SI 657/757:
Information Technology and Global Development

School of Information, University of Michigan
Winter 2010

Instructor: Steven Jackson

(ver 29mar10)

OVERVIEW:

This course will provide an intensive introduction to the field of information technology and global development, in its historical, policy, and design dimensions. Part One offers a comprehensive overview of key historical and contemporary debates, problems, and issues in international development. Part Two explores crucial information policy issues in developing country contexts, ranging from technology transfer, research and innovation systems, and intellectual property to telecommunications, wireless, and other critical infrastructure development. Part Three explores the growing ICT4D project literature, with special reference to programs and applications in the health, education, finance, governance, agriculture, and rural development sectors. Through readings, discussions, and course assignments, students will gain critical research and professional skills in the analysis and design of information policies, programs, and projects in a range of developing country settings. Through geographically focused project and discussion groups, students will also develop specific regional or country-level knowledge and experience.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of SI 657/757, all students are expected to be able to:

• **Understand** key transnational economic, institutional, and political factors shaping the nature and use of ICTs in developing country settings;
• **Identify and analyze** the key policy positions, interests, and strategies of major stakeholders in the information policy field;
• **Compare and contrast** domestic information policy processes, frameworks, and challenges across a range of developing country settings;
• **Assess** local and sector-specific policy and design initiatives in the IT and development field;
• **Analyze** and **contribute** to current theoretical and practical debates in IT and global development policy; and
• **Write** concise, informed, and effective policy briefs and analyses appropriate to work in the IT and development field.

These learning objectives will be met through a combination of readings, lectures, discussion, and individual and small group assignments, as described below.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

The following books are recommended for purchase:


We’ll be reading numerous pieces out of the Roberts and Hite book in the first 3 weeks of class; we’ll also be referring periodically to the Todaro and Smith book throughout the term (this will be perhaps especially valuable to those of you without a prior background in the economics of development). Both are available on fast order from major online booksellers, at varying cost: Roberts and Hite for around $35, and Todaro and Smith at around $135. Copies of both will be placed on 4 hour reserve in the library.

MSI REQUIREMENTS:

Reading Notes: 20%
Policy Assessment Paper: 20%:
Integrative Information Assessment and Design Project: 40%
Seminar Participation and Small Group Work: 20%
Reading Notes: (20%)
Working individually, students will be responsible for producing a brief summary and analysis of one of the assigned additional readings (indicated by “Plus ONE of” in the syllabus) several times throughout the term. Your summary should be no more than 1 single-spaced pages, and should: a) synthesize the key points and arguments of the article; and b) connect the article to arguments and themes from the weekly reading set and/or larger themes in the course. Your notes should be posted to the relevant section of the Ctools Resources folder by the start of seminar using the following format: “Chambers_JacksonNotes_22March2010” (where Chambers is the author of the piece you’re reviewing, Jackson is the student, and 22March2010 is the date). Please also bring 5 paper copies to class (4 to share with your colleagues, 1 for me).

Policy Assessment Paper: (20%)
Working individually, students will be required to produce a 3-4 page (single-spaced) paper assessing a relevant information policy framework or initiative (e.g. innovation, tech transfer, intellectual property, broadband or wireless policy) in a developing country context. Your paper should include a clear and succinct explanation of the policy framework or initiative in question; an analysis of its pros and cons, including an explicit analysis of its developmental costs and benefits (as measured along economic, social, cultural, environmental, or other dimensions); and your recommendations for possible changes, supplements, or alternatives. Additional details and possible themes or examples will be discussed in class. Policy assessment papers will be due in class and to your Ctools dropbox on Monday, March 15th.

Integrative Information Assessment and Design Project: (40%)
Working in groups of 3-4, students will be required to produce a 12-15 page (single-spaced) project proposal that: a) identifies a clearly-defined development problem, barrier, or challenge; and b) proposes an innovative programmatic, institutional, or design intervention that shows reasonable promise of addressing or improving the problem identified. Your proposal must include:

• A clear problem statement identifying the specific local need(s), issues, or challenges your project is meant to address. This should include relevant background research providing evidence of the problem(s) to be addressed, and an explicit statement of how your project will address these.

• A clear project description that explains exactly what (and who) your project involves; the method and timeline of implementation; and possible project sponsors, partners, or funding sources. This section should include a clear stakeholder map identifying key groups, populations, and organizations directly or indirectly affected by your project.

• A clear impacts statement that describes the specific impacts your project will have, including poverty impacts, inequality, gender, etc.

• A clear evaluation or assessment plan, explaining the precise methods, procedures, and criteria by which project outcomes will be assessed.

