

Rutgers University - Department of Human Ecology
Globalization, Development & Environment
Spring 2025 - 11:374:305:01
MW 3:50-5:10, RAB 109B

Instructor:

Dr. Pamela McElwee

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Office Hours: Wed 2:30-3:30 and other times by email appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the processes at play in globalization and development and the impacts of these processes on the environment. Relevant histories, policies, and institutions are examined, with a focus on such issues as trade, migration, and inequality, among others. Emphasis of the course will be on understanding the social, political and economic factors that have contributed to globalization and development, and the environmental impacts of these trends. We conclude by examining the degree to which communities, nations and global institutions have the ability to manage these problems, and with what solutions.

Course Learning Goals

At the end of the course, students will have met several learning objectives:

- Understand theoretical concepts and approaches to the study of global development and the history of policy in this field, including modernization theory, dependency theory, world systems theory, theories of underdevelopment and uneven development, structural adjustment, neoliberalization, and ecologically unequal exchange.
- Assess the environmental tradeoffs involved in economic development and global integration and be able to use and critique methods of assessment commonly used, including the environmental Kuznets curve, ecological footprints, and commodity chain analysis.
- Examine what role inequality and poverty plays in different global regions and how this influences environmental impacts.
- Apply key class concepts to real-world development case studies, including the impacts of fast fashion, global supply chains for iPhones, fair trade coffee, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

To meet these goals, the course focuses on three primary activities:

- (1) core readings and lectures on aspects of development, globalization and environment
- (2) understanding real world examples through films and case studies that highlight the issues involved in global development
- (3) periodic written assignments and quizzes

Required Textbook

You will need to have access to one textbook for the course: **McMichael, Philip and Heloise Weber (2022). Development and Social Change: A Global Perspective. 7th edition.** It is available at the Rutgers bookstore and other online bookstores. Please ensure you purchase the correct edition of the text (the most recent 7th edition). It is also available on reserve via the Rutgers Library. Other required readings are available in Canvas as PDFs, organized by class date.

Canvas site

Announcements, additional online readings, assignments folders and other materials will be posted on Canvas. Please make sure you have your settings so that you can receive email communication from the site. To access the Canvas course site, please visit <https://canvas.rutgers.edu> and log in using your netID. For more assistance with Canvas support contact Canvas Help at <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/> or email help@canvas.rutgers.edu or call 877-361-1134.

REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

This course will serve as a vehicle to emphasize reading and writing skills of the student. There will be reading spread throughout the semester. Please budget your time so that you can devote the necessary time to staying up to date with the readings and meeting weekly deadlines. Written work and their points are listed in the table below.

There are 100 points that are possible to achieve in the work in this class. I will grade according to the following university scale. Cutoffs are firm, especially given the use of pluses and minuses

A	90-100
B+	89-88
B	80-87
C+	79-78
C	70-77
D	60-69
F	59 and under

The points you will be graded on in the class include the following assignments:

Assignment	Points (200 total)	Due Date
Reading annotations (2)	20 (10 pts each)	Due Feb 26 and Apr 23
Case study assignments (2)	40 (20 pts each)	Due Mar 12 and Apr 14
Midterm reflections quiz	10	Mar 24
Final Exam	20	May 14, 12-3pm
Attendance/Participation/Discussion (may include pop quizzes)	10	All semester

ASSIGNMENTS

Written assignments are to be turned in on Canvas in the designated slot. This means assignments are NOT to be emailed to the instructor, or given to me in class, or dropped off at

my mailbox, etc: there are too many chances for it to get lost. Any assignment not turned in to Canvas begin to be considered late immediately following the time in which it was due. **Late assignments will be penalized 5 points per 24 hours late**; there are no exceptions.

