

Eckerd College
International Relations and Global Affairs
Spring 2020
PO 241S-001

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International Political Economy

MWF, 10:40-11:40, CMLS 099

Course Description

This course will examine alternative theoretical perspectives of international political economy (IPE) in relation to issues of global economic development. We will begin with an analysis and critique of economic globalization. The class will then explore in detail the main three theoretical approaches to IPE: realist/conservative, liberal, and historical/structuralist. We will relate these IPE theories to issues of worker's rights, economic equality, gender, race, global public goods and sustainable development.

The course is structured to look at the impact of world economic activity on human development. Specific issues covered include trade, foreign aid, transnational corporate investment, and sustainable development. We will examine how these concerns influence development choices for the less-developed countries. We will survey some innovative policy proposals from the United Nations and elsewhere to bring about sustainable development, create economic equality, and protect global public goods. Finally, we will explore the current dynamics between global capitalism and democracy that now dominate international economic and political relations in the 21st century.

Noneconomists should not be scared off by the course's title. This is not an economics course; rather, it involves historical, institutional and structural analysis. Economics students are, of course, also welcome.

Poverty Amidst Plenty

This semester we will seek to better understand why wealth generates poverty. How can this be? How does what many consider the very source of the solution to the problem of poverty expand it? Why is poverty and destitution the plight of more than 1.4 billion people? Why is there so much poverty in our bountiful world? The dramatic depiction of poverty often presented in the media does not provide a means for understanding. If we wish to develop policies to alleviate human misery, we must examine the economic and political frameworks in which policy choices operate. To be able to do this requires the study of international political economy.

The Theoretical Task of Students in Political Economy

Poverty is a problem in political and economic theory. What does this mean? What are theories and why do we need them? Professor Weisband responds to those questions as follows:

First, theories seek to explain complex reality or phenomena that defy common sense or intuitive understanding.

Second, theories neither “prove” nor provide “answers.” A successful theory is measured by the richness of the questions it allows us to raise rather than by the answers it provides. The task of theoretical discourse is to get the question right. Why wealth promotes poverty is such a question. The mere act of posing this relationship between wealth and poverty represents a new level of theoretical understanding. Once a theory is said to have proved something it no longer remains a theory as such, but moves on to a new status such as a law or principle.

Third, theories operate intellectually in ways that require alternative explanations or contrasting ways of thinking and reasoning. Too often we think either in terms of facts or in terms of opinions/values. In such analytical schemes, facts are “hard” and opinions/values are “soft.” This often results in the misguided notion that all opinions are always equally correct or useful. But social understanding is not a taste. Examining poverty is not like a preference for chocolate rather than strawberry ice cream. We have to earn our intellectual spurs before we have the right to exert our opinions. Thus opinions or value-judgments must be informed by a theoretical quest in which alternate ways of interpreting reality and contrasting visions are all systematically introduced and analyzed.

Fourth, the primary task in studying political economy focused on poverty and development is to establish a multidisciplinary perspective on alternate forms of explanation of why and how development and poverty expand in a world economy of uneven growth.

International Development Policy: The Realm of Choice

The examination of alternative perspectives on poverty and development may sometimes lead to a kind of paralysis. The problems presented by poverty seem so overwhelming. The political and economic forces that generate and sustain poverty often appear intractable. Yet hope for a better world lies in the realm of policy. This semester we will discuss the most effective means and methods of pursuing sustainable development and poverty alleviation. It is through the development of doable, workable policy options that paralysis and despair can be overcome.

By the end of the semester, you will have studied various approaches to alleviate poverty, end corruption, and promote viable, sustainable economic growth. Hopefully this class will provide you with a way to see that there are genuine alternatives to the present economic and political structures that cause needless suffering. Your task is not to necessarily agree with the readings and proposals discussed in class. What is expected is that you engage these alternatives and evaluate for yourself whether they are (or are not) reasonable. At the conclusion of the class, you may want to develop new public policy proposals and present your own vision forward.

Course Requirements

- *Class Participation & “Think Papers” (20%)
- *Test one (20%)
- *Test two (20%)
- *Test three (20%)
- *Final exam (20%)

NOTE: One grade is automatically deducted from any student who has more than two unexcused absences.

Office Hours

Mondays: 1:00—5:00pm
Wednesdays: 3:00—5:00pm
Or by appointment.

Please stop by my office to discuss any questions or concerns about the class (or to chat).

Major Readings

Required texts available for purchase at the bookstore are:

Matthew Desmond, *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City* (N.Y.: Crown Publishers, 2016).

William Felice, *The Global New Deal: Economic and Social Human Rights in World Politics – 2nd Edition* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).

Chris Hedges & Joe Sacco, *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt* (N.Y.: Nation Books, 2012).

Robert Kuttner, *Can Democracy Survive Global Capitalism?* (N.Y.: Norton, 2018).

Honor Code

All students are expected to uphold the Eckerd College honor code:

“On my honor, as an Eckerd College student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to tolerate these behaviors in others.”

You are required to write “pledged” on every assignment to indicate your work is consistent with the Honor Code.

