Institute for the Study of International Development  
McGill University  
Winter 2014  

INTD 397  
Lecture: Culture and Development  
(3 credits)  

Monday and Wednesday, 16:05-17:25  
Location: EDUC 129  

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Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-14:00  

Course Description  

The course is an introduction to the study of culture in development. Development policy makers and agencies have long assumed that successful development interventions are direct results of positive economic behavior, while perceiving culture as an inappropriate variable. In recent years, however, development has looked to culture as a significant resource explaining the success of development outcomes.  

Building on this new paradigm of culture and development, this course pays particular attention to the effects of culture in development thinking, approaches, and actions. In this course, students will explore the dynamic roles of, and the symbolic meanings attached to, culture in the context of contemporary development.  

Culture is a broad, and at times, ambiguous concept. It is generally understood to be a system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, knowledge, and artifacts among members of society. An important feature of culture to which we will pay particular attention is not its static and unchanging nature but its dynamic and flexible character. This course sees culture as an ongoing socio-political process especially because culture creates a system of power relations in society and between societies. As the anthropologist Clifford Geertz argues, culture is a set of control mechanisms which define social behavior, norms, and values. An ultimate aim of the course is to uncover such socio-political mechanisms embedded in culture as well as its effects in shaping development thinking, approaches, and practices.  

The course will mainly employ sociological and anthropological perspectives in examining diverse empirical studies related to culture and development. The readings span almost all the major regions of the developing world. We will look at a variety of themes including culture and development agencies, cultural values and
economic development, culture and politics, social capital, local knowledge, gender inequality, health, tourism, consumerism, religion, and diasporas. At the end of the course, students will have a solid understanding of the complexities, controversies, and debates surrounding the relationship between culture and development.

Course Requirements:

1. Participation
Students are expected to come to class having done the required readings beforehand in order to contribute to class discussion in the conferences. Readings will average 60 pages per week. Your participation is evaluated through weekly conferences, clicker participation, and the ISID March Conference.

Conferences
Conferences start in the fourth week of the semester. From the fourth week, weekly lectures will be from 16:05 to 16:55. Each student will sign up for one of the conference groups on Minerva and attend it throughout the term. The attendance of conferences is mandatory. The conferences are meant to facilitate the discussion of issues raised in the lectures and readings. This is your opportunity to participate actively in the class. Discussion topics will be posted on myCourses.

Grading for the conferences will be based on attendance and participation. There are 9 conferences in this course. To get full points for attendance, you must attend at least 8 conferences. In other words, you are allowed to miss 1 conference without penalty and without having to give an explanation. To get full points for participation, you must participate consistently and thoughtfully.

Clickers/Student Response System
Clickers will be required in this course and they will be used in every lecture. Clickers actively enhance student participation during lecture time. Clickers enable quizzes in class and allow me to receive immediate feedback based on the answers. You should purchase your clicker immediately with all the course materials, register your clicker on myCourses on our course page, and bring it to every class. Students’ class participation will be evaluated through clicker participation from the 3rd week. Note that the quizzes will be evaluated only for participation.

Rules for clicker usage:
- Purchase only one clicker for all your courses. Clickers can be purchased at the McGill Bookstore. Only one type of clicker is authorized for use on campus.
- Register your clicker to your McGill ID by going to the course in myCourses, click on the link “Register your clicker,” and follow the instructions on screen. You will only need to register your clicker in one course and it will be registered in all your courses.
Lost clickers must be replaced at your own expense and re-registered in all your classes using the link in myCourses stated above.
- For verification that a clicker is working correctly, please consult the ICS Service Desk at 688 Sherbrooke, Room 285 between 9:00 and 17:00.
- For any other questions, please see the frequently asked questions (FAQ):  
  
  http://www.mcgill.ca/tls/srs/resources/#FAQs

**ISID March Conference (Participation)**

On March 13 and 14, the Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID) is organizing a conference on Truth and Reconciliation Commissions. There will be one session taking place on Thursday March 13th and a few sessions on Friday March 14th. Attendance to any session of the conference will earn students extra credit (1.5%) that will count toward their participation grade. Please note that participation is never to exceed the percentage established for the course. At the conference there will be a sign up sheet at each session. Students should put their name, student ID, and signature. Needless to say, students leaving early from a session will not receive the extra credit.

2. **Midterm in-class exam**
The midterm exam will be scheduled in class on Wednesday, February 12. Students must answer five identification questions out of ten. These identifications will focus on concepts discussed in the course. Each identification must be explained in about two paragraphs. I will mention the potential identification questions in class.

