STPEC 492H - 01  Senior Seminar II - Topics in Political Economy
Defining Sustainability, Well-Being and Justice. Fall 2015

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Office Hours: Mondays 2:00 – 4:00pm by appointment.

Description:
Based on a case study of Dr. Stenn’s Fulbright summer research of indigenous women working in the Fair Trade industry in the Bolivian Andes, this seminar offers a critical examination of the political economy of sustainability and equity using Sen and Naussbaum’s Capabilities Approach, Hofstede’s Cultural Dimensions, and the United Nation’s Circles of Sustainability (CoS) framework. Students are invited to contribute to the conversation by sharing various models of economic analysis they have encountered in their coursework in political economy. Together we engage in a hands-on, critical examination of the political economy of sustainability and equity in the developing world. Indigenous models of sustainability (Suma Qamana) and nature based design (permaculture) are used to explore the complexities of well-being and justice. The CoS framework identifies trends and opportunities for place-based sustainability. After engaging in critical analysis, students individually apply development theories, tools and approaches to their own regions of interest (local or global) to create a case study for (or against) sustainability. Critical inquiry will ensue and the concept of true sustainability will be explored. The final deliverable in this seminar is the presentation of an 8-10 page position paper on sustainability, well-being and justice.

Class Schedule and Places:
Mondays 4:00PM - 6:30PM, Elm 230 (Commonwealth Honors College)

Course Texts (see annotated bibliography at end of syllabus for more description):
Texts (for reference only – not necessary to purchase):

Online Materials: TBA
PDFs and links to online readings will be provided weekly as needed in following with course themes.
**Classroom Behavior:**
Our classroom is a place where we are free to interact, explore, take risks, have fun, and immerse ourselves into the deeper realms of learning. Norms will be determined together at the start of class.

**Class Cancellations:**
If campus is closed then class is cancelled too. If you suspect a class cancellation even though campus is open (a very rare event), call my cell phone 802-579-3386. I will also make every effort to e-mail you regarding unscheduled cancellations. Be sure to check Moodle for new announcements, assignments, reading, regularly - especially if we did not meet for class that day.

**Changes in Syllabus**
Our class is dynamic and changing just like you and the world we live in. Our syllabus is flexible in this way and is subject to change.

**Expectations**
Students in this course are expected to spend at least six hours a week of preparation and work outside of class time. This time includes such things as completing assignments, project research and execution and other activities as needed. Classroom attendance is mandatory, will be taken daily, and is an important part of students’ learning. *There is much material covered in class that is not found anywhere else.* Online and group participation is required for success. What one gets out of this course depends fully on one’s effort. This includes coming to class prepared by completing assigned readings, written assignments, research and final projects. This is a challenging course, so plan your schedule accordingly!

**Evaluation Criteria**
- Participation in group and individual projects in and out of the classroom
- Participation in class discussions and activities
- Completion of readings and critical response essays
- Semester project (8-10 page position paper)
- Self-evaluation
- Attendance  *Note: 3 absences will have a negative impact on student evaluations. More than 3 absences could result in a student not passing the class.*

**Course Goals**
1. Students engage in design thinking to critically define sustainability, well-being and justice using at least three different economic models or frameworks.
2. Students apply these frameworks to their own areas of interest to create new analysis.
3. Students share and debate their data finds with others though a mentorship/peer review process.

**Specific skills covered**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creative and critical thinking</th>
<th>Qualitative data analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data collection: primary &amp; secondary</td>
<td>Communication: writing and presenting</td>
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Course Outline:
This outline is provided to help you schedule your semester. Topics covered pertain to materials in the course book, online text, handouts, case studies, and other materials. Check on Moodle for assignment details and due dates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>Classroom Topics</th>
<th>HOMEWORK</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 28</td>
<td>Deconstructing Sustainability, Well-Being and Justice. Reviewing the Andean case study, data and analysis. Qualitative research methods.</td>
<td>In teams choose different aspects of Stenn's data/findings to review using different models of economic analysis.</td>
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<td>Oct. 5</td>
<td>Project assessment: students present project ideas, teams are formed (or not) and research plans begun.</td>
<td>Research methods, literature review, analysis. Development of point of view (thesis statement) for position paper.</td>
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<td>Oct. 12</td>
<td>Columbus Day – No class</td>
<td>Start identifying and researching own project/question to bring to class.</td>
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<td>Oct. 26</td>
<td>Outlines for position papers presented, peer review. Exercise: “shouting match” for</td>
<td>Create timeline with measurable deliverables and original research goals for paper.</td>
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<td>Nov. 2</td>
<td>TBA – possible topic: Critical Issues. Class assessment.</td>
<td>Round robin discussion of critical issues in our papers/world. Open review of where we are and what we need to do going forward.</td>
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<td>Nov. 9</td>
<td>Draft I of paper due.</td>
<td>Hand in papers for professor review</td>
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<td>Nov. 16</td>
<td>Open day – TBA: speaker, movie, activity, special topic: the business of development?</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td>Nov. 23</td>
<td>Draft 2 of paper due. Presentation skills that catch attention.</td>
<td>Peer review of final drafts. Make your position clear - prepare presentations in academic “elevator pitch” style.</td>
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<td>Date</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>Paper-Pitch Presentations</td>
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<td>Dec. 7</td>
<td>Peer review, writing lab, closing exercises</td>
<td>Work on position paper – final draft.</td>
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<td>Dec. 14</td>
<td>Final Papers due</td>
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**Annotated Bibliography (APA style)**

Deneulin, S. (2009). *An introduction to the human development and capability approach*. Earthscan, UK. This collection of essays introduces the idea of Human Development and examines the functioning of the Capabilities Approach (CA). CA is explored from a growth perspective, inequality, markets, democracy and political participation, education, health, culture and religion perspective. This text provides a multi-faceted approach to understanding and applying the CA in these different situations. Part III, Policy, provides analysis and case studies of CA giving readers a practical understanding of what CA can be and how it works.

James, P. (2015). *Urban sustainability in theory and practice, circles of sustainability*. Routledge, NY. The Circles of Sustainability method is an Engaged Theory approach to assessment model developed through the United Nations Global Compact Cities Program, Metropolis. The Circles of Sustainability model measures people’s perceptions of their own well-being based on culture, politics, economics and the environment. Information is gathered with participatory, qualitative methods and a survey instrument. The authors argue that the data gathering process naturally leads to the forming of relationships and development of coalitions as common needs and challenges are identified across different sectors. This book also features case studies and comparisons of sustainability assessments worldwide.

Nussbaum, M. (2011). *Creating capabilities, the human development approach*. Belknap, Harvard. Nussbaum adds the feminist and voice and humanistic viewpoint to traditional global measurements of well-being. Instead of using narrow GDP measurements, Nussbaum introduces in the Capabilities Approach which values the ability that one has to live the life they value. This multi-disciplinary approach includes educational opportunities, safety, employment, access to nutritious food, love, recreation, shelter, and respect. These measurements are relevant for both rich and poorer nations. As Nussbaum writes, “All nations, then, are developing nations, in that they contain problems of human development struggles for a fully adequate quality of life and for minimal justice” (p. 16).

Sen, A. (2009). *The idea of justice*. Belknap, Harvard. This book pulls together decades of Sen’s thoughts and ideas about freedom and well being and presents a well argued explanation and defense of his transformative way of viewing justice. Pulling on Sanskrit and historical data, Sen weaves a compelling vision of a future world where discussion, inclusion and diversity enable systems to develop enabling people to live the lives they wish to live. More specifically he focuses on several areas that influence the amount of justice one is able to realize: the ability to present, hear and tolerate sometimes contradictory points of view; the ability to have the resources and opportunities in which to develop and express these different points of view; the platform and space in which to publically and democratically share different ideas and affect policy.

Stenn, T. (2013). *The cultural and political intersection of fair trade and justice*. Palgrave Macmillan. This is a case study of Bolivian women over time and how foreign institutions shape the ways in which they interact with their world. Focused on a study of Fair Trade, this book identifies four pillars that build social and economic justice: government, institutions, producers and consumers. Fair Trade was developed as a way to create fairer access to world markets in collaborating with disadvantaged producers and privileged consumers. This book highlights how social, economic, cultural and gender differences within each of the pillars shift and affect the amount of justice realized, or not, in a Fair Trade exchange.
Yépez, F. & Carcelén, X. (2004). *Learning wisdom and the good way to live*. Imprenta Mariscal, Quito, Ecuador. This seminal piece took almost a decade to write as indigenous leaders came together to define their world views and apply them to a knowledge model that can be shared in a global context. Written in the indigenous language of Quechua plus Spanish and English, this text is an important piece in understanding the context of sustainability, especially that of the Andean model of Suma Qaman or bien vivir. Based on the symbol of the Southern Cross, this model explains the Andean Cosmovision and shows how knowledge, love, action and wisdom come together to create a more balanced, sustainable world.