RPOS 572 Topics in Comparative Public Policy: Trade, Aid & Debt

Fall Semester 2010 Tuesdays, 5.45-8.45pm in DR115

Professor Holly Jarman
Office Hours: 220 Milne Hall, Tues 4.30-5.30
Please email hjarman@albany.edu for appointments at other times.

Course Summary:

This class deals with how developed countries behave towards developing countries. Why do industrialized countries feel the need to give grants, loans and special trade preferences to developing countries? What factors determine how these resources are distributed? The course tackles these questions by analyzing some broad themes: part one places the course in the context of the recent financial crisis, part two examines multiple levels of policymaking, and part three introduces a series of case studies: the role of foreign economic policy in preventing the spread of AIDS, and the changing trade relationships between China and other industrialized states. By the end of the course, you should have an appreciation of the underlying structural and cultural differences between modern industrial countries and how these affect the allocation of aid, finance, and trade preferences.

Class Schedule:

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Learning Objectives

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- discuss the global economy with others, using evidence from contemporary sources to construct coherent arguments in writing and in person.
- evaluate trade, aid and financial policies in depth: explain why an existing policy came to be, debate its effectiveness, and identify potential alternatives.
- compare US policy debates with those in other countries and at the global level, and discuss those differences with others.

This course contributes to fulfillment of the University at Albany learning objectives for social science courses, which are as follows:

1. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding that human conduct and behavior more generally are subject to scientific inquiry.
2. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the difference between rigorous and systematic thinking and uncritical thinking about social phenomena.
3. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the kinds of questions social scientists ask and the ways they go about answering these questions.
4. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate knowledge of the major concepts, models, and issues of at least one discipline in the social sciences.
5. Social science courses enable students to demonstrate an understanding of the methods social scientists use to explore social phenomena, such as observation, hypothesis development, measurement and data collection, experimentation, evaluation of evidence, employment of mathematical analysis, employment of interpretive analysis.

Required Texts

You do not need to purchase texts for this class. All the required readings are available on our Blackboard site, which can be accessed at https://bls.its.albany.edu/webct/logon/816632288001.

What I Expect From You

- Please come prepared. I expect you to read all of the required texts for each class before you come to class. Come to class ready to discuss, debate and disagree with the arguments they contain, with your fellow classmates, and me!
- Please be respectful of other people’s opinions. This does not mean that those opinions should or will go unchallenged, but that we all agree to listen carefully to one another and offer constructive criticism.
- Assignments should be submitted to Blackboard by 12 noon on the day of the deadline. 5 points will be deducted from late assignments for every day that they are late, unless there are mitigating circumstances (see below). If for some reason
Blackboard does not allow you to upload, simply send the assignment by email to me at hjarman@albany.edu – assignments submitted by email before the deadline are still considered on time, but Blackboard submission is strongly preferred as it stops assignments from getting lost in my inbox.

- Please respect the university’s policy on academic integrity, available at: http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html. Using someone else’s argument without citing their work, quoting an article, book, web site or other source without giving the source, claiming as your work a paper written by someone else, and resubmitting a paper you wrote for another class are all examples of plagiarism. Plagiarism is considered to be a serious matter, even if it was not intentional. Plagiarism could result in any of the following, depending on the seriousness of the case: requirement to rewrite the affected assignment, lowering the assignment or the course grade by a full grade or more, failing the assignment or the course, or withholding permission to withdraw from the course.

- We will try to follow current policy developments as much as possible in class, so it is highly recommended that you get into the habit of reading articles on foreign economic policy from quality news sources such as the Financial Times, the Economist, the Nation, the New York Times and the Washington Post, etc. This will help a great deal in getting to grips with the material we cover.

There are no prerequisites for this course. The course is graded A-E. Formal requirements are as follows:

**Blog Posts and Comments: 30% of your grade**
**Research Paper: 40% of your grade**
**Class Participation: 30% of your grade**

**Blog Posts and Comments** – The Blackboard site for this course has the facility for you to post blog entries related to trade, aid, and finance policy. I encourage you to contribute to this blog in the form of reading summaries, comments on things happening in the news, useful data you find, or anything else that strikes you as interesting on these topics. At the end of term, you will be graded on your contribution to this blog – both in terms of your own posts and your comments on the posts of others.

**Research Paper** – As a final assessment you are required to submit a short research paper on any foreign economic policy topic of your choice. Detailed information about what the paper should contain will be made available on Blackboard and we can discuss any questions you have in class. You will start by selecting possible research questions and flesh out the paper as the semester progresses. You will have two opportunities to get feedback on your paper by posting a draft to Blackboard, which will be returned with comments. We will discuss these drafts in class as a group. The final paper is then due at the end of term.

**Draft Research Paper Deadline 1:** September 21 2010
**Draft Research Paper Deadline 2:** October 26 2010
**Final Research Paper Deadline:** November 30 2010
What You Can Expect From Me

• **Instructor accessibility:** I will hold regular office hours each week in Milne 220 on Tuesdays, 4.30-5.30pm. Please try to come and see me during those hours. If you can’t come to office hours due to a conflict with another class or a work commitment (and only for those reasons), I can arrange an alternative meeting time with you—but be aware that you might have to wait a bit longer for an appointment. Many problems can be solved if you bring them to my attention early enough, so please come to me sooner rather than later.

• **Grading:** If you submitted your assignment on time, you have the right to get the graded work returned to you within a reasonable timeframe (approximately one week), with a set of written comments.

• **Right to appeal:** if you believe your grade is wrong for whatever reason, I encourage you to visit me in my scheduled office hours to talk about the problem. However, I ask that you do so within two weeks of receiving the grade. Appeals about assignments that are more than two weeks old will not be considered unless there are mitigating circumstances. Making an appeal is no guarantee that your grade will be raised: it may go up, down or stay the same depending on the results of the review.

• **Mitigating circumstances:** From time to time, unforeseen circumstances mean that students will have to miss classes or assignments. In such circumstances, please let me know the situation as soon as it is practical, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

• **Alternative class requirements:** Please contact me at the start of the course if you require alternative assessment arrangements e.g. extra time to finish assignments. If you are new to the university, you may wish to contact UAlbany’s Disability Resource Center for advice, [http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml](http://www.albany.edu/disability/index.shtml)

Reading List

The following list gives the required readings for each week. Other useful readings will be posted on Blackboard for you to explore. I am happy for you to split the readings amongst yourselves in order to cover more ground, and we can discuss this in our first session. There will be no readings for the first week. Just show up and introduce yourself!

**The Global Financial Crisis**


Trade and Markets


Aid…and Altruism?

Dambisa Moyo ‘Dead Aid: why aid is not working and how there is a better way for Africa’ p3-47, Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York.

Debt and Development


Multilevel Policymaking


**Interest Groups**


**Bureaucracy**


**Citizens, Movements & Protest**


**Parties, Elections & Democracy**

**Case Study 1: Fixing Global Finance**


**Case Study 2: Aid Against AIDS**


**Case Study 3: Microfinance**

Case Study 4: Coffee Supply Chains


Making Progress?