• A clear discussion of likely or possible implementation barriers, and how your project will overcome these.

• A clear and concise (one page) executive summary at the start of the proposal that summarizes each of the above points.

• A list of references providing bibliographic information on any sources cited in the proposal.
These requirements and ideas for possible project types will be explained in further detail in class. Students are strongly encouraged to start thinking about project ideas early in the semester; a 2-3 page project pre-proposal addressing each of the points above will be due to the Ctools site by 5 pm on Sunday, March 28th. Final integrative assessment and design projects will be due no later than 5 pm on Saturday, April 17th. Groups will also be expected to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation of the project in class on Monday, April 19th.

Seminar Participation and Small Group Work: (20%)
This is an advanced graduate research seminar, with serious expectations placed on quality of preparation and participation on the part of all seminar members. While I will lecture on specific points, the class will operate primarily as a discussion-based research seminar; the quality of class discussion will therefore depend heavily on the care and depth with which you engage the course materials and each other. This requires you to complete and reflect critically on all readings in advance of the seminar itself; I’d also encourage you to take careful notes as part of this process, including around any points you found confusing or problematic and would like to bring up for seminar discussion. Failure to consistently attend, complete, reflect on, and/or participate in assigned readings and discussions will have a negative impact on your seminar participation and/or overall class grades. If you know in advance that you won’t be able to attend a session, please let me know via email or in person.

DOCTORAL REQUIREMENTS:

Weekly reading notes: 20%
Critical Literature Review: 20%
Final Seminar Paper 40%
Seminar Participation and Small Group Work: 20%

Weekly Reading Notes: (20%)
Working individually, doctoral students will be responsible for producing an integrative summary and analysis incorporating most or all of the commonly assigned readings for the week. Your summary should be no more than 1-2 single-spaced pages, and should: a) synthesize key points and arguments made across the reading set; and b) critically engage one or more of the key arguments or problems referenced in the readings. Your notes should be posted to the relevant section of the Ctools Resources folder by 6 pm the night before the seminar in which the readings are to be discussed. Please also bring at least 2 paper copies to class (1 to reference for discussion purposes, and 1 for me).

Critical Literature Review: (20%)
Working individually, doctoral students will be required to complete a 3-4 page (single-spaced) critical literature review of academic research around a topic of relevance within the information, globalization, and development field. The review may include reference to specific development projects or practical initiatives, but should be grounded in appropriate bodies of academic work.
Students are expected to consult with the instructor in selecting a topic. Your literature review will be due in class on Monday, March 22nd.

**Final Seminar Paper: (40%)**
All doctoral students will be required to submit a 20-25 page (double-spaced) final seminar paper on a course-related topic of your choice, to be developed in consultation with the instructor. *The paper may include portions of your previously submitted critical literature review*, and may align with or contribute to other doctoral program requirements; students are welcome and encouraged to use their final paper to move forward relevant pre-candidacy, preliminary, or journal publication projects, though in no cases will previously completed or submitted work be accepted for course credit. Students will be expected to submit a 500 word proposal and outline for the final paper by no later than the last class before winter break (i.e. Monday, February 22nd). *Students are expected to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation on the topic of their final paper in class on Monday, April 19th. Final papers will be due in paper copy and in Ctools drop box by 5 pm on Friday, April 23rd.* More details will be discussed in class and in individual consultation with the instructor.

**Seminar Participation and Small Group Work: (20%)**
This is an advanced graduate research seminar, with serious expectations placed on quality of preparation and participation on the part of all seminar members. While I will lecture from time to time, the class will operate primarily as a discussion-based research seminar. The quality of class discussion will therefore depend heavily on the care and depth with which you engage the course materials and each other. This requires you to complete and reflect critically on all readings in advance of the seminar itself. I’d also encourage you to take careful notes as part of this process, including around any points you found confusing or problematic and would like to bring up for seminar discussion. Failure to consistently attend, complete, reflect on, and/or participate in assigned readings and discussions will have a negative impact on your class participation and/or overall course grades. If you know in advance that you won’t be able to attend a session, please let me know via email or in person.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

Part One: Development Theory and Practice

Week 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW (Jan 11th)


(nb: no class on Monday, Jan 18th due to Martin Luther King holiday)

Week 2: MODERNIZATION, DEPENDENCY, and STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENT (Jan 25th)


Week 3: DEVELOPMENT, POVERTY, and POWER (Feb 1st)


Plus ONE of:


Tania Murray Li, The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics (Duke University Press: Durham 2007) (intro + chs 5-6)

*** Recommended: Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith, Economic Development, 10th edition (Addison-Wesley: Boston, 2009), pp 208-272 ***

