INTERNATIONAL STUDIES 393:
Development, Non-Profits, and Social Change in a Global Context

INSTRUCTOR
Diego Arispe-Bazán, PhD
Email: diego.arispe-bazan@northwestern.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course combines intensive classroom with structured experiential learning, as well as peer-to-peer education to examine international development work. The course sets contemporary development practice in the context of fundamental debates over the nature and goals of non-profits and other such efforts, the causes of global poverty, and the history of development, with particular attention to the relationships between power, participation, and social change. Students will be introduced to the political, social, economic, cultural and geographic characteristics of their different locations, with consideration to how these factors influence community-based work. Overall, the course seeks to give students the intellectual, emotional and practical readiness, and framework to pursue and reflect critically on their field experience and in-country work. The aim of the course is neither a simplistic condemnation or celebration of nonprofits/non-governmental organizations, but a serious engagement with the complexities of non-profit and development industries and their variable impact upon communities around the world. The class presents a critical overview of the history, operation and structure of non-profits, NGOs and development organizations. It examines the ethical and sociological orientation of such organizations, and it introduces students to concepts such as cultural humility that will help them to build the skills necessary to operate ethically and reflexively in complex transnational work environments. Students use the concepts learned through readings and lectures prior to departure to reflect upon their experience as interns for nonprofit/NGOs. Lectures will be paired with collaborative team-building and decision-making role-play scenarios. These goal-oriented activities will expand the experiential course model, challenging students to engage with the multiple entanglements and social realities involved in the work of nonprofits/NGOs.

After their time abroad, students reconvene at Northwestern to compare and contrast field experiences across the program and contextualize the community development internships within the larger dynamics of development theory and practice. Critical reflection is integral to your study abroad/immersion experience and reintegration process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To think critically about development concepts, paradigms, and institutions; and to analyze the potentials and limitations of the theories, policies, and strategies that NGOs/non-profits employ to address global inequality.

- To develop skills in cultural humility and to improve students' capacity to work collaboratively, reflexively, and professionally in a non-profit context.

- To think critically about one's place and role in global development and social change efforts, while preparing students to work collaboratively, humbly, and equitably with community partners.

- To introduce students to the bureaucratic, social and institutional work that underlies the public face of development and humanitarian work through a work-study model.

COURSE STRUCTURE & COMPONENTS

This summer-long course has four integrated components:

1. An intensive, one-week pre-departure classroom work at Northwestern.

2. Collaborative development of a community-based project with local partners over eight weeks. Students will work in one of the following: [*TBD*] either **in-person or virtually.**

3. Brief bi-weekly (every other week) video check-ins with the instructor and peer facilitators, and two brief reading assignments during their time as working with nonprofits.

4. Two reflection assignments during their time abroad linking their experience with central issues and debates in international development based on experience and field research.

5. Structured analysis and reflection for three days at Northwestern after fieldwork, drawing comparisons with other students' experience, to advance a collective theorization of core development issues.

COURSE MATERIALS

All readings and videos will be available on the Canvas site for this course. Please note if a student is off-campus or using a personal device, they must log in to the Northwestern VPN to be able to screen the videos. The readings include a varied combination of theoretical works, applied case studies, and news articles.

The classroom portion of the pre-departure seminar is concentrated and intense. Students are required to have read and viewed listed materials in advance of the relevant class session. **Students are strongly encouraged to have completed the reading before they arrive for the pre-departure seminar.** Then preparation for class sessions would only entail reviewing materials, focusing on the key arguments and perspectives presented therein.

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

The assignments for this course are designed to develop your skills and measure your progress in achieving the learning goals presented above.

Attendance (10%)

Attendance will be taken at every session. Attendance to all class sessions, language trainings, and small group activities is mandatory. Please contact the GESI team if you require an excused absence due to illness, family emergency, religious observance, or other issue *in advance* of the class session to be missed.

Participation (40%)

Students are required not only to attend all class sessions, language trainings, and small group discussions and activities, but also to participate *meaningfully*. Discussions and assignments are designed to critically interrogate arguments and analytical techniques presented in readings, cases, and class lecture. Much of the learning during the seminar will come from your active participation in small group discussions and activities during the sessions; therefore, participation is a major component of your course grade. Students will also have to participate online every other week, using the course Padlet platform, to share relevant videos, blog posts, news articles, or their thoughts on any points they think of after the class session.

Merely being present in class is not sufficient to do well, since being present does not prove engagement with course materials. Students must demonstrate that they have spent time thinking about course materials and develop their own set of discussion questions. The instructor will keep tabs on how students participate (on and offline), as will the student instructors, who might act as moderators, observing students' interactions to make sure everyone participates to the best of their ability.

