MDP 5001: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

COURSE OVERVIEW
Students in MDP 5001 will be exposed to complexities of interdisciplinary development practice through an examination of the range of ways that development theories manifest within development practice organizations. Development is a paradigm that is implemented at different scales and in different ways that reflect the practitioner organizations and the collective and individual ways of knowing within them. While exploring a diverse sampling of development practice organizations, students will simultaneously explore the realm of critical reflection and reflexivity. In essence, we will critique development organizations as well as ourselves. The goal is to attain a deeper understand of how theory interacts with reality.

Student learning objectives
Student learning objectives relate to two areas: critical reflexivity and development practice.

Critical reflexivity:
By the end of the semester students should:
- Understand the concepts of critical reflection and critically reflexive practices (Cunliffe, 2004).
- Understand the concepts of reasoned judgement and private reflection (Haidt, 2012).
- Understand the twin concepts of single and double-loop learning (Argyris 1991).
- Practice critical reflection and reflexivity, reasoned judgement, and private reflection.
- Understand the concept of positionality
- Explore how positionality affects perception and practice in development work.
- Become familiar with analytic memo writing (Saldaña, 2013), an important qualitative research tool.
- Develop and enhance professional writing skills AND
- Build a body of qualitative data for possible future use in MDP courses.

Development practice:
By the end of the semester students should:
- Understand the boundaries of development practice and how it interacts with similarly oriented but differently focused organizations
- Be able to recognize development theories within the written and other materials created by development practitioner organizations.
- Critique the real world application of development theory to practice
- Trace the evolution of development theory (or its variants) over the lifespan of a practitioner organization.
Course Principles

General course approach
- The principal value of this course derives from the structured and facilitated interactions of a group of students and professionals, all of who bring essential and valued real-world and academic experiences.
- Real-world development practitioners and other relevant contributors will be incorporated into course sessions as much as possible.
- To maximize potential and actual real-world contact time, we will focus on local, state, and regionally-based organizations whenever possible.

Individual conduct
- All individuals have the right to express their opinions and perspectives within the context of course meetings and assignments and no student shall be penalized for a particular idea or belief.
- Similarly, all individuals have the responsibility and obligation to express their opinions and perspectives in a way that is respectful to their colleges and that demonstrates awareness of alternative viewpoints.
- The instructor will communicate any concerns or issues with individual students in a confidential and respectful manner.
- Likewise, students will communicate any concerns or issues related to the course or course participants with the instructor in a timely and respectful manner and without penalty.
- All guests MUST be treated with respect, regardless of their individual or organizational beliefs or practices. This is imperative and absolute! The ability to navigate contested spaces is an essential professional and personal skill.
Weekly meetings

We meet one time per week. Whenever possible, course sessions will be used to “interrogate” development practitioners about the ways that development theory meets practice within their particular organization. Weekly sessions are geared toward structured and facilitated interactions - though unscripted - that will depend on the student’s degree of preparation and contribution quality.

Attendance:

Life happens, even in graduate school! That said, more than two excused absences will negatively affect your grade, as any discussion course relies on the attendance and participation of the students. Moreover, communication is essential. More than one unexcused absence will lead to a reduction in your grade. An “excused absence” is one that is communicated to the instructor before the course begins. I don’t need to see the message before class starts, but it should be in my inbox or voicemail. Messages sent after class begins will not count as excused.

Participation:

Participation is the lifeblood of a discussion course and will be 25% of your course grade. This is a big component of your success in this course and it is a relatively subjective grade. Here’s how to get full credit: Do the readings before class. Prepare questions and comments before class. Share your ideas, questions and comments with your peers. Respect others and strive to understand their viewpoint more than you strive to communicate your own. Think deeply and critically about your ideas and beliefs and don’t hide your personal inquiry from the group. Have and demonstrate a positive attitude toward your peers and toward learning. If you do these things and do them convincingly then you will have no issues with your participation grade.

Most teaching faculty, myself included, know what it looks like when a student has read one part of one reading before class and then tries to get by with one specific comment about that reading, followed by a host of comments that are critical of your peers’ ideas or the course in general. If you (individually and collectively) don’t put effort into this course you will be disappointed at the end of the semester and will have missed an opportunity to sharpen your contemplative skills and cognitive processes, two critical tools that don’t always correspond with problem sets and final exams.

Electronics:

Laptops and tablets are wonderful technologies that can enhance our learning experiences and make life easier in many ways. However, this course is structured on discussion and interaction: the presence of a laptop, tablet, or phone in no way enhances the conversation experience. For this reason, these devices will not be permitted during 5001 class sessions. The benefit of face-to-face engagement and the signaling of mutual respect demonstrated by being fully present outweighs the costs of not being able to access related websites and papers or being unable to take notes directly into word processing documents. I do understand that many people
electronically annotate their readings. Unfortunately, salient points will need to be copied to a piece of paper or the documents printed prior to class to preserve the desired classroom ambiance.

