Advanced Topics in Public Policy: International Development

PA 388K Spring 2014
Thursdays 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
SRH 3.316/350

Course Description:

Any foray into international development must grapple with fundamental questions regarding how we understand poverty and development and how we know what works or doesn’t work in the practice of global development. We begin the course with a discussion of the ways in which we may define, observe and measure development from multiple perspectives and methodologies. We then proceed to explore the development experiences through the lens of studies, which employ different ideologies and methodologies to understand what does and does not work in international development. This section focuses on macro, meso, and micro approaches in development studies, as well as a critical look at the role of international development aid.

This iteration of the course does not offer a grand survey of the history and practice of international development, although much of our discussion will focus on historical experiences, contending debates and strategies for producing growth, reducing poverty and inequality, and improving societies’ well-being. Moreover, there is not enough time in the course to delve deeply into thematic issues in global development, such as gender, governance, and the environment or the effect of the current global challenges on the developing world, such as recent volatility in food and commodity markets, climate change, and the global financial crisis. Each of these topics will surface at various times in the class.

Throughout the semester, I will emphasize exposure to multiple points of view, from varying disciplines, methodologies, and ideologies. Students will gain experience with important statistical databases (such as the World Development Indicators, Human Development Indicators, and the new Multidimensional Poverty Index), and an exposure to a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative approaches to understanding and addressing poverty. Assignments will emphasize direct engagement with primary materials and will focus on building critical writing, analytical and presentation skills that will demonstrate a broad understanding of the key issues and challenges facing international development today. Please bring your laptop to class. Whenever possible, we will refer to web resources during class discussion and will do interactive exercises with online databases.

This syllabus contains material that is designed to serve as a reference for your current and future study of international development. I include a long list of blogs sites, journal suggestions, links to relevant organizations, and data sources. I also include for each week a list of recommended readings. These are for your interest only, if you should so wish to continue reading on a particular topic. While I do expect you to read the required materials for each week prior to class (and come prepared to discuss those materials), I do not expect you to have reviewed the recommended readings.
Course Agenda and Deadlines

**Part I: How Do We Define and Measure Poverty?**

- Jan.16: How Do We Define and Measure Poverty and Development?
- Jan.23: The Human Development and Capabilities Approach
- Jan.30: Voices of the Poor and Dynamics of Poverty
- Feb.6: New Measures of Multidimensional Poverty and Well-Being
- Feb.10: Special Class (Monday): Presentation by Nina Munk, author of “The Idealist”
- Feb.13: No class meeting - Data Exercise Groups should meet to complete exercise

**Part II: What Works (or Not) in Development?**

- Feb.20: Rethinking Growth and Development, Part I
- Feb.27: Rethinking Growth and Development, Part II
- Mar.6: The Political Economy of Growth and Development
- Mar.13: No Class (Spring Break)
- Mar.20: The New Development (Micro)Economics
- Mar.27: No class (Professor at ISA conference in Toronto)
- Apr.3: Randomized Experiments and Development Impact Evaluation

**Part III: Global Development Aid: Problem or Solution?**

- April 10: The Global Aid Industry
- April 17: The Problems with Aid
- April 24: Fixing Aid?
- May 1: Group Project Presentations

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**Course Deadlines:**

- **Sun., Feb.16:** Group Data Exercise Due at 5:00 pm by email to ceweaver@austin.utexas.edu.
- **Sun., Feb.23:** Blog #1 due at 5:00 pm; post to Canvas.
- **Fri., Mar. 7:** Abstract, outline and references due at 5:00 pm for final papers (both Option A and B); send by email to Dr. Weaver
- **Sun., Mar.30:** Progress Reports due by 5:00 p.m., send by email to Dr. Weaver
- **Sun., Apr.6:** Blog #2 due at 5:00 pm; post to Canvas
- **Sun., Apr.13:** Rough Drafts due at 5:00 pm, two copies by email to peer reviewers and Dr. Weaver
- **Sun., April 20:** Peer reviews of rough drafts due, two copies by email to groups/authors and to Dr. Weaver
- **Thurs., May 1:** In-Class Presentations of Option A final project and panel defense
- **Thurs., May 8:** Final drafts for both Option A and B due at 5:00
**Required Books**