Annotated readings:

On several weeks we have online readings instead of the textbook. For weeks in which you are asked to provide reading annotations, you will open the assigned PDFs in Hypothesis, a Canvas add-on (you may be asked to sign up for a Hypothesis account or authorize the app the first time you do this). Clicking on the online link should take you to the PDF within Hypothesis (the URL should start with <https://lms.hypothes.is/>). You will see your PDF of the assigned reading with a menu on the right. Selecting any text in the PDF will allow you to highlight or annotate it (annotations are notes on the text from you). Please provide annotations of **key points** of the article, with your analysis of why the points you have chosen are key – explain them in your own words and relate these points to previous discussions and lectures in the class. Make sure you use your annotations to answer the **key questions** for the week outlined on the syllabus. Clicking the ‘eye’ button on the sidebar will allow you to see other students’ annotations, or hide them. Do not just highlight text, but fully annotate it for full credit for these assignments.

Case study assignments: We will have two case study assignments which will require you to take a concept from the readings/class and demonstrate understanding of the concept through independent research and analysis. Each assignment is worth 20 points and are due by due dates noted. They should be uploaded in the following format on the respective assignment tabs:

1. The writeup must be typed in 12-point font and be single or 1.5 spacing.
2. The paper must be in Microsoft Word document form (.doc).
3. The paper must be in standard APA bibliographic format if/when you use references; see <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/06/>
4. The file name of the document you upload must be in the form of:
YourLastNameAssignment1.doc, etc
5. Papers should be proofed carefully, and please pay attention to readability and writing style, as well as to content.

Final exam: This class will have a final cumulative exam. More details will be announced in class.

CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Instructor contact:

Email is a medium that should be used carefully. I do not answer emails immediately and especially not on nights and weekends, so be aware that emailing me the night before assignments are due is not acceptable. Please plan ahead and try to make use of live office hours, not email, for more complicated or in-depth discussions.

Classroom meetings

Please note that while this is not technically a hybrid class, I have some work-related travel this semester. I have built my travel into the class periods so that on the days that I am not in NJ, we will

not meet in-person but instead have films and recorded lectures on Canvas, or meet live on Zoom. The syllabus indicates those dates for which I have confirmed I will not be able to meet in person. There may be additional shifts in these dates as travel times firm up, so please stay on top of announcements on Canvas.

Similarly, COVID is now on the rise again and there may be times when some of us have it; please let me know as soon as you know if you should isolate, and we can record in-person lectures/work for you to keep up with. Despite the various modes in which we will be working, I expect students to stay engaged and attend classes regularly, as attendance and participation are included in your final grade.

Attendance and Make-ups

Because this is a seminar-type class, attendance and participation is an important part of making the class work. Excessive absences will detract from your participation grade. You will need to actively participate in class sessions in order to earn the full points for participation. Additionally, if you cannot attend a class it is YOUR responsibility to obtain notes, syllabi changes, assignments etc. from another student. If you know you will have to miss class in advance because of something beyond your control (NOT, for example, a routine appointment), let me know (with relevant documentation) in time to arrange when you should hand in any work. Make-up after the fact is available only for a documented emergency. Students who will miss class due to an athletic competition or other official university events are required to follow official university policies if they wish to make up an assignment. You must notify me immediately, and at that time we can make arrangements for turning in missed work. Those who fail to do so will not be accommodated.

Withdrawals and Incompletes

Please see me if you feel you will need to withdraw from the class. You will need to follow university rules on dates for withdrawal. I will not give incompletes for this course, except for extreme emergency situations such as family problems or illnesses that you or an immediate family member suffer that would make it impossible for you to come to class. Documentation is required.

Academic dishonesty:

The Rutgers code of conduct mandates “[that all work submitted in a course, academic research, or other activity is the student’s own and created without the aid of impermissible technologies, materials, or collaborations.](#)” Academic dishonesty is not tolerated in any shape or form. If you are unclear on what constitutes dishonesty, please see the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy : <https://policies.rutgers.edu/B.aspx?BookId=11914&PageId=459231> Dishonesty includes any form of plagiarism, cheating on tests, fabrication of sources, and other things. **I have a zero-tolerance policy on academic dishonesty:** An initial incident will result in the student receiving no credit for the assignment. A second incident will result in a failure in the class, and a grade of XF is an option for cases in which I feel there has been serious misconduct.

