

Fall 2006
POLITICS OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD
Thursdays 12:30 – 3:10

PSC 781.M002
Classroom: 070 Eggers
mboroujerdi@maxwell.syr.edu
<http://faculty.maxwell.syr.edu/mborouje/>

Dr. Mehrzad Boroujerdi
Office: 332 Eggers Hall
Office Hours: T 11:00-1:00
Office Phone: 443-5877

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This seminar shall introduce students to the politics of those disparate – and often desperate - developing state-societies known as the "developing world." Rather than concentrating on geographical areas or state-societies, the course follows the contours of a truly interdisciplinary approach to the socio-economic, political, and cultural issues shaping people's lives in the more than 140 state-societies that constitute the "developing world." The course will begin with a critical look at the spatial assumptions that underlie our conceptions of "continents" and proceeds to discuss the "Westernization of the political order." The second part of the course will historicize such "meta" concepts as "colonialism," "modernity" and "globalization" to ascertain how they have challenged and changed modern lives during the last two centuries. In the third and final part of the course we will turn our attention to scrutinizing the triumphs and travails of "development" and "state planning" in the developing world. In all these cases, we are concerned with how the language of the Enlightenment and that of alternative localities shape these debates.

COURSE PHILOSOPHY: You should consider this seminar a collective exercise in critical thinking. My role is to steer class discussion and engender an informal participatory class environment where we can all search collectively for a broader understanding of the subject matter at hand. The readings will introduce you to some of the more important scholarship on the subject, and they will form the springboard for class discussions. Please keep in mind that the present structure of the course reflects my interests. However, I welcome a broadening of aims and interests. Also, please take note of the fact that this syllabus represents *anticipated* scheduling of lectures/readings/assignments; changes may be made to suit the actual composition and competencies of the class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation: In addition to being physically present, I expect you to be mentally present as well! As such, you should complete all assigned readings *before* each class meeting so that you are familiar with the concepts, facts, theories, and controversies with which we are dealing. Furthermore, you should try to engage in cyber discussion through the course listserv (psc781@listserv.syr.edu). You and I will use this listserv to (a) post interesting or informative e-mails about the subject matter of the course; (b) post your critical summary/commentary; and (c) respond to points and issues raised by the instructor or your peers.

Oral Presentations: To ensure class participation and to spread out the work a bit, each student is required to make at least one oral presentation in class concerning one of the topics listed in the syllabus in which they are interested. The presenters will provide a critical summary of the assigned or suggested readings pertaining to their chosen topic. They are expected to answer such questions as: (a) what is the author's *thesis*?; (b) what is the major point s/he is trying to make?; (c) what are the major *assumptions* the author makes (and expects readers to accept) in arguing that thesis?; (d) what are some *useful concepts* s/he presents?; (e) how does the reading *relate to previous readings*?; (f) what are the major *strengths and weaknesses* of the work?; (g) what *questions* have come to mind in light of past readings?; and (h) what are the *implications for research practice* if the author's thesis and underlying assumptions are valid or true? Each presentation should last 20 to 30 minutes and should be accompanied by a class handout of 2-3 single-spaced pages. To make this a worthwhile exercise, each presenter is expected to post their comments over the class listserv at least two days before their scheduled presentations (i.e., Tuesday mornings before noon). You will sign up for the presentations during our first-class meeting.

Reflection/Research paper or Journal of Notes: You can choose one of the following two options:

(a) Turn in a "journal of notes" (a reading log with critical commentary and opinion) on the seven books that we will read in this course. In your seven entries (each of which must be 3-4 double spaced pages), you are expected to analyze, compare, and contrast works read in the seminar by entertaining the set of questions (a through h) mentioned above under "Oral Presentations." The deadline for turning in your journal of notes is *December 7*.

(b) Write one major reflection/research paper, 20-25 double spaced pages long, focusing on a paradigm (i.e. post-colonial), concept (i.e., modernity), or problem/issue (i.e., state planning) examined in class. This paper, which should have a theoretical rather than a descriptive focus, is due on *December 7*.

GRADING CRITERIA

Quality and degree of participation in class and listserv discussions	20%
Oral presentations with handouts	30%
Final Paper or Journal of Notes	50%

REQUIRED TEXTS (available at SU Bookstore and Orange Student Bookstore)

Arjun Appadurai, Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization (University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

Bertrand Badie, The Imported State: The Westernization of the Political Order (Stanford University Press, 2000).

Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism (New York: Monthly Review, 1972).

Dipesh Chakrabarty, Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Arturo Escobar, Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World (Princeton University Press, 1995).

Martin Lewis and Karen Wigen, The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography (University of California Press, 1997).

James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (Yale University Press, 1998).

Please note that single copies of all the assigned readings have also been placed on reserve in Bird Library.

What is the truth of language but a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms – in short, a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically, and which after long use seem firm, canonical and obligatory to a people: truths are illusions about which one has forgotten that this is what they are.

Friedrich Nietzsche

READINGS ASSIGNMENTS

Aug. 31: Introduction - The Nature and Structure of the Course

Logistics, trajectory, expectations, and goals of the course. No readings.

Recommended:

Vittorio Hosle, "The Third World as a Philosophical Problem," Social Research v. 59, no. 2 (Summer 1992): 227-262.

Part I: Thinking about Geography and Westernization of Political Order

Sept. 7: Demystifying Geography

Lewis and Wigen – pp. ix-103

Sept. 14: Reconstructing Geography

Lewis and Wigen – pp. 104-205

Sept. 21: Export and Import of Political Models

Badie – pp. 1-164

Sept. 28: Internal and International Disorders

Badie – pp. 165-235

Recommended:

Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, "Why Africa's Weak States Persist: The Empirical and the Juridical in Statehood," *World Politics*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Oct. 1982), pp. 1-24. Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0043-8871%28198210%2935%3A1%3C1%3AWAWSPT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-K>

Part II: Provincializing Europe

Oct. 5: **Discourse on Colonialism**

Césaire – entire book

Oct. 12: **Provincializing Europe**

Chakrabarty – pp. 3-113

Recommended:

Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial'," *Social Text*, no. 31/32 (1992), pp. 99-113. Stable URL: <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0164-2472%281992%290%3A31%2F32%3C99%3ANOT%22%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>

Oct. 19: **Histories of Belonging**

Chakrabarty – pp. 117-255

Oct. 26: **Encountering Cultural Globalization**

Appadurai – pp. 1-85

Nov. 2: **Playing with Modernity**

Appadurai – pp. 89-199

Part III: Development and Social Engineering

Nov. 9: **Theorizing Development**

Escobar – pp. 3-101

Nov. 16: **Political Economy of (under)Development**

Escobar – pp. 102-226

Nov. 23: **No Class** (*Thanksgiving Break*)

Nov. 30: **The Will to Reshape Society**

Scott – pp. ix-179

Dec. 7: **The Failure of Social Engineering**

Scott – pp. 183-357

(Term papers are due)