All required readings not in the above books are available on Canvas in PDF format or available as free downloads on the internet (I have provided the website addresses in the reading schedule below). I have not pre-ordered a separate coursepack and have assumed that many of you will wish to read these documents on-line or print at your discretion. NOTE: I reserve the right to add or subtract readings from the required list during the course of the semester.

**News Sources**

*The Economist* [http://www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com)

*Financial Times of London*: [http://www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com)


*The Guardian* Global Development page: [http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development](http://www.guardian.co.uk/global-development)


**Blogs**

Blogs are often informal opinion editorials, written quickly and often without substantial supporting evidence. Never read a blog uncritically. That said, blogs can be an excellent source of very timely analysis and can point you in the direction of the latest information on policy issues. Here are some of the blog sites I follow:


Duncan Green writes a daily blog, *From Poverty to Power*, for Oxfam International ([http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/](http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/)). It is one of the best places to find the newest reports on international development and the aid industry.


Owen Barder is a British national who has worked for over 20 years in development and is now a Senior Fellow and Director for Europe at the Center for Global Development in Washington, D.C. He runs a very interesting blog called “Owen Abroad: Thoughts on Development and Beyond” at http://www.owen.org/about.

Dani Rodrik, Harvard development economist, keeps a blog at http://rodrik.typepad.com/dani_rodriks_weblog/

Chris Blattman, Professor at Columbia University, keeps a blog at http://chrisblattman.com/


Boring Development: a blog written by, and devoted to, nerds who care about the nitty-gritty, unglamorous side of development work and are very critical of development aid. A good source of leads on new development studies and evaluation reports. http://www.boringdevelopment.com

Innovations for Poverty Action blog: http://www.poverty-action.org/blog

Gates Foundation Impatient Optimists: http://www.impatientoptimists.org/


MFAN (Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network) blog: http://www.modernizeaid.net/pressroom/blog/

The Project Syndicate (http://www.project-syndicate.org/): contains numerous op-eds from prominent economists (and the occasional political scientist) such as Nouriel Roubini, Jagdish Bhagwati, Joseph Stiglitz, Barry Eichengreen, Dani Rodrik, Martin Feldstein and many more.

Financial Times Beyond BRICs: http://blogs.ft.com/beyond-brics/#axzz1tkQHQ2s2

**Data Sources**

*World Bank World Development Indicators (WDI):* http://data.worldbank.org/
- your one-stop guide to all kinds of country-level information, ranging from GDP to literacy rates to per capita cell phone use.

- The counterpart to the World Bank’s World Development Indicators, produced annually and now with an online interactive data site. Includes the HDI, IHDI, GII, and MPI

*DevInfo:* http://devinfo.org/libraries/aspaspx/Catalog.aspx
- New searchable database of development indicators, endorsed by the United Nations.

*GapMinder:* http://www.gapminder.org/
- Hans Rosling’s amazing world of visualized development and global health data.

www.WolframAlpha.com:
- A computational knowledge engine that digests simple searches and spits out answers in graphical and other data visualization forms (e.g. punch in “GDP per capita Ireland and Iceland” and it instantly produces a line graph).

MEDevEcon: https://sites.google.com/site/medevecon/development-economics/devecondata
- Website that aggregates development data

*DevelopmentData*: http://www.developmentdata.org
- A useful website that collects links to sources of data from international organizations and other official agencies on all kinds of things related to development (governance, population, debt, trade, etc).

- The World Bank’s online interactive computational tool to replicate research from the World Bank’s research group.

- World Bank’s interactive data site on regional poverty.

