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PSC 240.01: Introduction to Third World Studies

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University of Montana
PSC 240 - Introduction to Third World Studies
Spring Term 1997

Professor: Olatunde Ojo

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Office Hours: T 12:35-2:00; W 9:00-10, or by appointment

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This course is designed to introduce students to issues of great concern in the Third World, primarily from a non-western perspective. The main objective is to seek understanding of the causes of Third World underdevelopment, the abject poverty of most of the citizens, and the pathology of the life of poverty with particular reference to the consequences for social and political life. The purpose is to increase students' understanding of how these issues impact on, and are impacted by, Western and especially U.S. foreign policy.

The course begins with a general overview of everyday life as described in the words of peasants, workers, children and household members as well as in the writings of Third World authors and state officials. The historical origins of how the Third World became the Third World are then explored, with a focus on the relative impact of internal and external forces, and how the power, wealth and policies of the great powers still contribute to the deepening poverty while widening the prosperity gap between the Third World and the rest of the world.

The second half of the course focuses on contemporary issues and challenges -- food and debt crises; ethnic and religious conflicts; military rule and militarization; human rights abuses, especially abuses of women and children; genocide and refugee problems; population growth, population movements and environmental degradation. Key national and international policy measures to resolve these problems are assessed and the underlying obstacles to success discussed. The goal here is to sensitize students to these issues, and activate their interest in the literature on the subject to ensure informed basis for their activism.

Course Format and Requirements

Essentially this is a reading/discussion course, with the instructor as facilitator and guide. For most of the sessions the instructor will make introductory remarks on the topic, outlining the key issues, themes and concepts. Group discussions of the previously assigned readings then take place at which students draw out materials that illustrate or challenge the concepts and theories underlined in the introductory lecture. Apart from identifying important areas of controversy, the groups will also be expected to discuss other relevant issues arising from the readings and relate them to the broader themes in the course. Group leaders then present to the entire class a summary of their

Group leaders then present to the entire class a summary of their respective readings, what the group got out of it, and what issues and questions have been raised and discussed in the group. Notes are compared, areas of agreement are noted, and questions and issues of controversy are further discussed with a view to resolving them.

Students are expected to do the readings on schedule, to attend classes regularly and to participate in class discussions. To ensure adequate preparation for, and quality contribution to class discussions, students will be required periodically to write short (no more than three pages) papers that summarize and react to some to some of the reading assignments. These will constitute a major part of the course grading (40%). There will also be a mid-term examination (20%) and a final(30%) The balance of the course grade(10%) will be for class attendance.

The Texts

The basic texts are: Ayi Kwei Armah, The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born; Howard Handelman, The Challenge of Third World Development; Hazel Johnson and Henry Bernstein, eds., Third World Life of Struggles; and Alan Thomas et al., Third World Atlas (2nd edition).

Course Outline

Week 1

Jan. 28 Introduction
Jan. 30 The Third World: Problems in Definition and Conceptualization
Reading: Third World Atlas pp.10 - 23.
Also begin and try to finish Ayi Kwei Armah, The Beautiful Ones are not yet Born by Feb. 6

PART ONE

Conditions of Everyday Life of Third World Peoples

Week 2

Feb. 4 The nature of the Third World
(Video and discussion of "Of Snakes and Software")
Feb. 6 Discussion of Ayi Kwei Armah. First written assignment due: 2 to 3 pages on the central theme, how Armah develops this theme, the key events, the issues they raise and questions you would like answered.

Week 3

Feb. 11 Discussion of Kwei Armah continued.
Feb. 13 Family Life. (Video and discussion of Dadi's family).