Classroom Technology Policy

All digital and electronic devices, including laptops, ipads, e-readers, and cell phones, should not be visible and should not be turned on during class. The classroom is a place where we gather to exchange ideas in person, and to give and receive respect for those ideas. For that reason cell phones and all electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class. They should not be visible to you or others.

Accessible Education Services

If you have a disability or believe that you qualify for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or other laws, please contact Accessible Education Services at extension 8248 or via email at aes@eckerd.edu as soon as possible. Appropriate accommodations can only be arranged through that office, and may not be made retroactively.

Eckerd College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students with disabilities who need special accommodations must make their requests by contacting Accessible Education Services (located in Edmundson Hall) at extension 8248 or via email at aes@eckerd.edu.

Students with physical, cognitive, or psychological disabilities must contact Accessible Education Services, located in Edmundson Hall, at extension 8248 or via email at aes@eckerd.edu to discuss potential accommodations of other helpful services. All information will be kept confidential.

Title IX Reporting Policy

Eckerd College is committed to fostering a campus community based on respect and nonviolence. To this end, we recognize that all Eckerd community members are responsible for ensuring that our community is free from discrimination, gender bias, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. In accordance with Title IX, Eckerd is legally obligated to investigate incidents of sexual harassment and sexual assault that occur on our campus. Faculty who become aware of an incident of sexual violence, including harassment, rape, sexual assault, relationship violence, or stalking, are required by law to notify Eckerd's Title IX Coordinator. The purpose of this

disclosure is to ensure that students are made aware of their reporting options and resources for support. For more information about your rights and reporting options at Eckerd, including confidential and anonymous reporting options, please visit <http://www.eckerd.edu/titleix/>.

Unauthorized Use of Course Materials

All course materials (including lectures, PowerPoint, and materials posted on Moodle or other course management sites or shared by email) may only be used for the purposes of an individual's or group's study while enrolled in this course, and may not be shared with a wider audience on or off campus nor posted on an external website without my explicit permission.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Jan 29	Introduction and Overview
I	Poverty in America
Jan 31	Desmond, 1-52
Feb 3	Desmond, 53-110
Feb 5	Desmond, 111-157
Feb 7	Desmond, 158-206
Feb 10	Desmond, 207-254
Feb 12	Desmond, 255-313
Feb 14	Review
Feb 17	Test One: Poverty/Housing Crisis in America
II	IPE Theory
Feb 19	Liberal Perspectives Felice, Intro and Ch 1 (1-25)
Feb 21	Liberal v Conservative Felice, Ch 2 (27-60)
Feb 24	Conservative/Realist Perspectives Felice, Appendix to Ch 2 (60-72)
Feb 26	The Historical Structuralist Perspective Felice, Ch 3 (73-109)
Feb 28	United Nations and Development Felice, Appendix to Ch 3 (109-123)
March 2	Linking Human Rights and IPE: Global Public Goods, Economic Equality, Capabilities Approach

III Dimensions of IPE

- March 4 The Environment and IPE
Felice, Ch 4, The Environment (125-156)
- March 6 The UN, the Environment and Development
- March 9 Race and IPE
Felice, Ch 5, Race (157-177)
- March 11 Gender and IPE
Felice, Ch 6, Gender (179-204)
- March 13 Gender, Race and Human Development

March 14 – 22: Spring Break

- March 23 Military Spending
Felice, Ch 7, Military spending (205-231)
- March 25 Europe and the US
Felice, Ch 8 (233-256)
- March 27 A Global New Deal?
Felice, Ch 9 (257-287)
- March 30 Review
- April 1 Film: Life and Debt
- April 3 **Test Two: Economic Globalization and Development**

IV “Sacrifice Zones” in America?

- April 6 Native Americans—Pine Ridge, South Dakota
Hedges/Sacco, Ch 1
- April 8 African Americans—Camden, N.J.
Hedges/Sacco, Ch 2
- April 10 Good Friday – No Class

- April 13 White Working Class—Welch, West Virginia
Hedges/Sacco, Ch 3
- April 15 Latinos, Immigration, Slavery—Immokalee, Florida
Hedges/Sacco, Ch 4
- April 17 The Occupy Movement—Liberty Square, NYC
Hedges/Sacco, Ch 5
- April 20 Review
- April 22 **Test Three: Human Development in America**

IX Global Capitalism and Democracy

- April 24 The New Deal and the Bretton Woods Institutions
Kuttner, Chs 1-2 (1-48)
- April 27 The “Liberation” of Finance
Kuttner, Chs 3-4 (49-96)
- April 29 The Global Assault on Labor
Kuttner, Chs 5-6 (97-148)
- May 1 Trading Away a Decent Economy
Kuttner, Chs 7-8 (149-211)
- May 4 Governing Global Capitalism
Kittner, Chs 9-10 (212-257)
- May 6 Final Lecture – 7PM – Miller Auditorium**
- May 8 The Road From Here
Kuttner, Chs 11-12 (258-309)
- May 11 FINAL EXAM, 11:30am – 2:30pm
(Monday)**