- Another World Bank site that aggregates development data

- Includes country National Health Accounts (NHS) data

*USAID Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS)*: http://www.measuredhs.com/
- Data on population, health, HIV, and nutrition through more than 300 surveys in over 90 countries

- The World Economic Outlook (WEO) and the Global Financial Stability and Global Monitoring reports present the IMF staff's analysis and projections of economic developments at the global level, in major country groups (classified by region, stage of development, etc.), and in many individual countries. The WEO and GFSR focus on major economic policy issues as well as on the analysis of economic developments and prospects. They are usually prepared twice a year, as documentation for meetings of the International Monetary and Financial Committee, and are primary instruments of the IMF's global surveillance activities. The IMF also publishes WEO outlook updates on a more frequent basis.

- Statistics, policy analysis and other information on global trade, finance and development with a particular focus on issues relevant to developing countries.

*United Nation World Income Inequality Database*: http://www.wider.unu.edu/research/Database/en_GB/database/
- Data on income inequality for developed, developing, and transition countries

- a good source of macroeconomic data on the OECD member states, as well as many analytical reports on salient economic policy issues

OECD Development Assistance Committee: [http://www.oecd.org/dac](http://www.oecd.org/dac)
- the OECD’s site for tracking official development aid data from the OECD donors. It also includes several analytical reports, evaluations, and links. For the creditor reporting system (CRS), see [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1).

- a new development index developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, now adopted by the United Nations Development Program for integration into the annual Human Development Reports.

AidData: [http://www.aiddata.org](http://www.aiddata.org)
- An independent course of data on international aid flows and analysis on aid, in partnership with Development Gateway.

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**On Academic Integrity**

Students are expected to respect the LBJ School's standards regarding academic dishonesty. You owe it to yourself, your fellow students, and the institution to maintain the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior. A discussion of academic integrity, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, as well as helpful information on citations, note taking, and paraphrasing, can be found at the Office of the [Dean of Students web page](http://www.aiddata.org) and the [Office of Graduate Studies](http://www.aiddata.org). The University has also established disciplinary procedures and penalty guidelines for academic dishonesty, especially Sec. 11.304 in Appendix C of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities section in UT's General Information Catalog.

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**Assignments and Grading**

I. **In-Class Participation (10%)**

Minimal participation in classroom discussion requires that you read, think about, and bring to class the assigned reading materials; be prepared to discuss the reading materials; and show respect for other participants as well as the instructor. The discussion evaluation guideline attached to the end of this syllabus differentiates contributors in the following areas: mastery of material, quality of ideas, effectiveness of argumentation, respectful and active engagement of others in the discussion, and general impression. Positive and constructive class participation is not based on a quantitative measure of how many times you speak in class. Rather, good participation entails actively staying engaged during class by asking questions, making useful comments, and posing an argument relevant to the topic at hand. A willingness to play devil’s advocate is encouraged.

As part of your participation, you are also expected to read and respond to the discussion board blogs. Your responses may be posted on the Canvas discussion board site (as a reply to a thread) or provided during class discussion.

II. **Discussion Board Blogs (2 @ 10% each = 20%)**

As part of this course, you are required to post two “blogs” on the course discussion board (available on Blackboard). The purpose of this assignment is twofold: (1) to help you critically engage with the readings and (2) gain experience in policy-oriented blogging.
You are required to blog two (2) times over the course of the semester at the specified times (see below). Each blog should be at least 500-1000 words and be written in a professional manner; ie: no incomplete sentences, improper grammar, slander, crude remarks, etc. Each of the blogs should respond to one of the provided prompts / titles, although I encourage you to be creative in how you interpret and use these prompts to shape your blog entry. Remember, the key point of a blog is to seriously engage an important topic, but to do so in an accessible, smart, fun, and jargon-free manner. Blogs should also include hyperlinks to other sources, and charts, graphs and other visuals where appropriate.

I encourage you to submit your blog entries early. If you submit the entries late (and please note that Canvas discussion board time stamps each entry), you will receive a 10% grade deduction for every 24 hours past the deadline. No exceptions will be made without prior approval, so if you are sick or have other extenuating circumstances, please email me before you miss the deadline.

