Development Studies 1600 - Tools for Development: From Theory to Practice
Tuesday, Thursday 2:30 – 3:50pm
Watson 138

Instructor: Jamie McPike   **Teaching Assistant: Rie Ohta**
Email: jamie_mcpike@brown.edu   Email: rie_ohta@brown.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4-6pm in Watson 106 (or by appointment) Office Hours: by appointment

---

COURSE DESCRIPTION

"Tools for Development" was initiated and co-designed by a group of Brown undergraduates who left their development studies (DS) classes feeling enlightened but paralyzed as to how they could fight global poverty and inequality. The students wanted to complement DS offerings at Brown—all theory-based—by focusing on the *practice* of development. The course they designed gives students a platform to question and start defining their roles in the field of development through skills building, case studies, conversations with development practitioners, and critical reflection exercises. Throughout the semester, students will prepare for their summer field experiences by working with their host organizations to design role descriptions, plan their summer travel and living arrangements, and gain cultural competency.

This course has three components: 1) a spring semester course; 2) a summer work experience with a small, grassroots development organization in the U.S. or abroad; and 3) a wrap-up retreat at the end of the summer.

The Course Outline (this document) and its companion document—Guide to Assessment and Required Assignments (Handout #2)—together comprise the framework for the course. Handout #2 contains guidelines for: course participation, weekly check-ins, the Providence Project, and your final project as well as assessment procedures and policies,

---

INTRODUCTION, AIMS, OBJECTIVES

"Tools for Development" is a course for proactive, humble-yet-ambitious students who already have a critical understanding of development and who are motivated to engage deeply with the challenges of this coursework. A prerequisite for this course is thorough prior engagement with development theory as this course is intended to build on that foundation, and allow you to spend the majority of the class connecting theory to your summer field experience. This hands-on course will help students to make important decisions about their role as future development practitioners, and to engage in critical, self-reflective, and meaningful development work either in the U.S. or abroad.

A key element of the course will be conversations with development practitioners and guest lecturers. Each guest speaker will be asked for two things: 1) to teach students a practical skill (e.g. community asset mapping, non-profit fundraising, etc.) that can potentially assist them in their summer field experience, and 2) to discuss the theories, values, and ethical dilemmas that

inform their work. Speakers are not asked or expected to teach students everything they need to know about a particular skill set, instead, they are asked to point students to a range of resources that students could use to teach themselves the related skills they need for their upcoming summer project.

Planning a field experience is a difficult and ongoing process, often requiring months (sometimes years!) of preparation. While it is difficult (if not impossible) to prepare for every challenge that may arise during a field experience, there are multiple ways that this course will prime students for their summer field experiences. In this course, students will: 1) engage with a range of materials that highlight both current theoretical perspectives on development as well as key case studies in both the U.S. and abroad, 2) gain field experience during the semester through a hands-on evaluation of a grassroots social change organization located in Providence, 3) communicate regularly with their summer host organization and complete weekly check-ins about their progress and plans for their summer projects, and 4) reflect on their role as development practitioners and communicate with other students about their work and its broader impacts. It is important that all students take the time to critically read the assigned readings, thoughtfully write the weekly check-ins, actively engage with other students in the course, seriously complete the Providence Project, and thoroughly prepare for the summer field experience.

Learning Aims:
This course has four specific aims:
- To critically examine to the meaning of "development", with an emphasis on theories of development and case studies from the U.S. and abroad;
- To help you develop well-informed connections between theories of development and development practice so that the problems you identify and the possible solutions you offer for them rest on empirical, rather than anecdotal evidence;
- To prepare you for any unexpected moments you may encounter in the field and to ensure that you are well-equipped to handle potential failures, unexpected changes, and other challenges you may encounter during your summer experience; and
- To encourage you to reflect deeply and critically about your role as a "development practitioner" and your social position in the field.

Learning Objectives:
On completion of this course, students should be able to:
- Demonstrate an understanding of the various meanings of "development" and the kinds of projects that are considered development projects;
- Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary theories of development;
- Use your knowledge of development to evaluate the work of a grassroots social change organization located in Providence, RI. Through this assignment you will learn to build a relationship with an organization and understand their work in and impact on the local community;
- Think creatively about solutions to entrenched problems of social inequality;
- Learn to listen to others and closely observe the cultural and social context in which you will carry out your summer project;
- Explain how and why your social position may influence your field experience and some of the consequences of this position on your work; and

- Appreciate the challenges that will arise during your field experience and develop skills to prepare yourself for these challenges.

