CRD 153C: International Community Development: Africa
Race, Class and Community Development in the New South Africa

June 22-July 19, 2014
South Africa

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Class Overview

During the apartheid era, black South Africans were systematically denied access to basic economic resources and political representation. This changed dramatically in 1994, when Nelson Mandela was elected as the first democratic president of a non-racial 'New' South Africa, marking the end of 500 years of colonial rule on the African continent and ushering in an era of new hope and opportunity for historically disadvantaged populations in the country. Since that time, South Africa has undergone a dramatic period of economic and political restructuring, with dynamic new development processes being pursued at all scales, from the community to the nation and beyond.

This course examines processes of community and regional development in the post-apartheid period in South Africa. Based primarily in the multi-cultural city of Durban on the Indian Ocean, this course examines both urban and rural community development challenges and opportunities, with a particular focus on issues of racial justice and sustainability. Societies are fundamentally shaped by inequality and conflict, as different social groups mobilize political and economic resources in an effort to improve their socio-economic circumstances. Rapid globalization and the rise of an information economy, however, are resulting in rapidly changing patterns of employment, economic opportunity and political power. Understanding these changes, how they differ in different places, and how they are affecting patterns of inequality and economic opportunity, is both critical for understanding patterns of development, and essential for promoting more equitable, livable, and sustainable communities.

Developed in collaboration with the Durban University of Technology, the course is very hands-on. Working closely with local non-governmental organizations and government development initiatives, students will have the opportunity to engage first-hand in development initiatives and residents of historically disadvantaged communities. The course also includes extended field visits to development projects in and around Johannesburg, and to the Somkhandha Game Reserve near the Swaziland Border.

The broad summary of contents of the course include the following:
(1) Introduction to history, society and culture of Africa, with focus on South Africa;
(2) Analysis of processes of economic and political restructuring in Africa in the post-independence period
(3) Examination of community and regional development policy and practices;
(4) Review of civil society organizations and activities at the community level
(5) Case studies of topical areas in community and regional development (e.g. job creation, housing, youth development, environment and sustainability, poverty alleviation, political participation)
(6) Field trips to selected communities in both urban and rural areas.

Course Readings:

There is no textbook for this course, and all readings will be provided in electronic form.
Readings will be drawn primarily from the following sources:


Course Assignments (% of final grade):

-- (20%) Daily participation and group involvement
-- (20%) Daily academic journal, submitted weekly on Friday of each week. This should involve your daily reflections on development challenges and opportunities you see, read and experience. It can be informal, and an opportunity to explore new ideas and concepts.

--(15%) Week 1: 5-page individual written analysis of South African development challenges. What do you think are the most critical challenges facing South Africa, and particularly poor communities in Rustenburg, and how are those challenges similar or different to challenges facing communities you are familiar with in the United States? What do you see as the primary causes of those challenges in South Africa and how are they similar to or different from those you have seen in the United States? What do you think are the most promising broad strategies you have seen for addressing those challenges in South Africa, and what lessons do these South African strategies hold for similar community in the United States?

-- (30%) Weeks 2-3: Group written summary and analysis of development initiative: This product will vary from project to project, but must be a final product that documents the work going on in your particular project (you can use photos and videos as well as written analysis). Please consider the following key questions: What are the particular strengths of the project, and what kind of impact has it had on its target community? (Make sure to identify the target community). What do you see as the major challenges or weaknesses the
project faces? What recommendations would you provide for making the project even stronger and more effective in the future?

--(15%) Week 4: Overall collective analysis of the impact of the Somkhanda Game Reserve on the employees and surrounding community. This should also incorporate photos, videos, and personal testimonies, to provide a compelling argument about the impact of the project, and recommendations for future development.

Reading

Read by June 24


Read by July 1


Read by July 11

11. Chapter four: “Land of dreams: claiming the Eastern Shores of Lake St. Lucia”