Because of their problematic nature and the issues they may generate with regard to the Academic Integrity Policy, I strongly encourage students not to rely on any AI chatbots for work in this class. Such chatbots currently produce highly inaccurate information on simple factual matters and often generate fake sources and citations. If I see these in your assignments, this will be considered a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. Beyond these problems, AI chatbots do not provide a chance for you to strengthen your own critical writing or thinking skills. The

assignments in the class are specifically designed to not be ones that chatbots can write for you, and current detection software on Canvas will highlight for me if use of chatbots in assignments is suspected. Limited use, such as for spellchecking or improving grammar of things you yourself have written, would not be a violation. However, use of chatbots to generate all your sources and writing would. Please do your own work.

Disability Services Statement

If you are entitled to a disability accommodation, I encourage you to request it. Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey abides by Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments of 2008, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1998, and the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination. If you have a disability and may require some type of instructional and/or examination accommodation, please contact me early in the semester so that I can provide or facilitate in providing accommodations you may need. If you have not already done so, you will need to register with the Office of Disability Services, the designated office on campus to provide services and administer exams with accommodations for students with disabilities. The Office of Disability Services can be reached at 732-932-2848.

Other University Services:

The faculty and staff at Rutgers are committed to your success. Students who are successful tend to seek out resources that enable them to excel academically, maintain their health and wellness, prepare for future careers, navigate college life and finances, and connect with the RU community. Resources that can help you succeed and connect with the Rutgers community can be found at success.rutgers.edu, and nearly all services and resources that are typically provided in-person are now available remotely. All services are contingent on the ongoing COVID epidemic. Please check websites.

Dean of Students Office

Email: deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu [You can do drop-in visits during office hours.]
848-932-2300, 88 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901, Mon-Fri, 8:30am-5:00pm
The Dean of Students Office at Rutgers University-New Brunswick provides solutions, services, and support to help students navigate Rutgers University. The Office serves as a student support network by providing advocacy, problem resolution, and critical incident intervention for those times when additional assistance is needed. Please call to schedule an appointment to meet with a representative from the Dean's office.

24-hour services: see <http://health.rutgers.edu/general-resources/emergency-information/>
Rutgers Violence Prevention & Victim Assistance (VPVA)

(848) 932-1181 (to speak with someone immediately)

3 Bartlett Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901 / www.vpva.rutgers.edu/

The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance provides confidential crisis intervention, counseling and advocacy for victims of sexual and relationship violence, racial violence, and stalking to students, staff and faculty. Lots of programs, including voluntary opportunities.

ProtoCall, a phone-based service for students in crisis when Rutgers' Counseling (CAPS) is closed. Call the main CAPS number, 848-932-7884, and follow the prompts.

Acute Psychiatric Service (APS): 855-515-5700, a 24-hour emergency service for local residents. If you live outside of Middlesex County you should contact the nearest hospital emergency department.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)

NJ Hope Line (Suicide Prevention): 855-654-6735

National Crisis Text Line: Text KNIGHTS to 741741. To speak directly with a counselor of color you can text STEVE to 741741.

Ongoing services: mental health, disabilities, faith-related services

<http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Counseling, ADAP & Psychiatric Services (CAPS)

(848) 932-7884 / 17 Senior Street, New Brunswick, NJ 08901/

A CAPS on-call counselor is available for crisis intervention/emergencies every day during regular business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:30am–4:30pm, except University holidays).

CAPS is a University mental health support service that includes counseling, alcohol and other drug assistance, and psychiatric services staffed by a team of professional within Rutgers Health services to support students' efforts to succeed at Rutgers University. CAPS offers a variety of services that include: individual therapy, group therapy and workshops, crisis intervention, referral to specialists in the community and consultation and collaboration with campus partners.