Stern words aside, have fun with this. Blogging is an acquired taste, but is fast becoming a good way to hone policy-writing skills, get recognized, and develop professional networks. For good models of blog entries, see all of the above recommended blog sites.

Prompts (Choose one prompt under each topic for your blog entry):

Blog #1: Rethinking Development [Due Sunday, Feb.23 at 5:00 pm]
  Prompt A: Development and Data: Beauty and the Beast?
  Prompt B: What Really Defines Development?
  Prompt C: The Big Push, and the Push Back: What Future for the Millennium Villages Project?

Blog #2: Getting the Incentives Right [Due Sunday, April 6 at 5:00 pm]
  Prompt A: What 50 Years of Economic Orthodoxy Got Wrong
  Prompt B: Scaling Up by Scaling Down: How Rigorous Impact Evaluation Can (or Cannot) Inform the MDGs
  Prompt C: Institutions for Development: Can We Fixed Failed States?

III. Group Development Data Exercise (25%)

A key objective of this course is to attain familiarity with the various ways that poverty and development are defined and measured, particularly through the major sources of data collection and dissemination. This assignment is designed to help you, in groups of 3-4 students each, learn to navigate frequently used development databases, as well as compare and critically evaluate various ways of collecting relevant data and calculating levels of poverty and development. For the purpose of syncing the data exercise to the first part of our course, the exercise is organized into four parts:

  Part I: Discovering Development Data
  Part II: Measuring Capabilities? Measuring Vulnerabilities?
  Part III: Participatory Poverty Assessment
  Part IV: Exploring the MPI, GII, and GNH

The Group Data Exercise due on Sunday, Feb.16 by 9:00 pm by email (to ceweaver@austin.utexas.edu)

IV. Final Paper – Option A: Group Regional Development Report (45%)

As a follow-on to the data exercise, this assignment is a staged group regional development report. The purpose of this report is to conduct an analysis of the current development status of a region (using the six regional groupings used by the World Bank, listed below), and derive insights and depth from 4-5 selected countries within that region. The final product will be an oral presentation and a written report composed of
three main parts: (1) introduction/overview to the region and its overall development status; (2) 4-5 chapters on individual countries within the region; (3) conclusion with policy recommendations on development priorities and strategies for the region.

Six Regional Groups (4-5 students each):
Latin America & Caribbean (LAC)
Middle East & North Africa (MENA)
Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)
East Asia & Pacific (EAP)
South Asia (SA)
Europe & Central Asia (ECA)

A critical part of this assignment will be your group’s determination of what must be included (or not) in the analysis to properly assess the socioeconomic and human development progress of a region and its countries, identifying important differences between countries within the region. I strongly suggest that you narrow the focus of your report as quickly as possible to one development issue that your group sees as either defining or paving the path towards the development success of your region, or the issue that poses the biggest challenge to achieving the region’s development goals. Selectivity and brevity are key here: you must be able to provide enough breadth to justify the selection of your thematic focus, and then you must provide enough depth on the thematic focus to enable your reader to fully understand the nature of the issue and the prescriptions that follow.

You will be expected to delve deeply into primary sources, including data indices (e.g. WDI, HDI, MPI, etc), primary reports (e.g. World Development Reports, Human Development Reports, UNDP regional and country reports, MDG regional and country reports, World Bank Country Assistance Strategy [CAS] or Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers [PRSPs]), and secondary sources from news, scholarly journals, and books. Your reports should be well documented, with a full list of references provided in your endnotes, and should include charts, graphs, maps, and photos as appropriate.

Students within each regional group will collectively write the introduction/overview and the conclusion/policy recommendations. Individual students will author the country chapters. I will evaluate the group and individual components separately to allow for a certain proportion of the grade to be based on the work of the collective and the remaining portion to be based on the work of the individual author.