The Padlet will be available to share images, bits of writing, questions, links etc. with your colleagues to foster discussion. Posts must be brief, but thoughtful and carefully crafted. Always consider: "Why am I posting this?" Posts must incite conversations respectfully and humbly. Students will have access to WiFi at the educational partner offices to upload their responses.

Participation in the Final Summit's project presentation is required. A brief video presentation (open format) of approximately 2 minutes will be shared by each student to close out the course.

Note: Any additional small homework assignments for a class session are mandatory and are part of your participation grade. In the event there is a homework assignment, you are to bring the homework with you to class, which will be used in small group discussions and activities.

Field Reflection Assignments (30%)

Students will use their experience working with the nonprofits to explore key theoretical and practical questions about the development work carried out by small, community-oriented organizations. Students will work on two field reflection papers in response to prompts that will ask them to draw on their experiences from their development projects, processing their time in-country. These written reflections will require students to bring together: independent research, internship experiences, and concepts introduced through course readings. The first writing assignment will require students to research and reflect upon the local history of one of the student's host institution's target issues. The second writing assignment, will be a reflection on the student's role in your host institution's efforts to address that target issue.

All written work must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-point font (one page per sheet and without staples please). These short reflection essays must be written in academic prose with in-text citations and bibliography.

Assignments will be submitted by uploading to Canvas. If you have connection issues, you may also email them directly to diego.arispe-bazan@northwestern.edu. You will receive comments from the instructor within a week and a half of submission of each assignment.

Report from Nonprofit Partners (20%)

The nonprofit partner organizations will evaluate student engagement and performance and submit a grade for students at the end of their field experiences.

FOR STUDENTS SEEKING 3 CREDITS

Attendance (10%)

Participation (20%)

Field Reflection Assignments (30%)

Report from Nonprofit Partners: (20%)

Final Group Reports (20%)

Students seeking greater credit will submit bi-weekly (every other week) participatory/action research field notes surrounding their work with the nonprofit organizations. What are they learning about nonprofit work? Who are they collaborating with, and in what capacity? How are they engaging with the community? These will not be graded, but full credit is contingent on their submission.

Students will compile their notes and work with others in their country groups to create a **report** extrapolating from their in-country work, employing conceptual and theoretical tools from the course to analyze and critically assess what they observed. Field notes will serve as data, which they will pair with the research they gather collectively within their country groups during pre-departure, as well as any outside research they choose to conduct. Students will evaluate what the role of their labor might be within the complex social systems existing in the region their organizations work in.
 These might be submitted in alternative formats, including photo essays, creative nonfiction, or other recorded media. While available, these options will depend on the students' proven experience and commitment.

Letter grades will be assigned based on the total percent of points according to the following scale:

	A = 94-100	A- = 90-93
B+ = 87-89	B = 84-86	B- = 80-83
C+ = 77-79	C = 74-76	C- = 70-73
D = 60-69	F = 59 or below	

COURSE POLICIES

Completing Course Requirements

Please note that failure to complete any of the assignments for this course will result in a non- passing grade for the course.

Academic Integrity

University policies on academic integrity apply to this course. Cheating (using unauthorized materials or giving unauthorized assistance during an examination or other academic exercise) and plagiarism (using another's ideas or words without acknowledgment) are serious offenses in a university. All quotations and ideas taken

from others should be appropriately cited in all written work. For more information on University policy on academic integrity, see Academic Integrity Policy.

Students with Disabilities

If you have specific disabilities that require accommodation, please let the instructor know at the beginning of the course so that your learning needs may be appropriately met. Northwestern is committed to providing appropriate academic accommodations to ensure equal access to fully participate in academic programming. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact AccessibleNU http://www.northwestern.edu/accessiblenu, 2122 Sheridan Road, Room 130, (847) 467-5530, accessibleNU@northwestern.edu.

Inclusive Practices and Guidelines for Dialogue

1. **Confidentiality.** We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange. What is said in the space stays in the space. What is learned in the space can leave the space.

2. **Our primary commitment is to learn from each other.** We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

3. **Speak from personal experiences. Use "I" statements** to share thoughts and feelings. You cannot speak for your group; just because you are does not mean you understand.

4. **Do not demean, devalue, or "put down" people** for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.

5. **Take responsibility for your impact.** Our intentions do not negate the negative impact we may have on someone. We will hold ourselves accountable by challenging ourselves to be quick to sincerely apologize and then open to learning when we do not understand.

6. **Assume best intentions.** Trust that people are doing the best they can and that everyone is attempting to balance being honest, vulnerable, and imperfect with standards of perfection, mastery, and survival.

7. **Challenge the idea and not the person.** If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.

8. **Speak your discomfort.** If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.

9. **Monitor your airtime.** Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

10. **Be fully present.** Our time together is precious and limited. Everyone at the table has significant contributions to make and we need you to fully participate with both your head and your heart.

