ICT and Development

Academic Year: 2014-15, Hilary Term
Day and Time: Weeks 1-9, Day and time to be determined
Location: TBC

Course Provider
Dr Mark Graham, Oxford Internet Institute, mark.graham@oii.ox.ac.uk

Background
This course will introduce students to the debates and practices surrounding the uses of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) with a focus on the Global South. It will draw on resources from Anthropology, Development Studies, Economics, Geography, and History in order to examine the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that underpin development - as a practice, as a subject of research, and as a discourse. The course will also draw heavily on case-studies in order to ground theory in practice and will introduce students to a range of projects that have employed ICTs as a solution to problems in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

ICTs have the power to fundamentally transform the economic, social and political relationships in poorer parts of our planet. However, potentials often do not translate into realities, and it is important to be aware of not only the promises, but also the perils of the transformative nature of communication technologies. As such, this course will provide an opportunity to reflect on local appropriateness, social inclusion and the range of arguments for and against any ICT for development project in a variety of contexts.

Course Objectives
This course will expose students to some of the most innovative ICTD solutions to economic, social and political challenges in the Global South. Students will be familiarised with a variety of theoretical movements in development studies. Through detailed case studies in weeks 6-8, students will be exposed to a wide range of methods that are employed to study ICTD projects. Ultimately, students will also be encouraged to critically examine the notion of development, how it can be achieved, and whose needs it meets best.

Learning Outcomes
Upon course completion students will:

- Have a familiarity with key debates in ICTD
- Have a sophisticated understanding of the potential for the internet and other ICTs to alter the practice of development in the Global South.
- Be able to formulate well-grounded research questions on ICTD topics.
- Be able to link development theory and ICTD practice.
**Teaching Arrangements**

There will be eight weekly two hour classes which will cover theory and case-studies. The classes will meet in weeks 1-4 and 6-9 of Hilary term and consist of lectures and discussion. Eight topics will be covered: (1) Uneven development and the origins of ICTD; (2) Development theory; (3) Critiques of ICTD; (4) Development in the Network Society; (5) Social inclusion; (6) Appropriate technology; (7) ICTs and rural economic development; and (8) Open development and peer-production.

**Note**

Students should note that over the course of the year, small changes may be made to the content, dates or teaching arrangements set out in this reading list, at the course provider's discretion. These changes will be communicated to students directly and will be noted on the internal course information website.

**Summative Assessment**

Students will be assessed through a final essay that is no longer than 5000 words which must be submitted to the Examinations School by 12 noon of Monday of Week 1 of Trinity term. The essay will cover one of the course topics, and students will choose a topic in consultation with the course tutor in advance. The essay should be clearly related to the topics of the course.

**Formative Assignment**

Each student will be required to give one ten minute presentation on a specific aspect of the session topic or to review the argument of one of the books under the additional readings for each session topic. Details of these presentations will be agreed in Week 2.

Students will also be required to write one short (advised length: 1500-3000 words) essay on any of the 8 topics covered. This essay will provide a means for students to obtain feedback on the progress they have achieved.

**Submission of Summative Assignments**

All coursework should be submitted in person to the Examinations School by the stated deadline. All coursework should be put in an envelope and must be addressed to ‘The Chairman of Examiners for the MSc in Social Science of the Internet C/o The Clerk of Examination Schools, High Street.

Students should also ensure they add the OII coversheet at the top of the coursework and that two copies of the coursework are submitted. Please note that all work must be single sided. An electronic copy will also need to be submitted to the department. Please note that all coursework will be marked anonymously and therefore only your candidate number is required on the coversheet.

Please note that work submitted after the deadline will be processed in the standard manner and, in addition, the late submission will be reported to the Proctors' Office. If a student is concerned that they will not meet the deadline they must contact their college office or examinations school for advice. For further information on submission of assessments to the examinations school please refer to [http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/schools/oxonly/submissions/index.shtml](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/schools/oxonly/submissions/index.shtml).


Any student failing this assessment will need to follow the rules set out in the OII Examining Conventions regarding re-submitting failed work.
Key Readings
A reading list is given below for each class. Those items marked with an asterisk (*) are essential reading and MUST be read by all students in preparation for the class. Items which are not marked with an asterisk are recommended readings.

Week 1: Uneven Development and the Origins of ICTD
What is development? In this topic we will closely reflect on the variety of ways in which development can be understood and trace the history of ICTD. While traditionally a variety of economic measurements have been used, notions of ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ places can also incorporate a range of environmental, social, and political elements. We will additionally engage with the objectives of ICTD. Development can be seen as a desire to bring about positive economic, social and political change in less privileged parts of the world or, alternatively, an external implementation of new forms of power-relationships. Finally, we will reflect on the two forms of unevenness that drive ICT projects: (1) unevenness in ‘development’; and (2) digital divides.

- Burrell, Jenna
- Toyama, Kentaro


- Castells, Manuel
  - Chapter 36: The Rise of the Fourth World, pp. 430-439

- Crow, Ben
- Zlatunich, Nichole
- Fulfrost, Brian


- Heeks, Richard


- Heeks, Richard


- Ocampo, José A.
- Vos, Rob


- Williams, Glyn
- Meth, Paula
- Willis, Katie


- Willis, Katie


- World Bank


Week 2: Development Theory
It is important to become familiar with the variety of development theories that frame ICTD projects and plans. This topic will therefore offer a close look at some of the major movements in development. Dependency, modernisation, structuralism, socialism, neo-Marxism and neoliberalism will all be discussed within the context of international development.
Week 3: Critiques of ICTD

In recent years powerful critiques have been raised against mainstream development theory and practice. It is thus important to be aware of these alternate approaches. This topic will review the most important feminist, postcolonialist, and poststructuralist critiques. Students will be encouraged to reflect on issues of power, social inclusion and local appropriateness as they relate to a range of ICTD projects.