3. **Final take-home exam**
The final exam is a take-home paper of five double-spaced pages due on Tuesday, April 15. Students will be given a question to answer on the last day of the course based on some of the themes addressed during the semester. The question will require the use of lecture notes, films shown during the semester, as well as course readings. I will provide more detailed instructions on the final take-home exam. The exam must be handed in the main office (Room 126) of the Institute for the Study of International Development at Peterson Hall (3460 McTavish), by 16:00 on April 15.

**Grade Distribution:**

1. Participation: 25% (Including participation for the conferences (13.5%), clicker participation during the class (10%), and the March Conference (1.5%))
2. Midterm exam: 35%
3. Final exam: 40%

**Books to Purchase**

All of the required books have been ordered at the Paragraphe Bookstore on 2220 McGill College Avenue. They are also available on online shops (for example, amazon.ca) often at lower prices for used copies.

In addition to the textbooks, one coursepack will be available for purchase at the McGill Bookstore. Articles and book chapters not included in the books will be
placed in the coursepack. A copy of the coursepack and the books will be placed on reserve in the Humanities and Social Sciences library as well.

**Required Reading**


**Plagiarism**

*McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information)*

**Policy on Languages**

*In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.*

**General Information**

If you have a hearing, visual and mobility impairment, please contact the instructor immediately (in advance of any evaluations or other class requirements).

**Course Schedule**

Week 1. Introduction (Jan. 6, 8)
Week 2. Development agencies and participatory development (Jan. 13, 15)
Week 3. Culture and economic development (Jan. 20, 22)
Week 4. Politics and values (Jan. 27, 29)
Week 5. Social capital in development (Feb. 3, 5)
Week 6. Local knowledge and development (Feb. 10)

*Midterm in-class exam (Feb. 12)*

Week 7. Gender inequality and development (Feb. 17, 19)
Week 8. Poverty and social hierarchy (Feb. 24, 26)
[no class on March 3, 5]
Week 9. Religion and ethnicity (March 10, 12)
Week 10. Health and local tradition (March 17, 19)
Week 11. Tourism and cultural heritage (March 24, 26)
Week 12. Consumerism and inequality (March 31, April 2)
Week 13. Diaspora and development (April 7, 9)

*Final take-home exam (due April 15)*
Week 1 (January 6, 8): Introduction: Culture and Development


Suggested reading


Week 2 (January 13, 15): Development agencies and participatory development

Jan. 13: Historical relationship between culture and development agencies

Jan. 15: Participatory development

Suggested readings


Week 3 (January 20, 22): Culture and economic development

Jan. 20: Effects of culture on economic development


Jan. 22: Cultural values and economic development in Asia


Suggested readings


Week 4 (January 27, 29): Politics and values

*Conferences begin this week. Lectures will now be 50 minutes from 16:05 to 16:55.

Jan. 27: Effects of culture on political development


Jan. 29: Asian Values and human rights

Guest Speaker: Erik Martinez Kuhonta (Political Science, McGill)


Suggested readings


Week 5 (February 3, 5): Social capital in development

Feb. 3: The concept of social capital


**Feb. 5: Role of social capital in development**


**Suggested readings**


[http://jae.oxfordjournals.org/content/11/1/4.full.pdf+html](http://jae.oxfordjournals.org/content/11/1/4.full.pdf+html)

**Week 6 (February 10): Local knowledge and development**


**Suggested reading:**


**February 12: Midterm exam**

**No conferences this week.**

**Week 7 (February 17, 19): Gender inequality and development**

Feb. 17: Gender inequality


Feb. 19: Gender in Asia


Film showing: TBA

Suggested readings

**Week 8 (February 24, 26): Poverty and social hierarchy**

Feb. 24: Effects of culture on poverty


Feb. 26: Caste discrimination and development

Film showing: TBA

Suggested readings


[*no class on March 3, 5*]
Week 9 (March 10, 12): Religion and ethnicity

March 10: The role of religion in development


March 12: Ethnicity and development

Film showing: TBA

Suggested readings


Week 10 (March 17, 19): Health and local tradition

March 17: Health and development

March 19: Female circumcision


Suggested readings
Shell-Duncan et al. 2000. “Women Without Choices: The Debate over Medicalization of Female Genital Cutting and Its Impact on a Northern Kenyan Community,” in


**Week 11 (March 24, 26): Tourism and cultural heritage**

March 24: Cultural heritage and development


March 26: Ecotourism and development


Film showing: TBA

**Suggested readings**


**Week 12 (March 31 and April 2): Consumerism and inequality**

March 31: Ritual consumption


April 2: Human organ market and poverty


**Suggested readings**


**Week 13 (April 7, 9): Diaspora and development**

April 7: Role of diaspora in development


April 9: Diaspora and media