The final reports should be approximately 25-35 single-spaced pages, depending on the number of country chapters. This page limit includes all endnotes, charts, charts, maps and appendices (as needed), so it’s not nearly as long as you might assume. Below is a rough guide to the length of each section. Endnotes/references should be included at the end of each chapter.

Report Structure

I. Cover Page (with list of authors)
II. Executive Summary (1 page)
III. Chapter 1: Introduction / Overview of the Region (4-5 pages)
IV. Chapters 2-5: Country Chapters (4-5 pages each) [Note: the report may have less or more chapters depending on the number of students in each group]
V. Chapter 6: Conclusion / Policy Recommendations (2-3 pages)

The presentation of the group regional reports will be on the last day of class (May 1). Each group will have 15 minutes to present, followed by 12-15 minutes of Q&A. Powerpoint presentations should be sent to Dr. Weaver the evening before. Grades on the presentations will be based upon the professor’s score (50%) and the average of peer scores (50%). I will provide a rubric in advance of the presentations so that you are familiar with the expectations.
The combined work for the regional report is worth **45% of your overall grade** (15% is based on your individual work on the country chapters and 30% upon collective work on all other parts). This is broken down for several stages of the assignment (with due dates listed below):

**Abstract, Detailed Outline (including country selections) and References (0%)**:
Due March 7 by 5:00 pm

**Progress Report – a form will be provided in advance (0%)**
Due Sunday, March 30 by 5:00 pm (email)

**Rough Draft (5% for group parts and 5% for single-authored country chapters)**:
Due Sunday, April 13 by 5:00 pm

**Peer Review of Rough Draft (5% - group grade)**:
Due Sunday, April 20 by 5:00 pm

**Presentation (10% - group grade)**:
In class on May 1. Please send powerpoint presentations to Dr. Weaver by 10:00 pm the night before

**Final Written Report (10% for group parts and 10% for single-authored country chapters)**:
Due Thursday, May 8 at 5:00 pm by email

V. **Final Paper – Option B: Book Reviews**

For students who want to do an individual final project, I provide the option of reading two additional books and writing two 2,000-word book reviews. You may choose two books from the list below. Alternatively, you may propose two books, published between 2011-present (first editions), that are directly relevant to International Development, and present them to me for approval by March 7. These must be books you have NOT read before.

Each book review should, at a minimum, address the following issues:

a. Who is the author of this book and who is his/her/their audience?
b. What are the key objectives of the book?
c. What is the central argument of the book?
d. How does this argument fit into the body of theory and practice of international development? What key theories or modes of practice does this book challenge or promote?
e. What evidence does the author deploy to support his/her argument?
f. How persuasive or important is this book in terms of shaping the way we think about and pursue development policy? What are the key strengths/weaknesses?
g. Who should read this book, and why?

Each book review will be worth 20% of your final grade. Rough drafts of the reviews (worth 5% each) will be due April 13 at 5:00 by email. Final drafts (15% each) are due May 8 at 5:00 pm.

In addition to writing two book reviews, students choosing Option B for the final paper assignment will also provide written short (1 page) peer reviews for two book reviews of other students pursuing Option B (due April 20), ad serve as a panelist for the final presentations of the Option A group reports on May 1. Peer reviews are worth 5% of your grade.

Options for books:


READING SCHEDULE

Part I: Defining and Measuring Development

Jan.16: How Do We Define and Measure Poverty and Development?

Required Reading:


High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Available at  


Recommended:


Jan.23: The Human Development and Capabilities Approach

Required Reading:


**Recommended Reading:**


**Jan.30: Voices of the Poor and the Dynamics of Poverty**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Readings:**


**Feb.6: New Measures of Multidimensional Poverty, (In)Equality and Well-Being**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Readings:**


Feb.10 (Note special day/time): Nina Munk’s presentation on The Idealist (Bass Lecture Hall 12:00-1:45 pm)

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


UNDP/ Millennium Development Goals Monitor: [http://www.mdgmonitor.org](http://www.mdgmonitor.org)