11. **Value but reflect upon the term "Safe Space."** Conflict and discomfort are often a part of growth. Make sure to differentiate between feeling challenged and feeling truly unsafe to act or speak.

12. **Trust the process.** The journey to our destinations offer us the chance to gain insights about ourselves and others. These insights help us grow and change and contribute to our cohesion, offering us opportunities for gratitude and appreciation on the way to goal achievement.

*What is service learning?

Students engage in community service activities with intentional academic and learning goals and opportunities for reflection that connect to their academic disciplines

*What to expect at GESI Pre-Departure

The GESI pre-departure coursework at Northwestern University is an intense six days of class. During Pre-Departure, you will often be in class for 6 to 7 hours a day with breaks for meals. GESI alums will serve as student instructors, facilitating class activities and discussions. We will also have many guest speakers supplementing class lectures; it is important that you complete all course readings before arrival. Some nights, we will assign additional (short) readings. You will need to discipline yourself so that you are able to complete these assignments and be alert and engaged for long days of class

*Country expertise:
Students will spend time learning about the history and current context of the countries where their organizations operate. First, they will meet with experts who will present on key topics in history, politics, economics, and the environment; students will also have time to ask them any further questions they might have.

In addition, students will collaborate in groups to conduct online research to expand on their knowledge of the country where their organization operates. Each student in a group will focus on an aspect that the country experts shared (history, politics, etc.) and then report back to their peers, finding points of intersection to reinforce a wholistic perspective on the country context. Research will include at least one scholarly, peer reviewed article, as well as encyclopedia entries, news items, YouTube videos, etc.

*Collaboration with Northwestern's Social Justice Education Office

Students will explore the meaning of privilege, oppression, social exclusion, intersectionality, etc. and explore their relationship to systems of socialization and issues of structural justice. Students will:
• Consider how social identity and privilege will influence your and others experience in this program.
• Identify the ways in which privilege confers power on people within certain groups and denies power to other groups and how systems are sustained.
• Begin examining strategies for marginalized and excluded groups to increase their relative power to control decisions that shape opportunities for development as well as the shifts required in systems, attitudes and behaviors that will lead to equitable collaboration and inclusive, participatory development.

READING SCHEDULE

PRE-DEPARTURE SUMMIT

Session 1: Identifying and Analyzing the Causes of Global Poverty
What are causes that produce conditions of poverty? How can we think about the proximate and root causes? What are the differences between individual and structural causes? How do different causes interact and reinforce one another? How can understanding the causes of poverty help guide choices and priorities for how to intervene to create positive social change?

- Chang, Ha-Joon. 2010. "Thing 15: People in poor countries are more entrepreneurial than people in rich countries." In *23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism*.
- Black, S. .2001). *Life and Debt*. [Documentary]. Jamaica: Tuff Gong Pictures Production.
- Frances Moor Lappé and Joseph Collins 1978. "Why can't people feed themselves?" In *Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity*.

Session 2: What is "Development"?
What are the experiences and legacies of previous development efforts? What are the

trends, assumptions and models animating development debates and approaches today? What does it mean to enact change through the development model and what could it mean? Development work comes with a particular idea of how to enact social change. The goals of development projects are not always met smoothly. This isn't necessarily a "failure" of development, but rather an existential aspect of collaboration. Development workers may not always be fully aware of their impact (or lack thereof). In this session, we will learn what "development" means in practice. What are some successes? What are some avenues for critique and improvement?

- Bartecchi, David. "A Brief History of International Development Theories and Practices," *Village Earth*, July 5, 2015
- Rodney, Walter. 1978. "Some Questions on Development'. In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.
- Sen, Amartya. "Introduction" Development as Freedom (Anchor Books, 1999), pp. 3-11.

Session 3: Participation, Power, and Humility

In this session, we further consider how systems of privilege and power produce and reproduce communities of poor and otherwise marginalized people. And we explore the difficulties inherent in defining 'community' and putting 'community' in charge. We examine in particular two key concepts in contemporary international development and global health: 'participation' and 'cultural humility'.

- Cornwall, Andrea. 2003. "Whose Voices? Whose Choices? Reflections on Gender and Participatory Development." 31.88:*World Development* 1325–42.
- Hardina, Donna. 2006. "Strategies for Citizen Participation and Empowerment in Non-profit, Community-Based Organizations." 37.4 *Community Development: Journal of the Community Development Society* 4-17.
- Tervalon, Melanie, and Jann Murray-García. 1998. "Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education." 9.2 *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* 117–25.

Session 4: Global Ethics

What ethics should guide social and political action in a world marked by conspicuous global inequality? Is such a thing as ethical international development even possible? In this session, we read a case study of a charity who resist the planning and evaluation imperatives of European donors, and we consider the possibilities and pitfalls of imagining ethics and political action on a global scale.

