

PLS 4933 - Third World Ideologies
Spring 2009

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Office Hours:

11:00-11:30 MWF 1:00-3:00 M, 1:00 - 1:30 WF

The “Third World”, or lesser-developed countries, or under-developed countries, or have-not countries, or southern countries, or whatever label you wish to apply currently contains close to 80% of the world’s population (and that percentage is steadily increasing!) and occupies a large majority of the world’s surface.

Often the actions of both individuals and governments in the Third World do not appear to make sense. We have all heard some variation of the phrase, “Well, you know all of those people are crazy!” used to explain actions in other parts of the world. And often, when viewed from the perspective of a middle-class citizen of the United States, their actions do appear crazy!

You view political events, like the rest of life, through a “perceptual lens”. Everyone interprets political events by using their own references. For us in the United States, this will usually mean acceptance of some widely held political norms, such as pluralist democracy with competing political parties, separation of religious law from political and secular law, freedom of speech and the press, private property, capitalism, ability to rise in wealth and status through relatively equal opportunities, absence of grinding wide-spread poverty and the like. When viewing the actions of persons and governments in other parts of the world, we often see them through our own values and priorities and not theirs. In doing this we not only delude ourselves as to the causes of many of the problems in the Third World, but also deny ourselves the opportunity to try to assist in developing solutions for these problems.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*

Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Gandhi, *The Essential Gandhi*

Guevara, *Guerilla Warfare*

Lewis, *The Political Language of Islam*

Nyerere, *Ujaama*

Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*

Various other readings will also be announced and placed on reserve

COURSE FORMAT

The purpose of this course is to introduce some of the political ideologies found in the Third World today, with particular focus on nationalism, revolution, socialism, and democratic change. This will be accomplished through various readings, class lecture and discussion. It is both expected and required that everyone will have read and be ready to discuss assigned

readings on the assigned day. A handout listing the specific readings and dates will be distributed the second day of class.

This class will not work in a pure lecture format. The very nature of ideology is that it is open to interpretation. An understanding of political ideologies, especially those which espouse ideals that are somewhat foreign to most citizens of the developed world, cannot be obtained by someone standing before you and telling you what Gandhi or Marx or Mao or most any other political theorist or ideologue “meant”. Their writings have “meant” many different things to many different people.

As this professor has said in this and many other classes dealing with the Third World, the primary goal is to get you to think like “the other guy”. To be able to see events through others’ “perceptual lenses”, regardless of your own political beliefs. More than anything else, this is the key to understanding political events in other parts of the world.

This is a 4900 level course. There is a heavy reading load. It is absolutely vital that you keep up with the readings. The nature of the readings is that ideas and concepts are developed throughout the work. They are not organized with key facts or terms in bold print, or with a handy synopsis at the end of the chapter. Unlike many other courses, it is virtually impossible to let the readings slide and then cram them all in the last day before an exam, or to take the exam based solely on class notes. This is not intended to frighten people off, but to make certain that students are aware of the course requirements. There are no prerequisites for this class, and no previous knowledge of Third World politics or ideologies is required or even expected. Those who keep up with the readings in this course tend to do well, and those who do not tend to do poorly.

GRADING PROCEDURE

Grades in this course will be determined through three in-class exams, two during the semester and a comprehensive final, and a paper assignment that will be made approximately half-way through the semester. Each count for 25% of your final grade. No grades are curved and there will be no opportunities for extra credit. Grades will be assigned in a straight 90-100 A, 80-89 B, 70-79 C, 60-69 D, below 60 F. NOTE: Those taking this course for graduate credit will have an additional paper which will be assigned the first week of class, and exams will be graded on a higher standard than undergraduates.

ATTENDANCE

Class roll will only be taken to determine that both you and the registrar’s almighty computer agree that you are indeed in this course. At this stage of your academic career it is expected that you have already discovered the cost-benefit value of attending class. Material will be covered in class that is not in the texts, supplemental readings will be announced, changes in the reading schedule will be made, and the student is responsible for that information. While actual attendance is entirely up to the individual, it is **HIGHLY** recommended!