**Course Deliverables**

Once underway, the course will follow a familiar rhythm:

**Weekly posts (Tuesdays @ 10:00)**

Each week, students will post responses or reflections related to the week’s readings or the organizational materials furnished by the guest speaker. Often, these posts will serve as the basis for discussion and may be shared with guests prior to sessions (as appropriate). **15% of course grade**

**Course meetings (Wednesdays @ 1:00)**

25% of course grade (participation)

**Weekly analytic memos (Fridays @ 3:00)**

Each week, students will prepare several (3-5) analytic memos that relate to the weekly topic. These memo assignments will be posted on Moodle and strive to reinforce learnings related to development theory at intersection with development practice, and to develop the student’s ability to practice critical reflexivity. Details for the analytic memos can be found in a separate document available on the Moodle site. **20% of course grade**

**Meta-analysis of memos (December)**

The meta-analysis is essentially a long-form analytic memo that is based on the body of critical reflection work done over the course of the semester. It is an analysis of the analyses that will be submitted at the end of the semester. For additional details, see the analytic memos assignment on the Moodle site. **15% of course grade**

**Group analysis and presentation of Government-Led development example (penultimate class session)**

Student teams will be responsible for researching and presenting to the class an example of a government-led development organization (e.g., USAID, DFID, NORAD, CIDA, etc.). Details for this assignment will be shared within the first few weeks of the semester. **10% of course grade**
Practitioner analysis paper (end-of-term).
Each student will be required to choose a development organization and then track and analyze the evolution of theory and practice at that organization over its lifetime. Details for this assignment will be shared within the first few weeks of the semester. **15% of course grade**

Exams
This course does not have a mid-term or final exam.

**Grading Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Component</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>weekly posts</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>participation</td>
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<td>analytic memos</td>
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93-100  A  
90-92   A-  
83-89   B  
80-82   B-  
73-79   C  
70-72   C-  
< 70    Not passing
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<tr>
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<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>FOCUS &amp; GUEST (if applicable)</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>03 September</td>
<td>Course introduction</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>10 September</td>
<td>The Social Intuitionist Model (Haidt)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>03</td>
<td>17 September</td>
<td>MDP Librarian</td>
<td>Mary Shoenborn, HHH Librarian</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>24 September</td>
<td>The MDGs and SDGs</td>
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<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>01 October</td>
<td>Development Practice @ Conflict: Provincial Reconstruction Teams</td>
<td>Jocelyn Frisch, PhD Consultant</td>
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<td>06</td>
<td>08 October</td>
<td>Development Practice @ Crisis: Relief and Refuge</td>
<td>Walter James, Program Associate American Refugee Center (ARX)</td>
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<td>Development Practice @ Faith: Faith-Driven Missions</td>
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<td>08</td>
<td>22 October</td>
<td>Checking In: Processing Easterly - Searchers, Planners and Beyond</td>
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<td>09</td>
<td>29 October</td>
<td>Aid Architecture</td>
<td>Brian Atwood, Professor and former HHH School Dean</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>05 November</td>
<td>Behind the Practice: A Volunteer-Driven Model</td>
<td>Global Volunteers Case</td>
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<td>Behind the Practice: A Small to Medium Scale Model</td>
<td>Mano-a-Mano Case</td>
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<td>Behind the Practice: An International NGO Model</td>
<td>Adeso Case [no guest]</td>
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<td>DP Lens: Gender</td>
<td>Karen Brown, ICGC</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>3 December</td>
<td>Behind the Practice: Government-Driven DP Models</td>
<td>USAID, GIZ, DFID, NORAD, etc. [Comparative Analysis]</td>
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UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Disability statement
Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately and as soon as possible to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Disability Services office at (612) 626-1333 if you have questions about the University’s policies related to disabilities.

Academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty policy
Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own, can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment, please ask during class or discuss these expectations with me during office hours. My goal is to help each of you become strong academic writers, and developing habits of scholastic honesty will take you a long way toward achieving this goal.

Classroom conduct
Instructors are responsible for maintaining order and a positive learning environment in the classroom. Students whose behavior is disruptive either to the instructor or to other students will be asked to leave. Students whose behavior suggests the need for counseling or other assistance may be referred to their college office or University Counseling Services. Students whose behavior may violate the University Student Conduct Code may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

This is a discussion course: the use of laptops and other devices will not be permitted during course time.

Harassment
Please note that sexual harassment by any member of the University community, student, faculty, staff, administration, is prohibited. To review the complete policy on this issue, view the following webpage:

http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/humanresources/SexHarassment.pdf
Expected Student Academic Work per Credit*

Workload expectations in this policy are an estimate of the amount of work needed for an average student to earn an average grade. Course grades are based on the quality of the work submitted, not on hours of effort (as provided in Administrative Policy: Grading and Transcripts: Twin Cities, Crookston, Morris, Rochester). Workload expectations per credit do not vary with the method of delivery of the course or the length of the academic term.

A. Undergraduate Courses

1. Student workload expectations per undergraduate credit. For fall or spring semester, one credit represents, for the average University undergraduate student, three hours of academic work per week (including lectures, laboratories, recitations, discussion groups, field work, study, and so on), averaged over the semester, in order to complete the work of the course to achieve an average grade. One credit equals 42 to 45 hours of work over the course of the semester (1 credit x 3 hours of work per week x 14 or 15 weeks in a semester equals 42 to 45 hours of academic work). Thus, enrollment for 15 credits in a semester represents approximately 45 hours of work per week, on average, over the course of the semester.

2. Exceptions to undergraduate workload standard. Professional norms and the nature of the academic work may necessitate spending more than three hours of work per week on average. For example, clinical experiences, some laboratory work, and some studio activities may require more than an average three hours per week. Demands on the student in excess of the average of three hours per credit per week are permissible with college approval and with appropriate notification to the student of the amount of work expected for the course or educational experience (e.g., in class schedules, bulletins, or syllabi).

3. Student workload statement required for undergraduate courses. All proposals for undergraduate courses must include a student workload statement demonstrating how the course conforms to the student workload expectations in sections (a) and (b). College and campus curriculum committees and other approving bodies (e.g., the Council on Liberal Education) must consider the student workload statement in reaching a decision on whether to approve a proposed course.

B. Graduate School and Professional School Courses

It is expected that the academic work required of Graduate School and professional school students will exceed three hours per credit per week.

*Policy available at: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/STUDENTWORK.html