Disability Services

(848) 445-6800 / Lucy Stone Hall, Suite A145, Livingston Campus, 54 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854 /

Live chat available during business hours! <https://ods.rutgers.edu/>

The Office of Disability Services provides reasonable academic accommodations for students with disabilities. Our team strives to provide the necessary tools, resources and support for individuals with disabilities to become responsible decision-makers and self-advocates in charge of their own future. We are dedicated to providing information and resources necessary for students to pursue their academic, personal and professional goals while at Rutgers. In addition, we are committed to working with administrators, faculty, staff and students to cultivate an awareness of creating an inclusive environment for all individuals.

Multifaith Council: ruoffcampus@echo.rutgers.edu for faith-related services

Help with learning: Learning Center services, for help with writing, math, study skills, time management: <https://rlc.rutgers.edu/>

General medical needs: Hurtado Health Center, 11 Bishop Place. New Brunswick, NJ

08901 <http://health.rutgers.edu/>

848-932-7402, email health@rutgers.edu

After hours RSH Advice Nurse Line

Phone: [800-890-5882](tel:800-890-5882)

This free service is provided for non-urgent medical problems that arise when our Health Centers are closed. It provides Rutgers students with access to experienced registered nurses who can answer health-related questions and help students decide the best course of action to take. The RSH Advice Nurse Line is produced by CitraHealth using standardized procedures and nationally recognized Clinical Triage Protocols. RSH reviews the calls for quality assurance and to assist students with appropriate follow-up.

Food resources:

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the Rutgers Student Food Pantry or the Dean of Students (contact below) for support. The Rutgers Student Food Pantry is dedicated to helping all Rutgers students in need of food, no questions asked. Students will be provided with groceries that typically last about one week. <http://ruoffcampus.rutgers.edu/food/> 848-932-5500. Check their website for hours and locations.

Schedule

(subject to change: pay attention to Canvas announcements!)

WEEK ONE (Jan 22): Introduction

No in-person class.

- Read the syllabus
- Answer discussion board prompt.

WEEK TWO (Jan 27 and 29): Roots of Development Challenges

Key questions for the week:

- What are the key concepts and theories associated with the study of development?
- What is globalization and how does it relate to development and environment?

Key terms to learn: Development project, gross domestic product, ecological blind spot, environmentalists' paradox, dependency and underdevelopment, commodity/supply chains

Jan 27:

Required readings:

McMichael & Weber, Ch 1: Development

Jan 29:

Required readings:

McMichael & Weber, Ch 2: Instituting the Development Project, p. 29-40.

WEEK THREE (Feb 3 and 5): Colonialism and Development

Key questions for the week:

- How does the history of colonialism explain current development?
- How did different development institutions arise and what were their aims?

Key terms to learn: Colonialism, colonial division of labor, export monoculture, plantationocene, unequal ecological exchange, Third World, economic nationalism, protectionism, international division of labor, newly industrializing countries (NICs), food aid

Feb 3: Watch film *When Banana Ruled*, 2018. Accessible online through: <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/watch/when-banana-ruled/transcript?context=channel:american-history>

Required readings:

Kodjo-Grandvaux, S. 2020. [Colonialism, The hidden cause of our environmental crisis](#). *Le Monde*, Feb 14.

Feb 5:

Required reading:

McMichael & Weber Ch 3: The Development Project

WEEK FOUR (Feb 10 and 12): : Trade versus Aid

Key questions for the week:

- How does foreign aid work and does it have an impact on the environment?
- How do trade and aid link to globalization?

Key terms to know: dependency, ODA, bilateral and multilateral aid, concessional financing, principal-agent problem, corruption, effective governance, microfinancing

Feb 10:

Required Readings:

News reports on USAID

Bachelet, S. 2006. A primer on foreign aid. Center for Global Development Working Paper.

Feb 12:

Required Readings: Choose either climate or health reading

Victor, D. (2018) Foreign Aid for Capacity Building to Address Climate Change. In *Aid Effectiveness for Environmental Sustainability*. Palgrave.

