New York University  
Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service  

Development Assistance, Accountability and Aid Effectiveness

PADM-GP 2204  
Tuesdays, 6:45-8:25 p.m.  

Instructors

John Gershman  
Puck Building 3018  
Tel: (212) 992-9888  
doctor@nyu.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 4:15-6:15 PM & by appointment

Paul Smoke  
Puck Building, 3052  
Tel: (212) 998-7497  
paul.smoke@nyu.edu  
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 4:00-6:00 PM & by appointment

Description

International development assistance has evolved considerably in the post WWII period. Although some of the initial development agencies are still operating and remain influential, the way they function has evolved and important new players have entered the field. This course provides an overview of contemporary debates in international development assistance with a detailed review of the major actors—multilateral, bilateral, and nongovernmental. The course explores the political economy of donor-client country relationships, the key accountability challenges that have emerged as aid has evolved, and the link between accountability and aid effectiveness. Particular emphasis is given to recent development assistance approaches and mechanism that have attempted to bridge the accountability-effectiveness divide. The course closes with consideration of the likely and possible future of development assistance.

Goals

The main goals of the course are:

1) To familiarize students with the evolution and goals of international development assistance;
2) To provide students with an overview of the main actors involved in providing development assistance;
3) To introduce students to the political economy dynamics surrounding development assistance, including the donor-client and donor-donor relationships.
4) To familiarize students with issues, proposals and debates on improving aid accountability and effectiveness, and,
5) To help students to think constructively about the future of development assistance.
Prerequisites

In order to take the course, students are required to have previously taken

1) Introduction to Public Policy (formerly P11.1022, now CORE-GP 1022) or History and Theory of Urban Planning (formerly P11.2660, now URPL-GP 2660) or equivalent; and

Those who do not have these prerequisites can only enroll in the course with the permission of the instructors. It would also be helpful if students have taken Institutions, Governance and International Development (formerly P11.2214, now PADM-GP 2101) and a prior course in the politics/sociology/economics/management of development, but these are not required.

Format

The class will meet weekly. The format will blend lecture (with occasional guest speakers) and discussion. Class participation is encouraged and expected. The last part of the course will involve student research and presentations on a range of case studies of development assistance.

Readings

There is one required book for the course (available from the NYU bookstore):


There is also one recommended book for the course:


Most other readings are provided on the Blackboard course site or can be downloaded from websites provided in the reading list. The attached reading list also provides a number of recommended optional readings for those who wish to delve further into the subject matter. Guidance about the required and recommended readings will be given regularly.

Course Requirements

The course has four requirements:

1) Class Participation (20%)

The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants. This will occur in two ways:
Weekly Participation (10%): Participation begins with effective reading and listening. Class participants are expected to read and discuss the readings on a weekly basis. That means coming prepared to engage the class, with questions and/or comments with respect to the reading. You will be expected to have completed all the required readings before class to the point where you can be called on to critique or discuss any reading.

Précis/Response Papers: (10%) Each week 3-4 people will take responsibility for preparing responses to one or more readings. This includes writing a 3-5 page précis of the readings or a subset of them that a) outlines and compares key argument(s), b) indicates what you found (or did not find) provocative and interesting, and c) poses 3-4 questions for class discussion.

2) Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm exam (take-home) will test students on their basic knowledge of the major development actors and will be administered near the end of Part II of the syllabus—it will be distributed prior to the class meeting on October 18 so that you can ask questions about it in class, and it will be due on Friday, October 21. Part of the midterm exam will involve the analysis of one of the two case studies that we will discuss in class on October 25.

3) Policy Memo (20%)

Each student will prepare a 4-5 page critical policy memo on one aspect of the political economy of aid and the aid accountability-effectiveness gap, e.g., one of the newer aid allocation/disbursement modalities, approaches to evaluation of aid effectiveness, or mechanisms for aid harmonization/coordination (Part III of the syllabus).

4) Case Study (35%)

The main assignment will require students working in small teams to do a detailed case that analyzes the history and dynamics of one of the following:

- The relationship between one development partner (multilateral, bilateral, NGO, etc.) and one recipient country; What is the nature of current relationship? How did it evolve and why? What are its implications for aid effectiveness? Where might it go in the future?

- Development assistance in a particular area (public sector reform or an aspect thereof), a service sector (education, health, infrastructure, etc.), a dimension of governance (civil society empowerment, justice, etc.) What is the nature of the assistance and how has it evolved? Which factors allowed change? How successful were the efforts and why?

- Efforts to reform a particular development partner—or one of it specific departments or programs; Which actors animated the reform efforts (insiders, outsiders, recipients, a mix)? How successful have they been? How sustainable? What were the political, policy, and/or management dimensions of change?

More details on the assignments will be provided in advance of when each is due.
Grading Policy

There is no curve in this course. Everyone may receive an A or everyone may receive an F. This course will abide by the Wagner School’s general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity.

Incomplete Grades: http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/pol5.html
Academic Honesty: http://www.nyu.edu/wagner/current/pol3.html

Late Policy

Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This policy is adopted out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

Useful Websites

Some of our readings are drawn from the many development assistance related websites. Many of these regularly update information and provide commentary and blogs. Some of the ones we recommend looking at include the following:

Aid Data: http://blog.aiddata.org/
Bank Information Center: http://www.bicusa.org
Bretton Woods Project: http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/
Center for Global Development: http://www.cgdev.org/
Devex: http://www.devex.com/en
Government Accountability Project (International Reform Section): http://www.whistleblower.org/program-areas/international-reform
International Aid Transparency Initiative: http://www.aidtransparency.net
International Initiative for Impact Evaluation: http://www.3ieimpact.org/
Managing for Development Results: http://www.mfdr.org/
Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network: http://www.mfan.org
OECD Development Cooperation Directorate: http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html
Overseas Development Institute: http://www.odi.org.uk/
Publish What You Fund: http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org
The Reality of Aid: http://www.realityofaid.org/

