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Critical Approaches to Development

Modular value: 20 credits

Lecturers: **Martin Rew (/staff/profiles/government-society/rew-martin.aspx)** and **Jonathan Fisher (/staff/profiles/government-society/fisher-jonathan.aspx)**

Aim of the Module

Why is theory important for understanding development policy and practice? How can theory and approaches inform policy and practice and what can be learnt from a more theoretically-informed approach? These questions reflect the emphasis in this module in providing students with a broad introduction to different approaches to development. You will critically examine development theories and how they have been, and are, applied to contemporary development issues.

The module is designed to give you a solid introduction to the key aspects of the topic that will serve as the analytical basis for much of the rest of your studies. A number of the issues are dealt with in more detail in other modules.

After an introductory session, you will explore theories of development in historical context from (roughly) 1945 up to the present. The theories are then applied to contemporary development approaches and issues. Throughout, the emphasis is on you developing a critical understanding of the evolution of development theories over the last half century and its implications for present day thinking about development.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module you will be able:

- Have an in-depth understanding of competing development theories – their origins, their continuities and their differences - and to critically evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.
- Distinguish between and critique different approaches to development
- Understand and critique how theories of development relate to specialist approaches to development
- Apply analytical and theoretical thinking to contemporary development situations.
- Develop an in depth understanding of the different ways in which development is measured, including their strengths and drawbacks.

Teaching and learning approach

The module will be delivered using a range of teaching and learning methods in a highly participatory environment, including interactive lectures, group discussions, student presentations, case studies, videos and invited speakers.

Topics covered include:

- What is development? Theories and interpretations of development
- Theories of development: modernisation, dependency, neoliberalism and post development.
- Contemporary approaches to development theory
- New development actors and the implications for development theory

Assessment

The assessment for the module will consist of:

- A 2000 word essay, worth 40% of the marks for the module. Initially this essay is formative. Feedback will be given on your essay and then you resubmit for a summative mark.
- The second assignment is a 2,000 word essay plus group work documents. Together these are worth 60% of the marks for the module.

You may be interested in these degrees:

- **International Development (with specialist pathways) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development.aspx)**
- **International Development (Conflict, Security and Development) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-conflict-security.aspx)**
- **International Development (Governance and Statebuilding) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-governance-state-building.aspx)**
- **International Development (International Political Economy and Development) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-political-economy.aspx)**
- **International Development (Poverty, Inequality and Development) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-poverty-inequality.aspx)**
- **International Development (Urban Development) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-development-urban.aspx)**
- **International Relations (Gender) (/postgraduate/courses/taught/govsoc/international-relations-gender.aspx)**

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