Feb. 18 Family ties and social order: Continuity and change in marriage, kinship and household structures
Suggested Readings: (on Reserve):
(1) Luigi M. Solivetti, "Family, Marriage, and Divorce in a Hausa Community: A sociological model" Africa 64 (2), 1994:252-268; (2) Charles Hirshman and Vu Manh Loi, "Family and Household Structure in Vietnam" Pacific Affairs

Feb. 20 Lives of struggle in a dual economy: Agrarian reforms and the politics of rural change - - the Indian, Colombian and Senegalese examples of how rural proletariats are made.
Readings: Third World Lives of Struggle, selection #5 on India (Indra Lahore), #9 on Colombia (Sugar estate workers in El Valle, #10 on Senegal (Developing the River Valley)

Week 5

Feb. 25 Land Reform and Peasant revolutionary pressures. Examples of peasant revolution and rebellion

Feb. 27 Lives of struggle in the formal and informal sectors
(A) Men
Readings:
(1) Lives of struggle: selection #13, #14 & #15
(B) Women
Readings:
(2) Lives of struggle: selections #24, #26 & #27
(C) How Strong is the rural-urban tension?
Reading:
(3) Misty Bastian, "Bloodhounds who have no friends: Witchcraft and locality in the Nigerian Popular Press." (Reserve)
* On the importance of witchcraft in social and political life, read Peter Geschiere & Cyprian Fisiy, "Domesticating Personal Violence: witchcraft, courts and confessions in the Cameroon" (Reserve).
Note: 2nd short paper due, on a review and reaction to at least one of the readings assigned to your group.

Week 6

Mar. 4 Group and general discussion of Robert Kaplan's "The Coming Anarchy" (Reserve and Atlantic Monthly, Feb., 1994)

Mar. 6 In-class review for the mid-term exam

Week 7

Mar. 11 MID-TERM EXAM

Mar. 13 The Making of the Third World: The rise of European capitalism and industrial power. **BRING YOUR ATLAS OF THE THIRD WORLD TO CLASS**

Reading: Atlas of the Third World pp. 25-33

Week 8

Mar. 18, 20 SPRING HOLIDAY

Week 9

Mar. 25 The New Imperialism: Incorporation of the Third World into the global capitalism
Reading: Third World Atlas pp34-45

PART TWO

Contemporary Imerialism and other Related Issues and Challenges

Mar. 27 Link between local economies, globalization, and human rights abuses

Week 10

Apr. 1 Debt, Structural Adjustment and de-development
Reading: Third World Atlas p.68

Apr. 3 Rights of women or cultural imprialism & political destabilization
Readings: Third World Lives of Struggles #28 & #29
For general background, read Handelman, chp.4

Apr. 8 The nexus between Population, Environment and Development
Reading: Third World Atlas p.62; The New American Fall 1993 edition on "the Resilient Earth, pp 5-15; "Global Environmental Politics and sustainable development" chp 8 from Marian Miller's book on the Third World in global Environmental politics.

Apr. 10 Policy conundrum: Is the Green Revolution a blessing or a curse?
Reading: Gregg Easterbrook, "Forgotten Benefactor of Humanity" Atlantic Monthly, January 1997 (Reserve)
* Video & discussion - the Legacy of Malthus

Week 11

Apr. 15 Policy Conundrum: Population control & international environmental regulation
* 3rd written assignment due: On "In the light of the New American article and the chapter from Miller's book what would you say are the obstacles to implementing and enforcing sustainable international environmental health?"

Apr. 17 The root of ethnic conflicts and genocide
Reading: Handelman, chp 3

Week 12

Apr. 22 Religious conflicts
Reading: Handelman, chp 2: Groups to be assigned (a) OPEC, OIC, and Islamic Politics (Reserve); and (b) David Camroux, "State Responses To Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia" (Reserve).

Apr. 24 Military Rule and militarization: the problem of
recivilianization and democratization
Reading: Third World Atlas pp. 64-65; Handelman, chp. 8

Week 13

Apr. 29 Refugees and population Movements
* Dialogue with death video
Reading: Mathew Connelly and Paul Kennedy, "Must it be
the Rest against the West? The Atlantic Monthly
December, 1994 (Reserve); Third World Atlas pp. 66-67

May 1 Finding Own Solutions to Underdevelopment: (a) The Non-
aligned strategy and South-South Cooperation
(b) Looking Eastward: Anything to be learnt from
Taiwan?
Read: Third World Atlas p.47

Week 14

May 6 Regional Integration schemes
May 8 Review

Week 15

May 14 Final Exam 8 - 10 am