Millennium Villages Project: [http://millenniumvillages.org/](http://millenniumvillages.org/)


**Feb.16 (Sunday): Group Data Exercise due by 9:00 pm**
Part II. What Does and Does Not Work in Development?

Feb.20: Macroeconomic Approaches to Development: Rethinking Growth and Development, Part I

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


**Sunday, Feb.23: Blog #1 due at 5:00 p.m.**

Feb.27: Macroeconomic Approaches: Rethinking Growth and Development, Part II

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:


**March 3 (Sunday): Blog #2 due**
March 6: The Political Economy of Growth and Development

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**March 7: Option A abstracts/outlines and Option B book choices due**

March 13: Spring Break – No class

March 20: The New Development (Micro)Economics

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Viewings/Reading:**


Macartan Humphrey's lecture at the Munk Policy School in Toronto. He offers some great insight into the motivations behind RCTs as well as the initial community intervention: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXu9eWLYiE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EXu9eWLYiE)


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**March 27: In-class group work on Regional Development Reports (Professor in Toronto for ISA conference, March 25-29)**

Group consultations with Dr. Weaver will be scheduled for Monday, March 24 in one-hour blocks.

**March 30: Progress Reports Due**

**April 3: Randomized Experiments and Development Impact Evaluation**

**Required Reading/Viewing:**


**Recommended Reading:**


**Sunday, April 6: Blog #2 Due**

**Part III: International Development Aid: Problem or Solution?**

**April 10: The Global Aid Industry: An Overview**

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Reading:**


Center for Global Development. 2013 *Commitment to Development Index* (brief and full, interactive report): http://www.cgdev.org/publication/commitment-development-index-2013


** Sunday, April 13: Rough Drafts Due**

April 17: The Problems with Aid

**Required Reading:**


**Recommended Readings:**


** April 20: Peer reviews due**

April 24: Fixing Aid?

**Required Reading:**

Recommended Reading:


May 1: In-class presentations

No required reading.

**FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE MAY 8 AT 5:00 PM BY EMAIL.**
**THERE IS NO FINAL EXAM IN THIS CLASS.**
USEFUL (ENGLISH-LANGUAGE) GENERAL JOURNALS AND OTHER SCHOLARLY SERIES:

African Development Review
Asia-Pacific Development Journal
Comparative Politics
Democratization
Development and Change
Development Policy Review
Development Studies
Economic Development and Cultural Change
Economic Journal
Environment and Development Economics
Environmental Politics
Finance and Development
Foreign Affairs
Foreign Policy
Global Environmental Change
Global Environmental Politics
Global Governance
Journal of Democracy
Journal of Development Economics
Journal of International Development
Journal of International Relations and Development
Journal of International Trade & Economic Development
New Political Economy
Oxford Development Studies
Public Administration and Development
Peace, Conflict, and Development
Review of International Political Economy
Studies in Comparative International Development
Third World Quarterly
World Development
World Politics

SELECTED MAJOR DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (MULTILATERAL AND BILATERAL)

African Development Bank (AfDB): www.afdb.org
Canadian Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (formerly CIDA): www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD): www.ebrd.com
German Corporation for Technical Cooperation (GTZ, now GIZ): http://www.giz.de/en/
InterAmerican Development Bank (IDB): www.iadb.org
International Monetary Fund (IMF): www.imf.org
Millennium Challenge Corporation: www.mcc.gov
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida): www.um.dk/en
OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC): http://www1.oecd.org/dac
United Kingdom Department for International Development: www.dfid.gov.uk
World Bank: www.worldbank.org
USEFUL NGO AND THINK-TANK SITES:
AidData: www.aiddata.org
Bank Information Center: www.bicusa.org
Bread for the World: www.bread.org
Bretton Woods Project: www.brettonwoodsproject.org
Brookings Institution: www.brookings.edu/
CARE International: www.care-international.org/
Center for Global Development: www.cgdev.org
Catholic Relief Services: www.catholicrelief.org/
Center for Economic and Policy Research: www.cepr.net
Development GAP (D’GAP): www.developmentgap.org
Development Gateway: www.developmentgateway.org/
Environmental Defense Fund: www.edf.org
International Development Research Center (IDRC): www.idrc.ca
International Rivers Network: www.irn.org
Natural Resources Defense Council: www.nrdc.org
Overseas Development Institute: http://www.odi.org.uk/
Oxfam International: www.oxfam.org
Oxford Development Studies: www.rpmlec.co.uk/eduweb/sites/rmext05
United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (WIDER):
www.wider.unu.edu/
World Resources Institute: www.wri.org/
World Vision: www.worldvision.org


