Histories of Development:
Technology, Society, and Political Economy in Global Perspective

Instructor: Liat Spiro

Course Description
Development discourses surround us. We speak routinely of “developed” and “developing” countries, development politics, and development indices. But what is development? Is development a process, a policy, or a program? Who develops and who, or what, is developed?

Historians of development usually start with postwar international institutions, nodding perhaps to massive infrastructure projects of the interwar period. This course, however, will take the long view on questions of development as discourse and project.

Throughout the course, we will work at two levels. First, we will trace the history of shifting ideas of development since the eighteenth century. Second, we will analyze the assumptions, mechanics, everyday politics, and actual results of policy interventions and economic programs—from tariffs and import substitution to intellectual piracy to infrastructure investment to “price scissors”—aimed at achieving development for a variety of public and private ends. To do so, we will read a wide range of primary and secondary sources authored not only by historians but also by philosophers, political scientists, economists, and engineers. These readings will lend insight into the making of today’s international political economy, from debt structures to environmental resource use and distribution to global inequality.

Assignments
1. Weekly response papers (15%)
   Approximately 250 words reflecting on the assigned readings for the week
2. Discussion participation (15%)
3. Midterm Exam (15%)
   Four identifications (one-to-two paragraphs), plus two analytical or interpretative essays
4. Development Project or Metric Paper (30%)
   This paper should analyze the history of a single development project (Hanyang Iron Works, Hoover Dam, etc.) or a specific development metric (Gross Domestic Product, Human Development Index, etc.) in the context of the assigned readings. It should be approximately twelve pages (double-spaced, twelve-point font) in length.
5. Final Exam (25%)
   Eight identifications (one-to-two paragraphs), plus two analytical or interpretative essays

Course Schedule
Week 1—Improvement
Lecture 1: From Enclosure to Stadial Theories
Lecture 2: War and Mercantile Manufactures

Readings:

Primary sources:
- William Robertson, *The History of America* (1777), selections from Book IV
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men* (1782)

**Week 2—The Great Divergence**
Lecture 1: Endowments in Land, Labor, and Coal
Lecture 2: Technology, Institutions, Culture

Readings:
- Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York, 2014), chapters one to five

**Week 3—Second Developers & their Discontents**
Lecture 1: American Economic Growth in the Long Nineteenth Century
Lecture 2: German Doctrines of Development

Readings:
- Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, 1980), chapters one, three

Optional:

Primary sources:

  Optional:

**Week 4—Metrics of Development**
Lecture 1: Inventing and Theorizing Backwardness
Lecture 2: The Making of GDP

Readings:
- Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca, 1990), chapters three to six
- Eli Cook, *The Pricing of Progress: Economic Indicators and the Capitalization of American Life* (Cambridge, MA, 2017), chapters four through seven

Primary source:
- Hinton Helper, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* (New York, 1857), selections

Week 5—Developing Labor
Lecture 1: Managing Labor
Lecture 2: Measuring Labor

Readings:

Week 6—Investment Frontiers
Lecture 1: Railroaded

Readings:
- Noam Maggor, *Brahmin Capitalism: Frontiers of Wealth and Populism in America’s First Gilded Age* (Cambridge, MA, 2017), chapters three and five
- Emily S. Rosenberg, *Financial Missionaries to the World: The Politics and Culture of Dollar Diplomacy, 1900-1930* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), chapters one through three, five

Optional:
- William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York, 1992), chapters one and two

Primary sources:
- William Barclay Parsons, *An American Engineer in China* (New York, 1900), selections
- Japan Times Publishing Co., *Economic development of Korea & Manchuria* (Tokyo, 1923), selections

Week 7—Technocracy
Lecture 1: Midterm Exam
Lecture 2: Engineering Expertise

Readings:
• Timothy Mitchell, *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity* (Berkeley, 2002), chapters one, two and seven
• Rudolf Mrázek, *Engineers of Happy Land: Technology and Nationalism in a Colony* (Princeton, 2002), chapters one, three, five

Primary source:
  o Daniel Burnham, Report on proposed improvements at Manila, June 28, 1905 (Washington D.C., 1906) and maps and plans of Burnham Plan

Week 8—Modernizing Elites, & their Collaborators and Critics
Lecture 1: Self-Strengthening
Lecture 2: Swadeshi Swaraj
Readings:

• Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a civilization* (Berkeley, 1995), chapters one and two
Barry Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Transitions and Growth* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), chapter three

Primary source:

**Week 11—Cold War Development Politics**

Lecture 1: The Green Revolution
Lecture 2: Small is Beautiful

Readings:
- Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA, 2015), chapters one, two, and four

Optional:

Primary source:

**Project or Metric Paper Due**

**Week 12—Debating the Washington Consensus**

Lecture 1: The End of History
Lecture 2: Development and Neoliberalism

Readings:
- Ha-joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective* (London, 2002), chapters two to four
- Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, 1999), chapters one, two, six, seven, eight

Optional:
• Rita Abrahamsen, *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa* (Chicago, 2000)

Primary sources:

Optional:
  o Audrey Topping, “Ecological roulette: Damming the Yangtze,” *Foreign Affairs* (September 1995): 132-

**Week 13—Where are we now?**
Lecture 1: Class-wide Discussion
Lecture 2: Final Exam

• Tom Miller, *China’s Asian Dream: Empire Building Along the New Silk Road* (Chicago, 2017), chapters one through three
• Dani Rodrik, *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth* (Princeton, 2007), chapters one, four, and seven through nine

Optional: