

THE GLOBAL MAJORITY
Economics 110, Fall 2008
Department of Economics, American University

Instructor

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Office hours: Monday and Thursday 10:00-11:00 am

Course Objectives

The Global Majority is one of the five foundation courses in Curricular Area 3 (Global and Multicultural Perspectives), Cluster One, in the University's General Education Program. The specific goals of this curricular area are to (i) understand those habits of thought and feeling that distinguish cultures from one another, (ii) explore comparative and cross-cultural perspectives, (iii) develop analytical skills appropriate to the study of international and intercultural relations, and (iv) analyze systematically major issues such as war and peace, global order, distributive justice and the future character of the earth's resources. While *The Global Majority* touches on each of these goals, it focuses primarily on the last goal by carefully examining a major issue: *global poverty*.

The general objective of this course is to systematically analyze global poverty so that you are in a position to carefully consider what actions might be taken to end poverty. Towards this end, the specific objectives of the course are:

- To expand your understanding of the range of economic conditions and the degrees of poverty in developing countries;
- To develop your ability to analyze the factors that influence a country's level of development; and
- To improve your capacity to design and evaluate specific policies to address global poverty.

Caveats

First, this class assumes that global poverty is an issue that should be addressed and that it is desirable to seek a world in which poverty is eliminated.

Second, I am an economist as are the authors of the three books chosen as the primary readings for this course. While these authors clearly disagree on key issues, they still come from a perspective that is based on an economist's view of the world. This class will generally be biased in that direction and I would encourage you to consider taking classes on development from other disciplines to get a broader perspective on what should be done about global poverty.

Required books and readings

The following books are required for this course:

Collier, P. 2007. *The Bottom Billion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Easterly, W. 2006. *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Sachs, J. 2005. *The End of Poverty*. New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

Additional required readings will be provided prior to each lecture and will be made available either in electronic format (via Blackboard), through library reserves or from the instructor.

Format, Assignments and Grades

This class will meet each Monday and Thursday during the fall semester from 8:30 am to 9:45 am. Each class will include a lecture and discussion. You are expected to attend class and participate in class discussion. Attendance will be taken.

Blackboard will be used to communicate with you about assignments and changes in the class schedule. You should check it on a regular basis.

As part of the assessment for the class, you are required to complete four assignments analyzing a particular developing country. At the beginning of the semester, you will select a developing country to analyze for these assignments. Details of the assignments will be provided in class. A hard copy of the assignments must be turned in **no later than** the beginning of class (8:30 am) on the due date (not via email). **Late assignments** will not be accepted without **advance request** for an extension which should be sent via email and include the reason for the extension.

A midterm exam covering the first half of the course will be held before the semester break. A final exam covering all the topics covered in the course will be held during the final exam period. Failure to show up for the exam will require a note from a doctor noting attending the exam was not possible due to illness. The due dates for all class activities along with the weightings of the assignment in the final grade are as follows:

<i>ASSIGNMENT</i>	<i>WEIGHTING</i>	<i>DUE DATE</i>
Midterm exam	25%	Thursday October 9
Four country assignments	40%	TBA
Final exam (All topics)	35%	Mon, Dec. 8, 8:30-11:00
Total	100%	

Students are required to submit **all** assignments to receive a passing grade for the course. Grades are calculated as follows: A=90-100%, B=80-89%, C=70-79%, D=60-69%, F<60. Each letter category includes all possible pluses/minuses (e.g. B+=87-89%, B=83-86%, B-=80-82%).

Topics covered and readings

The topics covered in this course and readings from the primary textbooks are below. Any additional required readings will be provided during the semester.

Part I: The global majority and the bottom billion

Topic 1: Characteristics of the global majority and the bottom billion

Collier, Chapter 1

Sachs, Chapter 1

Topic 2: Perspectives on addressing global poverty

Easterly, Chapter 1

Sachs, Chapter 4

Part II: Why the poor remain poor

Topic 3: Poverty traps

Easterly, Chapter 2

Sachs, Chapter 3

Topic 4: Natural resource and geography traps

Collier, Chapter 3 and 4

Easterly, Chapter 7

Sachs, Chapter 10

Topic 5: Conflict and governance/corruption trap

Collier, Chapter 2 and 5

Easterly, Chapter 3 and 4

Part III: Addressing the poverty problem

Topic 6: Aid

Collier, Chapter 7

Easterly, Chapter 6

Sachs, Chapter 11, 12 and 13

Topic 7: Globalization and markets

Collier, Chapter 6 and 10

Topic 8: Governance

Collier, Chapter 9

Easterly, Chapter 5

Topic 9: Military intervention

Collier, Chapter 8

Easterly, Chapter 8 and 9

Part IV: What can be done?

Topic 10: Overview of the possible agendas for action

Collier, Chapter 11

Easterly, Chapter 10 and 11

Sachs, Chapter 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18