

FRESHMAN SEMINAR PROPOSAL

Each year, hundreds of thousands of American youth volunteer services in developing countries through the Peace Corps and Operations Crossroads or go on study abroad programs. However, many of them often experience cultural shock upon landing there because they were not trained to expect the differing conditions. This freshman seminar will address this situation by exposing students to conditions in developing countries. In particular, it will focus on problems of development aid and how communication can enhance poverty reduction.

Students will have the opportunity to identify and debate development issues, research and write position papers on these issues, and present these papers to the class. A central argument of the course is that development problems are many and varied and will require a holistic approach, such as through community-driven development whereby all development partners—local, governmental, non-governmental, multilateral and bilateral aid organizations are required to work together for common cause. Communication is necessary for facilitating coordination across partners; mobilizing, organizing and training local people for participatory development; and building the capacities of local officials to manage development programs. Communication becomes the grease that makes the development wheel turns.

Robert Agunga is Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Agricultural Communication Program, Department of Human & Community Resource Development. He has joint appointments with the School of Communication and the Department of African and African-American Studies. He has published extensively on communication for development, including a textbook, *Developing the Third World: A Communication Approach* and an invited article in *Harvard International Review*. He is a consultant to several international development assistance organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Bank. Dr. Agunga has worked in agricultural and rural development projects in many countries in Africa, including Ghana, Ethiopia, Sudan, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe and brings first-hand experience to his students.

The strength of the course is the opportunity for active student participation and sharing of knowledge. Assignments will include a set of readings, research paper and class presentation. A letter grade will be administered. This is an evening class, meeting once a week.

AGR COMM 137
Communication and poverty reduction in the developing world
 Agricultural Communication

Course Details

Instructor: Robert Agunga

Quarter: Winter

Day: Tuesday, Time: 5 - 7 p. m.

Instructor Contact

Office: 203AA

Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Description

This course is designed to generate awareness of and interest in international development, particularly, on the role of communication in poverty reduction and sustainable development. Many often well-intentioned development aid programs fail due largely to the inability of project managers to address the human dimension in development—local participation, integration and capacity building. There is a growing belief that communication strategists are needed to help deal with the human dimension. Therefore, this course is an orientation to the emerging academy and profession of communication for development.

Format

This course is designed to elicit active student participation. There are weekly reading assignments to prepare students for class discussion. The class will meet for 2 hours once a week. Class sessions will comprise of discussions, video/slide shows, and presentations.

Academic Accommodations

Any student who needs accommodation based on a disability, should contact the instructor as soon as possible. The instructor will rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in determining the nature of accommodation to be provided. If the student has not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, s/he is encouraged to do so.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct of any kind will not be tolerated or permitted. If students have questions about what activities constitute academic misconduct they should consult Faculty Rule 3335-23-04. The procedures to be followed should suspected academic misconduct occur is outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-23-05.

Context

This is designed as an introductory course in Third World development. It is especially tailored to freshmen, however, students of senior ranks will find it informative as well. The course begins with a description of socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions in developing countries, an analysis of the meaning and problems of development; the role of development aid and the need for communication professionals in poverty reduction programs. Students are encouraged to select topics of interest to them and to research, write and present position papers on these topics to the class.

Textbook

Agunga, R. (1997). *Developing the Third World: A Communication Approach*. New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Requirements

The following are expected of all students in the course:

- a. Attendance is mandatory. Please contact the instructor if you will be late or absent.
- b. Students will come to class prepared, work diligently, and respect others' views.
- c. Participation in discussion and final presentations is essential.
- d. All assignments must meet established deadlines.

Project deliverables

Authoring of a 4 - 6 page paper on a subject, of interest to the student, such as the role of communication in curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS; strategies for increasing food production or a critical analysis of development aid. The goal is to get students engaged in a process of self-discovery. The thrust is a critical analysis of development issues, through a review of current literature.

Grading

The grading scale will be applied.

A = 95+	B- = 80-82	D+ = 67-69
A- = 90-94	C+ = 77-79	D = 63-66
B+ = 86-89	C = 73-76	E < 63
B = 83-85	C- = 70-72	

Assignments for the grade:

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|---------------------------------------|------|
| a. Research paper | 60 % |
| b. Paper presentation | 20 % |
| c. Class attendance and participation | 20 % |

Late assignments will receive a failing or lowered grade. Extra credit or make-up projects will not be available.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Course Overview; Worlds of development, Chapter 2.

Week 2: The meaning of development; Is development possible? Chapter 1.

Week 3: Problems of development, Chapter 3.

Week 4: Development aid in historical perspective, Chapter 5.

Week 5: Theories of development, Chapter 6.

Week 6: The blame assignment syndrome, Chapter 4.

Week 7: Development from a systems perspective, Chapters 7 & 8.

Week 8: Communication for development, Chapters 9 & 10.

Week 9: Paper presentations.

Week 10: Paper presentations (contd.) & course evaluation.