

# The Political Economy of Development



# Module outline

This course investigates the meanings, processes and contradictions of development over the long term – from the emergence of capitalism to contemporary globalisation. It examines how processes of economic growth and structural change generate new opportunities for poor and emerging countries and their populations whilst simultaneously engendering novel forms of poverty and inequality. It is rooted in an intersectional political economy approach – which examines interconnections between race, class, gender and capitalist development.

The course is divided into two parts. The first half provide historical and theoretical foundations for understanding broad based processes of development – by analysing how aspects of race, class and gender are foundational to capitalist economic systems. The second half of the course uses these insights to investigate contemporary dynamics of poverty and inequality, global value chains and development, dynamics of global food production and food poverty, the rise of China, and finishes by considering the viability of alternative conceptions of development.

# Module structure and weekly topics

## WEEK 1 – WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

- *In this introductory lecture we'll be asking what is development?*
- *How do we conceive of the relative importance of, and relationships between, economic growth, structural transformation, human freedom, environmental sustainability?*

## WEEK 2 – RACE, RACISM AND DEVELOPMENT

- *To what extent was racism important in Northern Europe's initial establishment of the global division of labour?*
- *How has racism in relation to the evolving world system changed over time?*
- *To what extent does racism still inform/influence developmental practices and processes?*

## WEEK 3 – GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

*This week we'll be looking at the World Bank's conception of smart economics as outlined in its 2012 World Development Report 'Gender Equality and Development'. We'll then place these in a broader historical and theoretical discussion about gender, capitalism and development.*

## WEEK 4 – LABOUR AND DEVELOPMENT

- How should labour be conceptualised within the development process?*
- Can labour be the subject of development?*
- What is pro-labour development? What is labour-driven development? what is labour-led development?*
- How have capital-labour relations underpinned the transformation of the world system and of national trajectories of development?*



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# Module structure and weekly topics

## **WEEK 5 – FOOD, AGRICULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT**

*One of the great paradox's of our time is hunger within food abundance. We'll be looking at why this is so, and ways to overcome this paradox.*

## **WEEK 6 –POVERTY AND INEQUALITY**

*What is the World Bank's international poverty line (IPL)? How is it calculated? (Wade and Selwyn readings)*

*What is the trendline for global poverty based on the World Bank's IPL? (Wade)*

*How would a class-relational perspective analyse poverty? (Selwyn)*

*What other markers of social difference (e.g. race, caste, gender) impact on poverty dynamics?*

## **WEEK 7 – GLOBAL FOOD CHAINS AND DEVELOPMENT**

*This week we'll be looking at the ways in which global value chains (GVCs) impact on development.*

## **WEEK 8 – EAST ASIAN DYNAMISIM AND THE RISE OF CHINA**

*This week we'll be putting China's rise in the broader context of dynamic economic growth across the East Asian region since the Second World War.*

## **WEEK 9 – ALTERNATIVES**

*This week we'll be discussing alternatives to mainstream conceptions of development.*

## **WEEK 10 – THEORETICAL PERSPEVIES AND ESSAY PREPORATION**



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# Assessment

**1 X 5,000 word essay. Worth 100% of your final mark.**

You can either chose (or modify) an essay question from the list below or formulate your own essay question focusing on a subject covered in one of the weeks.

Here are some essay questions that you MIGHT find interesting.

*Is state-led development a desirable and possible option for the countries of the global south?*

*To what extent can contemporary development free itself from its raciliased/colonial past?*

*How smart is 'smart economics'?*

*Discuss how the development and globalization projects required different global architectures to facilitate their realisation. To what extent were these project successful?*

*How useful is the World Bank's 'dollar a day' conception of poverty for understanding the prevalence of poverty in the world today?*

*What are the barriers that make upgrading difficult in the contemporary world system?*

*What strategies can states and firms pursue in order to facilitate upgrading in the contemporary world system? Use empirical examples to support your argument.*

*Explain the East Asian "Miracle".*

*Is China's rise best explained by its embrace of free market capitalism?*

*Labour must be at the centre of the analysis of development. Discuss, considering both historical and contemporary issues.*

*What is Labour-Centred Development? Is it a realistic approach to achieving human development for the majority of the world's population?*

*What are the causes of the contemporary global food (hunger) crisis? what are the solutions?*

# Learning outcomes

## **Learning Outcomes:**

An advanced knowledge and understanding of the Political Economy of Development.

The ability to apply a range of skills in the retrieval and use of primary and secondary sources.

To analyse and evaluate theories relevant to the Political Economy of Development.

# Module Convenor



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