* Mitchell, Tim


* Ya’u, Yunusa Z.


* Cline-Cole, Reginald
Week 4: Development in the Network Society

Information technologies are often promoted as an essential development strategy in both rich and poor countries due to their ability to alter economic connections and shape economic space. This topic will allow us to take a close look at the potentials for economic change in the globalised economy by focusing on digital divides, value chain disintermediation and e-commerce within the context of ICTD. The session will examine some of the dynamics of digitally-driven production as well as the opportunities and tensions that arise from non-proximate interactions in order to allow us to carefully consider the various ways in which the internet can influence the global positionalities of economic actors. Examples from both the Global North and South will be used in this session.

* Massey, Doreen

  • Chapter 4: Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place, pp. 60–70

* Malecki, Edward J.

  • Chapter 8: The paradox of a “double-edged geography”, pp. 174–198

* Dicken, Peter

  • Chapter 3: Tangled Webs, pp. 51-74
  • Chapter 4: Technological Change, pp. 75-108
Week 5: BREAK

Week 6: Social Inclusion

There are strong links between measures of development and socially inclusive education, health and gender policies. Many of the UN’s Millennium Development Goals revolve around these core issues. Technical solutions are frequently proposed to pressing education, health and gender issues, and the goal of this session will be to focus on a variety of related ICTD projects and the ways in which they can be studied. Examples will include the One Laptop Per Child Project, an Internet-based health clinic in Cambodia and E-learning tools in China. A guest speaker from one of these projects will be invited to provide further detail and answer questions. Particular attention will also be paid to methodological tools that can be employed by researchers in this field.

  • Chapter 3: Information and Communication in Development
Week 7: Appropriate Technology in the Global South

Approximately sixty percent of people globally have access to a mobile phone, compared to only twenty-five percent that have access to the internet. It is therefore understandable that many implementations of ICTD have moved towards the mobile devices as a platform. This session will look
at some of the most effective and innovative uses of mobile devices as development tools within a broader discussion of appropriate and contextual technologies.

* Burrell, Jenna

* Donner, Jonathan

* Donner, Jonathan

* Gurumurthy, Anita

* Zuckerman, Ethan

Sen, Amartya

Blumenstock, Joshua
Eagle, Nathan
  “Mobile Divides: Gender, Socioeconomic Status, and Mobile Phone Use in Rwanda.” *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies and Development*,
  • Available at: http://jblumenstock.com/papers/jblumenstock_ictd2010.pdf

Diga, Kathleen

Sood, Aditya D.

Veeraraghavan, Rajesh
Yasodhar, Naga
Toyama, Kenaro

de Angoitia, Regina
Ramirez, Fernando

Donner, Jonathan
Tellez, Camilo A.

Futch, Michael
MacIntosh, Craig

Jensen, Robert
**Week 8: ICTs and Rural Economic Development**

It is often argued that distance, a lack of access to markets and an absence of economic transparency are fundamental barriers to development. This session will examine some of the ways in which ICTs can alter informal social and local information systems. Particular focus will be placed on the idea of the village telecentre (or rural kiosk), which has become a huge priority for a spectrum of development organisations and NGOs in the Global South. Dr Adel el Zaim, Head of IDRC ICT programs in Middle East and North Africa, will be a guest speaker to talk about rural ICTD projects in the Middle East.

* Best, Michael L. Kenny, Charles


- Chapter 6: **ICTs, Enterprise and Development**, pp. 177-201

* Boston Review

“Can Technology End Poverty?” (all articles)

- Available at: [http://bostonreview.net/BR35.6/ndf_technology.php](http://bostonreview.net/BR35.6/ndf_technology.php)

* Carvin, Andy Surman, Mark


- Available at: [http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/27550/1/122166.pdf](http://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/27550/1/122166.pdf)

* Day, Bob Greenwood, Peter


- Chapter 10: **Information and Communication Technologies for Rural Development**, pp. 321-359

* Bailur, Savita


* Duncombe, Richard Heeks, Richard


* Kumar, Richa


* Matthee, Karel et al.


* Sachs, Jeffrey D. Mellinger, Andrew D. Gallup, John L.


* Tschang, Ted Chuladul, Mathurot Le, Thuy T. Jensen, Robert


Week 9: Open Development and Peer Production

How can the potentials of peer-production be harnessed within the contexts of development? This session will explore the ways in which openness (i.e. access, participation and collaboration) alter the possibilities for development. Two aspects of open development will be looked at: First, ICT-enabled open access as an organisational and structural model; Second, open participation in development as it affects the mobilisation of resources (both human and non-human) on a global and non-proximate scale for development. Dr Sean Gorman of Crisis Commons will be a guest speaker in the last segment of this session.

  - Available at: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/t/text/text-idx?c=nmw;;idno=5680986.0001.001

  - Available at: http://www.ctheory.net/articles.aspx?id=499


Gorman, Sean Graham, Mark Zook, Matthew "Volunteered Geographic Information and Disaster Relief: A Case Study of the Haitian Earthquake. 2010. World Medical and Health Policy. (in press)


Related Journals:
- African Journal of Information Systems
- Electronic Journal of Information Systems in Developing Countries
- Gender, Technology and Development
- Information Technologies and International Development
- Information Technology for Development
- International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology
- Information Technology in Developing Countries
- International Journal on Advances in ICT for Emerging Regions
Please note: Option papers will only run if selected by at least four students.