

Fall 2019
Anthropology of Development

Department of Anthropology
070:305

Thursday, 2:15-5:15, Ruth Adams Bldg., Rm. 209A (Douglass Campus)



Why are some countries rich while others are poor? An income gap between the global North and the global South barely existed in the year 1500, but it has tripled since 1960. Why do 4.3 billion people—about 60 percent of the world’s population—live on less than \$5 a day? What does it mean to say they require “development”? This course explores anthropological approaches to that contested concept. Some define development as improvements in material well-being and opportunity, while others view it as a destructive myth or delusion, or as inevitable historical processes of industrialization, modernization or globalization. We will examine development debates in anthropology and related fields, including topics such as how the climate crisis challenges conventional development approaches, the role of anthropologists in development organizations, and why the concept of development provokes such ambivalence within anthropology. Looking inside NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) as well as powerful international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which act as agents of development, we will examine why they spark protests in many parts of the world and how they respond to critique. Ethnographic case studies will help us to understand how people in nations (or parts of nations) targeted as objects of development perceive development initiatives and discourses, and how they craft livelihoods and imagine their futures.

The format of class meetings includes lectures, group discussions, and films.



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Photo: NASA's Blue Marble series