many spelling or grammatical mistakes

Assessment Task

Documentary Analysis and Reflection

Criterion

Able to critically analyse development issues presented in a documentary and apply relevant development theories and concepts to reflect on their causes, impacts, and implications.

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrate an excellent understanding of the development issues presented in the documentary and a strong ability to critically apply relevant development theories and concepts. Provide insightful reflection supported by specific examples from the documentary.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrate a good understanding of the development issues presented in the documentary and an ability to apply relevant development theories and concepts. Provide clear reflection with appropriate examples from the documentary.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of the development issues presented in the documentary and some ability to connect them to relevant development theories and concepts. Provide basic reflection with some reference to the documentary.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrate a limited understanding of the development issues presented in the documentary, with weak or unclear connections to development theories and concepts. Reflection is largely descriptive and provides limited supporting examples.

Failure (F)

Demonstrate little or no understanding of the development issues presented in the documentary and little or no ability to apply development theories or concepts. Reflection is incomplete, unsupported, or largely irrelevant. Do not show up for the documentary screening.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

- Development, development policy, development theories
- Modernization theory, dependency theory, neoliberalism, human development, sustainable development, post development
- Agents of development
- Aid
- Gender
- Sustainability and climate change

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	There are no compulsory textbooks for the course, although students are strongly advised to read 'The Companion to Development Studies' (2024) edited by Emil Dauncey, Vandana Desai and Robert B. Potter.
2	Babb, S. (2013) 'The Washington Consensus as Transnational Policy Paradigm: Its Origins, Trajectory and Likely Successor', <i>Review of International Political Economy</i> , 20(2), pp. 268-297.
3	Boserup, E. (2011) 'Women's Role in Economic Development', in Visvanathan, N. et al. (eds) <i>The Women, Gender and Development Reader</i> . London: Zed Books, pp. 38-40.
4	Bulkeley, H. and Newell, P. (2023) <i>Governance for Whom? Equity, Justice, and the Politics of Sustainable Development, Governing Climate Change</i> . New York: Routledge.
5	Carothers, T. and De Gramont, D. (2013) <i>Development Aid Confronts Politics: The Almost Revolution</i> . Baltimore: Carnegie Endowment.
6	Escobar, A. (1995) <i>Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World</i> . Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
7	Farias, D. B. L. (2019) 'Outlook for the "developing country" category: a paradox of demise and continuity', <i>Third World Quarterly</i> . Routledge, 40(4), pp. 668-687.
8	Frank, A. G. (2010) 'The Development of Underdevelopment', in Chew, S. and Lauderdale, P. (eds) <i>Theory and Methodology of World Development: The Writings of Andre Gunder Frank</i> . New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 7-18.
9	Hendriks, S. (2019) 'The Role of Financial Inclusion in Driving Women's Economic Empowerment', <i>Development in Practice</i> . Taylor & Francis, 29(8), pp. 1029-1038.
10	Kothari, U. (2019a) 'A radical history of development studies: individuals, institutions and ideologies', in Kothari, U. (ed.) <i>A radical history of development studies: Individuals, institutions and ideologies</i> . London: Zed Books, pp. 1-13.
11	Kothari, U. (2019b) 'From Colonial Administration to Development Studies: A Postcolonial Critique of the History of Development Studies', in Kothari, U. (ed.) <i>A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies</i> , pp. 47-66.
12	Kvangraven, I. H. (2021) 'Beyond the Stereotype: Restating the Relevance of the Dependency Research Programme', <i>Development and Change</i> , 52(1), pp. 76-112.
13	Langan, M. (2018) 'Neo-Colonialism and Donor Interventions: Western Aid Mechanisms', in <i>Neo-Colonialism and the Poverty of 'Development' in Africa</i> . Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 61-88.
14	Levitt, K. P. (2021) 'Unravelling the canvas of history', in Veltmeyer, H. and Bowles, P. (eds) <i>The Essential Guide to Critical Development Studies</i> . London: Routledge, pp. 13-20.

15	Li, T. M. (2007) <i>The will to improve: governmentality, development, and the practice of politics</i> . London: Duke University Press.
16	McMichael, P. and Weber, H. (2022) <i>Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective</i> . Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Ltd.
17	Nixon, R. (2011) <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
18	Rai, S. M. (2011) 'Gender and Development: Theoretical Perspectives', in Visvanathan, N. et al. (eds) <i>The Women, Gender and Development Reader</i> . London: Zed Books, pp. 28-37.
19	Robert O'Brien and Williams, M. (2016) <i>Global Political Economy: Evolution and Dynamics, Beyond Paradigms</i> . New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
20	Rostow, W. W. (1990a) 'Introduction', in <i>The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-communist manifesto</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-3.
21	Rostow, W. W. (1990b) 'The Five Stages of Growth- A Summary', in <i>The Stages of Economic Growth: A non-communist manifesto</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 4-16.
22	Sachs, J. (2015) 'Why Some Countries Developed While Others Stayed Poor', in <i>The Age of Sustainable Development</i> . New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 101-138.
23	Said, E. (2003) <i>Orientalism</i> . London: Penguin.
24	Sen, A. (2000) 'Poverty as capability deprivation', in <i>Development as Freedom</i> . Oxford: Oxford Paperbacks, pp. 87-110.
25	Wade, R. H. (2018) 'The Developmental State: Dead or Alive?', <i>Development and Change</i> , 49(2), pp. 518-546.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	N.A.