Course Description

According to the United Nations, about a quarter of all children living in the developing world are at risk of long-term effects from undernourishment; almost two thirds of employed women in developing countries are in vulnerable jobs; 2.5 billion people, almost half the world’s population, live without reliable waste disposal; and about one third of the growing urban population is living in slums. These numbers only begin to describe the magnitude of poverty in the global south.

Poverty is a heterogeneous and multi-dimensional phenomenon, much broader than economic deprivation alone. Poverty encompasses access to educational attainment and health services, land tenure, financial security, personal safety, a clean environment, human rights and social and political power. Poverty is also geographically specific, influenced by the physical environment; history and culture; thus it is difficult to generalize. As a result, aggregate welfare indicators do little to help us understand the specific causes and consequences of poverty in a particular place.

The course examines the following questions: How is poverty defined and understood? What methods are available for measurement and evaluation? What are appropriate strategies, policies and programs to alleviate poverty? What are alternative approaches? To address these questions, the course critically examines three schools of thought that have dominated how we conceptualize, measure and alleviate poverty. The first school conceptualizes poverty as economic deprivation. The second defines poverty in terms of well-being and basic human needs. The third school conceptualizes poverty in relationship to vulnerability, social exclusion and empowerment.
Course Format

The course employs lectures and seminar-style discussions. There are also opportunities for student presentations and working in small groups. The mixed format works best if students come to class prepared. To prepare you are expected to (1) complete assigned readings before each class meeting, and (2) come prepared to engage the material and each other. The readings for the measurement weeks (weeks 4, 8 and 13) are meant to provide you with examples of research and evaluation instruments.

Learning Objectives

The course meets the following specific learning objectives:

1) Appreciation for a global dimension of planning with specific emphasis on the global south.
2) Application of research tools, quantitative and qualitative methods useful for analyzing poverty as well as planning outcomes.
3) The ability to deliver clear, accurate and compelling written, oral and graphic communication.
4) An appreciation of the normative principles of social justice and equity that guide planning practice.

Evaluation

Your grade is based on three areas of evaluation: (1) presentations, preparation and participation in class discussions and activities; (2) completion of an abstract and outline; and (3) performance on a final project.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of evaluation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations, activities, participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract and outline</td>
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<td>Final project</td>
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Because there are graded activities in class, you cannot be given credit for an activity you missed. Emailed assignments and late assignments are not accepted.

Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity. Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student’s own work. For this course, collaboration is allowed for group assignments. For more information, please refer to the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity, located online at [http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html](http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/Academic/AIC.html).
Final Project

The final project will consist of a planning brief. The document will focus on a particular aspect of poverty in a developing country of your choice. Students will identify a conceptualization of poverty, outline a strategy for analyzing poverty, and provide policy and programmatic recommendations for how an international development agency, non-governmental organization, government body or other organization should approach alleviation. You should take into consideration the client’s needs as well as existing knowledge, data collection efforts and poverty alleviation programs that currently exist in the country, and explain how your brief addresses gaps in these areas. Some class time will be allocated for work on the final project. More detailed guidance about the final project will be provided in class throughout the semester.

Course Outline

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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<td>I. Introduction, Context and Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>Background and historical context</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>Competing conceptualizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>II. Poverty in terms of Economic Deprivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Economic deprivation, poverty lines and employment</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>February 12</td>
<td>Measuring consumption, income and employment</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>February 19</td>
<td>The informal sector and microfinance</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>February 26</td>
<td>Planning alternatives, presentations, discussion and group work</td>
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<td>III. Poverty in terms of Well-Being</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>March 5</td>
<td>Well-being and basic human needs</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Measuring health, housing and environmental conditions</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Spring break</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Upgrading informal settlements</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>Planning alternatives, presentations, discussion and group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. Poverty in terms of Social Exclusion and Vulnerability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12</td>
<td>April 9</td>
<td>Social exclusion, vulnerability and disempowerment</td>
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<td>Week 13</td>
<td>April 16</td>
<td>Measuring empowerment and participatory approaches</td>
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<td>Week 14</td>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Community-driven development</td>
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<td>Week 15</td>
<td>April 30</td>
<td>Planning alternatives, presentations, discussion and group work</td>
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Reading Assignments

I. Understanding Poverty

Week 1, Introduction, Context, Background

Meeting 1

No readings.

Meeting 2


Week 2, Competing Conceptualizations

Meeting 1


Meeting 2


II. Poverty in terms of Economic Deprivation

Week 3, Economic Deprivation, Poverty Lines and Employment

Meeting 1


Meeting 2


Week 4, Measuring Consumption, Income and Employment

Meeting 1


Meeting 2


**Week 5, The Informal Sector and Microfinance**

**Meeting 1**


**Meeting 2**


**Week 6, Planning Alternatives, Presentations, Discussion and Group Work**

**III. Poverty in terms of Well-being**

**Week 7, Well-Being and Basic Human Needs**

**Meeting 1**


**Meeting 2**


**Week 8, Measuring Health, Housing and Environmental Conditions**

**Meeting 1**


**Meeting 2**


Week 10, Upgrading Informal Settlements

Meeting 1


Meeting 2


Week 11, Planning Alternatives, Presentations, Discussion and Group Work

IV. Poverty in terms of Social Exclusion and Vulnerability

Week 12, Social Exclusion, Vulnerability and Dismopowerment

Meeting 1


Meeting 2


**Week 13, Measuring Empowerment and Participatory Approaches**

**Meeting 1**


**Meeting 2**


**Week 14, Community Driven Development**

**Meeting 1**


**Meeting 2**


**Week 15, Planning Alternatives, Presentations, Discussion and Group Work**