Additional links to specific development agencies and other development assistance actors are provided in the reading list.
Teaching Assistants

There are two people assisting us with the course:

Gundula Loffler (gundula.loffler@nyu.edu) and Crossley Pinkstaff (crossleypinkstaff@nyu.edu).
PADM-GP 2104:
Development Assistance, Accountability and Aid Effectiveness
Weekly Schedule Fall 2011

**PART I:** INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Sept. 6: Overview of Contemporary Debates on Foreign Aid in Historical Perspective

Sept. 13: Aid Modalities: Programs, Budget Support, Sector Approaches, Cash on Delivery

**PART II:** MAIN ACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FIELD

Sept. 20: Overview and Multilateral Agencies I: IMF, World Bank, Regional Banks

Sept. 27: Multilateral Agencies II: The UN System and European Union

Oct. 4: Bilateral Development Agencies and Emerging Donor Countries

Oct. 11: NO CLASS COLUMBUS DAY HOLIDAY

Oct. 18: NGOs, Foundations and Peer to Peer (**Midterm Exam distributed; due 10/21**)

Oct. 25: A View from Within: Panel Discussion with Aid Agency Representatives

**PART III:** THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE: OVERCOMING THE ACCOUNTABILITY-EFFECTIVENESS GAP

Nov. 1: The Politics of Accountability and Aid Effectiveness: Historical Trajectories And Lessons (**Policy Memo Guidelines distributed**)  

Nov. 8: Harmonization, Coordination, Reporting and Performance: The Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda and Beyond

Nov. 15: Unpacking the Donor-Recipient Relationship: Thematic Area, Linkages & Cases

Nov. 22: Reforming Development Assistance: Options & Possibilities (**Policy Memo due**) 

**PART IV:** SYNTHESIS AND LOOKING FORWARD

Nov. 29: Case Presentations

Dec. 6: Case Presentations

Dec. 13: Looking to the Future: An Open Discussion

Dec. 15: **Final case studies due**
PART I: Introduction and Overview: Theory and Practice of Development Assistance  
(September 6-13)

A. Overview of Contemporary Debates on Foreign Aid in Historical Perspective  
(September 6)

Required


Center for Global Development. *Commitment to Development Index*. (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2010).


Recommended


**B. Aid Modalities & Trends: Programs, Budget Support, Cash on Delivery (September 13)**

*Required*


**Recommended**


**PART II: Main Actors in the Development Assistance Field (September 20-October 25)**
A. Overview and Multilateral Development Agencies I: IMF, World Bank, Regional Development Banks (September 20)

All of the major international finance institutions have websites. The following can be consulted for an overview of each agency:

International Monetary Fund: http://www.imf.org/
World Bank: http://www.worldbank.org/
Asian Development Bank: http://www.adb.org/
Caribbean Development Bank: http://www.cariban.org
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: http://www.ebrd.com/
Inter-American Development Bank: http://www.iadb.org/en/
Islamic Development Bank: http://www.isdb.org/

Required


Recommended


Center for Global Development. *Rescuing the World Bank* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2006); full volume at: [http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/9957](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/9957)


**B. Multilateral Development Agencies II: UN System, the European Union (September 27)**

The United Nations and the European Commission (policy/administrative arm of the European Union)’s Development and Cooperation Directorate General (EuropeAid) each have a main website with links to various affiliated agencies and special initiatives (e.g. the Millennium Development Goals):

EuropeAid: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/index_en.htm)

**Required**


**Recommended**


**C. Bilateral Development Agencies and Emerging Donor Countries (October 4)**

Most bilateral development agencies have useful websites. A few key agencies include the following:

Department for International Development (DFID): [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)
Required

Steve Radelet, *Challenging Foreign Aid: A Policymaker's Guide to the Millennium Challenge Account* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, 2003), Chapters 1 (pp. 1-18) and 10 (pp. 165-174); full volume available from [http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2920](http://www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/2920)


Recommended


D. NGOs, Foundations, and Peer-to-Peer Assistance (October 18)

Many nongovernmental actors involved in development assistance have websites. A number of major ones include the following:

Gates Foundation: http://www.gatesfoundation.org
Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria: http://www.theglobalfund.org
Interaction: http://www.interaction.org
Bond: http://www.bond.org.uk
Ashoka Foundation: http://www.ashoka.org

Required


Recommended


E. A View From Within: Panel Discussion Representatives of Aid Actors (October 25)

Readings for the panel discussion to be determined with invited panelists and will be announced in advance of the class.

PART III: The Political Economy of Development Assistance (November 1-24)

A. The Politics of Accountability and Aid Effectiveness: Historical Trajectories and Lessons (November 1)

Required


Jonathan Fox and David Brown, eds. The Struggle for Accountability. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998). (Selections to be provided)


Recommended


**B. Harmonization, Coordination Reporting and Performance: The Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda and Beyond (November 8)**

**Required**


**Recommended**


Alison Evans and David Booth. DAC Evaluation Network: Follow-Up to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness -- Review of Literature. (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2006).


C. Unpacking the Donor-Recipient Relationship: Thematic Area (Decentralization and Local Governance), Linkages and Selected Country Cases (November 15)

Required


Recommended


D. Reforming Development Assistance: Options and Possibilities

Required


Recommended


**PART IV: Synthesis and Looking Forward (November 29-December 13)**

**A. Case Presentations and Wrap Up (November 29 and December 6)**

Materials on student team cases to be distributed prior to classes

**B. Looking to the Future: An Open Discussion (December 13)**

Discussion based on student generated questions—no required readings. Information on submission of questions and issues will be provided in advance of the final class.