**Evaluation Criteria for Participation**

**“A” Contributor**

- Contributions in class and on the BB discussion board reflect exceptional preparation as evidenced by frequent authoritative and/or creative use of textual/material evidence.
- Ideas offered are always substantive (i.e., unusually perceptive, original, and/or synthetic) and provide one or more major insights as well as direction for the class.
- Agreements and/or disagreements are well substantiated and persuasively presented.
- *If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished markedly.*

**“B” Contributor**

- Contributions in class and on the BB discussion board reflect thorough preparation as evidenced by competent and occasionally authoritative and/or creative reference to textual/material evidence.
- Ideas offered are usually substantive, provide good insights and sometimes direction for the class.
- Agreements and/or disagreements are fairly well substantiated and/or sometimes persuasive.
- *If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished.*

**“C” Contributor**

- Contributions in this class reflect satisfactory preparation as evidenced by at least some acquaintance with textual/material evidence.
- Ideas offered are sometimes substantive, provide generally useful insights, but seldom offer a new direction for discussion.
- Sometimes disagreements and agreements are voiced with little to no substantiation.
- *If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would be diminished somewhat.*

**“D-F” Contributor**

- Contributions in class reflect inadequate preparation.
- Ideas are seldom substantive, provide few if any insights, and never a constructive direction for the class.
- Integrative comments and effective challenges are absent.
- *If this person were not a member of the class, valuable air-time would be saved.*

**Non-Participant**

- Little or nothing contributed in class; hence, there is not adequate basis for evaluation.
- *If this person were not a member of the class, the quality of discussion would not be changed.*
- Said persons need to leave this category and move into a contributor category.
Guidelines for Peer Reviews of Rough Draft Reports

Constructive peer reviews contain the following elements:

1. A concise summary of the driving questions, objectives and significance of the report. This is essential, as it compels the reviewer to pay close attention and reiterate in his or her own words the key points of the report. If this summary is off, it signals to the author(s) that the arguments and organization are not clear and more work needs to be done on this front.

2. Comments on the overall organization of the paper, pointing out areas of confusion and offering helpful suggestions for reorganization, if needed.

3. Explanations of the weaknesses or flaws in the underlying logic of the report or use of evidence.

4. Helpful suggestions on additional literature or data sources to consult, if needed, as well as suggestions on where visuals (charts, graphs, maps, etc) can be edited (for clarity), added or subtracted.

5. Points out weaknesses in evidence and offers suggestions on where and how new evidence might be brought to bear to support the central arguments.

6. Discussion of whether or not the offered policy prescriptions are persuasive, are logical given the prior analysis, and seem feasible and/or desirable.

7. Generally corrects grammar, misspellings, awkward sentences, etc. However, it is not the job of the peer reviewer to micro-edit the paper. If you see consistent problems in the grammar or style of writing, point out an example, explain what is wrong, and tell the author that this occurs throughout the paper and needs to be fixed.

8. End the peer review with a concise summary of the key problems to address in revisions. While the tone should not be overly critical, it is not the job of the peer review to play cheerleader unless the draft paper is really in good shape. The majority of the peer review will be focused on the weaknesses of the paper.

A proper review is 2-3 pages, minimum, for the group regional report and 1-1.5 pages for a book review.