- Brotherton. 2013. "Fueling la Revolución" In Nancy Burke ed. *Health travels: Cuban health(care) on and off the Island*

- Scherz, China. 2011 "Let us make God our banker: Ethics, temporality, and agency in a Ugandan charity home" 40.4 *American Ethnologist* 624-636.
- Secret aid worker. 2017. "Secret Aid Worker: Why Don't We Practise What We Preach about Gender Inequality?" *The Guardian*, sec. Working in development. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/may/09/secret-aid-worker-why-dont-we-practise-what-we-preach-about-gender-inequality.

Session 5: Non- Profit and Development Institutions

How do non-profits and development organizations set goals, plan projects and make decisions? This session explores the institutional, bureaucratic and relational work that underlie development and non-profit work. We look at how multinational development projects are run, interrogating the inequalities that exist between 'local' and 'international' staff working on the same development project. We will also examine efforts to use multi-stakeholder platforms as a means to promote more participatory modes of project planning and evaluation.

- Mosse, David. 2005. *Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice*. London: Pluto Press. Ch. 5 "Implementation: Regime and Relationships "
- Hobbes, Michael. "Stop Trying to Save the World: Big Ideas are Destroying International Development." *The New Republic*, November 17, 2014.
- McLellan, Tim. 2021. "Impact, Theory of Change, and the Horizons of Scientific Practice." 51.1 *Social Studies of Science* 100–120. https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312720950830.
- Schuller, Mark. 2012. *Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. Ch. 5 "Tectonic Shifts and the Political Tsunami: USAID and the Disaster of Haiti"

Session 6: Taking responsibility
In this session, we will bring together all the aspects from previous sessions and discuss how your specific project, and your particular subject position can productively interphase with issues of inequality, development, and participation-driven social change at your GESI site, and beyond. We will reflect on best practices and consider some potential challenges.

- Dinyar Godrej, "NGOs – do they help." *New Internationalist*, December 2014.
- Teju Cole. "The White-Savior Industrial Complex" *The Atlantic*. 2012.
- John Kretzmann and John McKnight, "Building Communities from the Inside Out." Institute for Policy Research, Northwestern (1993), pp. 1-11.

FINAL REFLECTION SUMMIT

When students complete their work with the nonprofit partners, we will draw on a few brief readings, their experience, their field essays, and collective discussions amongst members of the GESI community to critically bring the issues and arguments from the pre-departure seminar to bear on your time abroad.

Session 1: Challenges for Development
What did you learn about the reasons that the problem our organization works on exists? What are the scope and causes of the problem, the role of political power in reproducing the problem and making change difficult, the core development assumptions made by your organization and made in your work? How are community members thought about and encouraged to participate in the issue or initiative your organization is working on, and what do you make of this framing?

- Green, Maia (2014) "Participating in Development: Projects and Agency in Tanzania", in *The Development State: Aid, Culture and Civil Society in Tanzania*, James Currey Press, pp. 35-55.

Session 2: Participation and Power (or how NOT to save the world)
After your GESI experience, what is your assessment of community-based development as an approach to development and social change? What do you think community-based, participatory development approaches can do well and what do they not do well? To what extent are these approaches scalable? Under what conditions? What are the implications for community development work at home and abroad?

- Biruk, C., & Trapence, G. (2018). "Community engagement in an economy of harms: Reflections from an LGBTI-rights NGO in Malawi." 28(3) *Critical Public Health* 340-351.
- Mavhunga, Clapperton Chakanetsa. 2015. "Guerrilla Healthcare Innovation: Creative Resilience in Zimbabwe's *Chimurenga* , 1971–1980." 31 (3) *History and Technology* 295–323. https://doi.org/10.1080/07341512.2015.1129205.

Session 3: Revisiting Responsibility
To what extent does international development work need to address and change power relationships in society to be successful? What degree and type of development is possible given existent socio-economic and political structures? Under what conditions is it more or less likely that power relationships can be effectively challenged? How does this inform your view of the relationship between power and development outcomes? What are your reflections about what it takes to live out a commitment to sustainable development and social change?

- Tania Mitchell, "Identity and Social Action: The Role of Self-Examination in Systemic Change." AAC&U Diversity and Democracy, Fall 2015.
- Sarika Bansal, 17 Development Clichés I'll be Avoiding in 2017, *The Development Set*, January 5, 2017.

Session 4: **Effective Advocacy and Organizing**
Now what? Has your GESI experience raised your interest in a new issue or given you greater impetus to pursue one you were committed to before? Does this newfound drive motivate you to take action in some way? Are there communities, organizations or opportunities you want to get connected with?

- Amanda Moore McBride and Eric Mlyn, "Innovation Alone Won't Fix Social Problems." Chronicle of Higher Education, September 2, 2015
- Spade, D. 2020. "Solidarity Not Charity Mutual Aid for Mobilization and Survival". 38 (1 (142)) *Social Text* 131-151.