ASSESSMENT

See Handout #2 for a complete statement of requirements and submission procedures.

Assignment	% of grade	Due date
Participation	25	---
Weekly Check-Ins (11)	25	Tuesdays by 9pm, beginning Feb 5
Providence Project	15	Thursday, March 21
Final Project + Presentation	35	Tuesday May 2, Thursday May 4

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Date	Class	Title

Part 1: Development Theory and The Meaning of "Development"

Date	Class	Title
Jan 24, TR	1	Introduction: Overview of DEVL 1600; Mutual Expectations; Course Policies
Jan 29, T	2	"What is Development?" Part 1: Examining Critical Perspectives on Development
Jan 31, TR	3	**No lecture**: Class meeting replaced with student/instructor meetings about summer projects
Feb 5, T	4	"What is Development?" Part 2: Contemporary Approaches to Thinking on Development **Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm**
Feb 6, W		**OPTIONAL WORKSHOP: "Funding Your Summer Project" (Time and Location TBA)**
Feb 7, TR	5	Rethinking Development: Guest Speaker, Keith Morton, Providence College, Providence, RI

Part 2: Connecting Theory with Practice: Case Studies from Development Practitioners

Date	Class	Title
Feb 12, T	6	Liberation Theology Part 1: Theories of Community-Based Action **Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm**
Feb 14, TR	7	Community Organizing: Guest Speaker, Chelsea Miller, DARE, Providence, RI
Feb 19, T	8	No Classes (President's Day)

Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm

| Feb 21, TR | 9 | Liberation Theology Part 2: Connecting Theory to Social Change |

| Feb 26, T | 10 | Community-based Asset Mapping: Guest Speaker, Mark Kravatz, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, Providence, RI
Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm |

| Feb 28, TR | 11 | Joint Class Session with ENG 1930 (Renewable Energy Technology), Chris Bull |

| Mar 5, T | 12 | Using IT for Development: Guest Speaker, Adam Thompson, eHealth Nigeria, Kano, Nigeria
Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm |

| Mar 7, TR | 13 | Mid-semester Reflection and Evaluation, Project Check-In (Group A) |

Part 3: Skills-building for Development Practitioners

| Mar 12, T | 14 | Building a Project from the Ground Up: Guest Speaker, Catherine Savell, Reflief Team One, Haiti
Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm |

| Mar 14, TR | 15 | "Design for Development" Workshop: Aaron Horowitz and Hannah Chung, Jerry the Bear and Design for America, Providence, RI |

| Mar 19, T | 16 | Quantitative Techniques: Survey Research and Design (TBD Based on Student Interest)
Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm |

| **Mar 20, W** | | **Optional Presentation: James Ferguson, Colloquia on Comparative Research, Watson Center (McKinney Conference Room, 5-6:30pm)** |

| Mar 21, TR | 17 | Project Check-In (Group B)
Providence Projects Due via Email before Class |

| Mar 26, T | 18 | No Classes (Spring Break) |

| Mar 28, TR | 19 | No Classes (Spring Break) |

| April 2, T | 20 | Providence Project: Individual Presentations
Upload Presentation by 9pm on April 1
Weekly Check-in Due by 9pm |

April 4, TR	21	Providence Project: Individual Presentations **Upload Presentation by 9pm on April 3**
April 9, T	22	Participatory Action Research: Guest Speaker, MaryJane Skjellerup, Youth Leadership Institute, Fresno, CA **Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm**
April 11, TR	23	Non-profit Fundraising: Guest Speaker (TBD)

Part 4: Understanding Your Role as a Development Practitioner

April 16, T	24	An Anthropological Perspective on Fieldwork: Guest Speaker, Stephanie Savell, PhD Candidate in Anthropology at Brown University **Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm**
April 18, TR	25	Project Check-In (Group C)
April 23, T	26	Development as Power: Understanding Your Social Position as a Development Practitioner **Weekly Check-In Due by 9pm**
April 25, TR	27	Learning to Fail: Guest Speaker, Lisa DiCarlo, Field School for Social Innovation, Providence, RI

Part 5: The Summer Field Experience

April 30, T	28	Demystifying the Summer Field Experience: Student Panel from DEVL 1600 Students (Spring 2012)
May 2, TR	29	Final Presentations **Upload Presentation by 9pm on May 1**
May 7, T	30	Final Presentations **Upload Presentation by 9pm on May 6** **Final Paper Due**

Final Class Potluck During Finals Week! (Location, Date, and Time TBD)