Bendavid, E. (2016) Past and future performance: PEPFAR in the landscape of foreign aid for health. *Curr HIV/AIDS* 13: 256-262

WEEK FIVE (Feb 17 and 19): Fashion as a Case Study in Globalization

Key questions for the week:

- How has globalization contributed to the phenomenon of ‘fast fashion’?
- What are the environmental impacts of the fashion industry?

Key terms to know:

Fast fashion, impulse buying, material throughput, degrowth, circular economy

Feb 17: No in-class meeting. Watch Film: *The True Cost*, 2015 (make sure you are logged in with your net ID):

<https://docuseek2-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/cart/product/1735>

Required readings:

Chua, J. 2019. [The environment and economy are paying the price for fast fashion — but there’s hope.](#) *Vox*, Sept 19.

Feb 19: No in-class meeting. Watch recorded lecture on your own.

Required readings:

Niinimäki, K., et al. 2020. "The environmental price of fast fashion." *Nature Reviews Earth & Environment* 1: 189-200.

WEEK SIX (Feb 24 and 26): Global Rules of the Game**Key questions for the week:**

- What models of economic development have characterized our growing global connections?
- How did the rise of globalization come out of the global debt crisis?

Key terms to learn: Neoliberalism, debt regime, structural adjustment, Washington Consensus, comparative advantage, free trade, WTO, biopiracy, privatization, deregulation, liberalization, externality, EKC, pollution havens/race to the bottom

Feb 24:**Required readings:**

McMichael & Weber Ch 4: Instituting the Globalization Project

Feb 26:**Required readings:**

Liverman, D. and Vilas, S. 2006. Neoliberalization and the environment in Latin America. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 31: 327-63.

Assignment: Annotation in Hypothesis on reading, due by class start time

WEEK SEVEN (Mar 3 and 5): The Global Factory and Transnational Corporations**Key questions for the week:**

- What is the global factory, and how have transnational corporations both driven and benefitted from globalization?

Key terms to know: Outsourcing and offshoring, global assembly line, export-oriented growth, global division of labor, depeasantization, remittances, informalization, verticalization, commodity chain

Mar 3:**Required reading:**

McMichael & Weber Ch 5: The Globalization Project

[Discuss consumption assignment due following week]

Mar 5:**Required reading:**

Shepard, E. et al. 2009. "Transnational production." In *A World of Difference: Encountering and Contesting Development*. Guilford Press.

WEEK EIGHT (Mar 10 and 12): Global Supply Chains

Key questions for the week:

- Why are global supply chains so complex?
- What are possible ways to include better environmental practices in supply chains?

Key terms to know:

Virtual resources, ethical supply chains, telecoupling, externalities, spillover

Mar 10:

Required readings:

Ibarrola-Rivas, M-J. et al. (2020). Telecoupling through tomato trade: what consumers do not know about the tomato on their plate. *Global Sustainability* 3, e7, 1–13.

Mar 12:

Required readings:

Kakaes, K. 2016. The All-American iPhone? *MIT Technology Review*, June
<https://www.technologyreview.com/s/601491/the-all-american-iphone/>

Cooper, D. 2018. You can't buy an ethical smartphone today. *Engadget*
<https://www.engadget.com/2018-02-06-ethical-smartphone-conscious-consumption.html>

Assignment: Consumption assignment due on Canvas before class

SPRING BREAK MAR 17 – 21

WEEK NINE (Mar 24 and 26): Rising Resource Grabs

Key question for the week:

- What are water and land grabs?
- How do plans to address climate change drive resource conflicts?

Key terms to know:

- World farm, land grabbing, commoditization of nature, fictitious commodities, resource conflict

Mar 24: Mid-term reflections quiz in-class

Mar 26:

Required readings:

Zoomers, A and G. van Westen. 2013. Reframing the land grab debate. *Global Environment* 12: 238-248.