Part Two: Knowledge, Technology, and Development Policy

Week 4: INVESTMENT, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, and INNOVATION (Feb 8th)


*** Recommended: Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith, Economic Development, 10th edition (Addison-Wesley: Boston, 2009), pp 714-749 ***

Week 5: RESEARCH, KNOWLEDGE, AND COLLABORATION (Feb 15th)


*Plus ONE of:*


**Week 6: BUILDING CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE** (Feb 22nd)


*Plus ONE of:*


*(NOTE: UNLIKE OTHER WEEKS, YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO PRODUCE A WRITE-UP OF THIS ADDITIONAL READING)*

**Part Three: ICTs and Development: Projects, Programs, and Applications**

**Week 7: ICTS AND DEVELOPMENT: PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS** (Mar 8th)


Plus ONE of:


**Week 8: PARTICIPATORY METHODS, ASSESSMENT, AND DESIGN (Mar 15th)**


**Week 9: SECTORAL APPLICATIONS: HEALTH AND EDUCATION (Mar 22nd)**


Plus ONE of:


**Recommended: Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith, Economic Development, 10th edition (Addison-Wesley: Boston, 2009), pp 369-430 **

**Week 10: SECTORAL APPLICATIONS: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (Mar 29th)**


Nb: IIAD project pre-proposal due by 5 pm the day before class (i.e. Sunday, March 28th). These should be labeled by group name (e.g. “Southeast Asia IIAD pre-proposal”) and uploaded to the discussion section of the class Ctools site. Please also bring a paper copy to class. Students will be asked to read and prepare comments on at least one IIAD pre-proposal other than their own in advance of class (reviewers to be assigned in class on March 22nd).


**Week 11: SECTORAL APPLICATIONS: FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE (Apr 5th)**


Plus ONE reading (you choose!) from the ICTD 2009 Conference Proceedings (please note: you ARE required to produce the standard 1-page summary for submission and sharing in class).

** Recommended: Michael Todaro and Stephen Smith, Economic Development, 10th edition (Addison-Wesley: Boston, 2009), pp 530-586 **

** Nb: there will be NO class held on April 12th; students are encouraged to meet in their project groups. Doctoral student research presentations will be moved to April 19th **

Week 12: RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS (Apr 19th)

Student presentations of Integrated Information Analysis and Design projects. Doctoral student research presentations. Course review and evaluation.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Beyond the materials dealt with in class, there is a (huge!) variety of books, journals, blogs, lists, websites, and other online and offline resources featuring material highly interesting, relevant and useful to the themes of the course. We’ll create a more active list of these (to which you’ll be encouraged to contribute) on the wiki section of the course Ctools site. But here’s a good starting point:

Academic Journals and Proceedings:

Development in Practice
(UM library link: http://mirlyn.lib.umich.edu/Record/003170140)

Information Technologies and International Development
(UM library link: )

International Journal of Technology and Globalization
(UM library link: )
Information Technology for Development
(UM library link:

Proceedings of the International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development
(UM library link:

Websites & RSS Feeds:

Association for Progressive Communication website (http://www.apc.org/) – Development Gateway (World Bank InfoDev Program
International Development Research Center (http://www.idrc.ca)
Science for Development Network (http://www.scidev.net)

Blogs:

Center for Global Development (http://blogs.cgdev.org/globaldevelopment/) -
Many Possibilities (http://manypossibilities.net/) - a blog maintained by Steve Song, telecoms and access fellow at the Shuttleworth Foundation in South Africa (and before that, IDRC and BellaNet)…
Future Perfect (http://www.janchipchase.com/) - a blog maintained by Jan Chipchase, intrepid Nokia ethnographer at large…

Books:

William Easterly, The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good (Penguin: New York, 2006).
Jeffrey Sachs, The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time
Joseph Stiglitz, Globalization and its Discontents
Jagdish Bhagwati, In Defense of Globalization
Thomas Friedman, The World is Flat or Flat, Hot, and Crowded


Anna-Lee Saxenian, The New Argonauts


Swasti Mitter and Celia Ng, eds. Gender and the Digital Economy: Perspectives from the Developing World (Sage 2005)

Arturo Escobar, Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World (Latin America)

James Ferguson, The Anti-Politics Machine (Southern Africa)

David Mosse, Cultivating Development: An Ethnography of Aid Policy and Practice (South Asia)

Tania Murray Li, The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development, and the Practice of Politics (Duke University Press, 2007)

James Ferguson, Global Shadows

James Scott, The Art of Not Being Governed

James Scott, Agrarian Studies: Synthetic Work at the Cutting Edge