Fecht, S. 2022. [Mining, Land Grabs, and More: When Decarbonization Conflicts With Human Rights](#). Columbia Climate School State of the Planet.

WEEK TEN (Mar 31 and Apr 2): Countermovements and crises

Key questions for the week:

- How have communities pushed back against globalization and what have been their arguments?
- How has globalization contributed to political crises and realignments?

Key terms to know:

Double movement, ecological accounting, food sovereignty, precariat, BRICs, illiberalism, multipolarity, Beijing Consensus

Mar 31:

Required readings:

McMichael & Weber, Ch 6 Global Countermovements

Apr 2:

Required readings:

McMichael & Weber, Ch 7 The Globalization Project in Crisis

WEEK ELEVEN (Apr 7 and 9): Accounting for Global Environmental Impacts

Key questions for the week:

- What are the varying ways to measure supply chain impacts?

Key terms to know:

Planetary boundaries, ecological shadows, ecological debt, consumption-based accounting and footprinting,

Apr 7:

Required reading:

DesJardins, J. 2018. Ecological footprint. In *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Business Ethics and Society*.

Laurent, A. and M. Owsianiak. 2017. Potentials and limitations of footprints for gauging environmental sustainability. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 25: 20-27.

[Discuss footprinting assignment due following week]

Apr 9:

Required readings:

Hickel, J. et al. 2022. National responsibility for ecological breakdown: a fair-shares assessment of resource use, 1970–2017. *Lancet Planetary Health* 6: e342–49

WEEK TWELVE (Apr 14 and 16): Climate Change as a Globalization Problem

Key questions for the week:

- How is climate change linked to globalization?
- What solutions could address both globalization and climate change?

Key terms to know: Anthropocene, adaptation, sustainable intensification, offsets, climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, transition towns, circular economy,

Apr 14:

Required readings:

McMichael & Weber, Ch 8 Development Climate

Assignment: Ecological footprints assignment due before class.

Apr 16:

Required reading:

McMichael Ch 9 Public and Local Green Initiatives

WEEK THIRTEEN (Apr 21 and Apr 23): Pandemics as a Globalization Problem

Key questions for the week:

- How has COVID-19 impacted globalization?
- What other pandemics may emerge in coming years?

Key terms to know: pandemic, transitions, de-globalization, localization

Apr 21:

Required Readings:

Sarkis, et al. (2020) A brave new world: Lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic for transitioning to sustainable supply and production. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 104894.

Green, A. (2024). Bird flu outbreak highlights potential risks for global food security. *Devex*, June 24.

Apr 23:

Required Readings:

Carlson, C. et al. (2025). Pathogens and planetary change. *Nature Reviews Biodiversity* 1:32-49.

Assignment:

Annotations in Hypothesis on reading due before class

WEEK FOURTEEN (Apr 28 and 30): Fair Trade as a Market-Driven Solution?

Key questions for the week:

- Is fair trade a viable solution to global economic problems?
- What steps can be taken to make agriculture more sustainable?

Key terms to know:

- Embeddedness, voluntary sustainability standards, certification, market-driven governance

Apr 28: No in-class meeting, watch recorded lecture

Required reading:

Raynolds, L. 2009. Fair trade. *International Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, 8-13

Apr 30: No in-class meeting. Watch film: *Black Gold* (1hr 17 min)

<https://www.njvid.net/show.php?pid=njcore:22917> (Choose Rutgers as licensing institution; log in with NetId)

Required reading:

Haight, C. 2011. The Problem with Fair Trade Coffee. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer 2011

WEEK FIFTEEN (May 5): Towards Sustainable Development**Key questions for the week:**

- What visions of future development are presented as alternatives to neoliberalization and globalization?

Key terms to know: degrowth, universal basic income, donut economics, subsidiarity, SDGs

May 5: Possible shift to Zoom for live class session – watch for announcements on Canvas!

Required reading:

McMichael, Ch 10, Towards Sustainable Development

Final exam May 14- likely in person in class.