“If I knew someone was coming over with the express intention of doing good, I would flee”
(Henry David Thoreau)

Substance of the Course

International emergency aid often takes place in violent contexts. Beyond the claim that humanitarian aid is and should be neutral, what are exactly the relationships between aid, politics, and violence? What are the political and military impacts of humanitarian and development assistance? Aid is aimed at healing sufferings, but it can also fuel violence or be an instrument of war. Should humanitarian aid promote the imperatives of conflict resolution and democratization? If so, does it compromise the humanitarian ideals? Does aid contribute to perpetuating subtle forms of domination?

This colloquium adopts a critical, social science approach to humanitarian and development assistance (it is not a class on how to design and implement aid programs, but rather a class on how to think about aid). It focuses on aid in Africa as background against which to understand the political implications of aid in complex emergency situations. It has a majority African focus, but it includes some non-African cases for comparative purposes, to elucidate the important theories on the subject. Readings include both highly theoretical works and case studies. Guest speakers will be invited for several class sessions, to exchange with students and explain how the debates studied in class play out in the “real” world.

Throughout the course, the students will develop their knowledge of international relations theory. They will acquire a broad understanding of the concepts, theoretical traditions, and debates in the study of development and humanitarian aid. The course will also introduce students to new issues in the field, such as the securitization of emergency aid and the interplay between aid and micro-local politics. Furthermore, by the end of the semester, the students should have an in-depth understanding of specific cases, notably the Sudan, Rwanda, and the D.R. Congo.

Class discussions and the written assignments will help students develop their research and analysis skills as well as their ability to understand, criticize, and create scholarly arguments. In addition, this class puts a lot of emphasis on developing students’ leadership and oral presentation skills. We will do so through various activities in the classroom (class discussions, oral presentations, role play, student-led discussions, and interactions with guest speakers) and outside of the classroom (through two workshops with Barnard Speaking Fellows, the first on oral presentations and third on how to lead a meeting, and the second on negotiations).

Grading and Requirements

1. Readings: Assignments are on the attached list.
   The books by James Scott, Roxanne Dotty, James Ferguson, and Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore, Peter Uvin, John Pendregast, Marie Anderson,
Alex De Waal, Marc Duffield, and Martha Finnemore are available at Columbia University Bookstore. In addition, all these books are on reserve at the library, under course number POLS BC 3810.

2. Class participation (20% of the final grade). The class participation grade will be based on 1- participation in the discussion during each session; 2- brief oral presentations on topics assigned by the instructor; 3- the oral presentation and discussion during week 12 (see second-to-last page of this syllabus), and 4- attendance to the workshops led by the Speaking Fellows.

3. Three reviews of the readings, maximum two pages single-spaced (40% of the final grade). The reviews should briefly summarize the argument, critically assess it, and raise questions for class discussion. They should be submitted by Monday, noon, through two means: 1- putting a hard copy in the folder on my door, and 2- posting them on the class website. No need to sign up or give me advance notice, just submit reviews for three different sessions of your own choosing.

4. A research paper (40% of the final grade), about 25-30 pages double space. Ancillary material due throughout the term: paper topic due on week 3 (5% of the final grade); revised paper topic and bibliography due on week 6 (5% of the final grade); 1-page outline due on week 9 (5% of the final grade); final paper due on week 13, i.e. December 9, the last day of class (25% of the final grade). The research paper should build on the material studied in class. It should apply the theories and concepts studied to specific debates or cases of interest to the students.

Students should come to see me during office hours on week 3, 4, or 5 to discuss their paper topic (this is a mandatory meeting). Students are also strongly encouraged to come and see me during office hours on week 8, 9, or 10 to discuss their progress and questions (this is not a mandatory meeting but you are very strongly encouraged to come). Students are of course welcome to come during all my office hours during the rest of the semester.

Here are a couple of very useful websites, full of advice for research and writing:
- [http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html](http://www.nd.edu/~dlindley/handouts/handoutlinks.html) (plenty of handouts on everything you need: how to make a theoretically informed argument, core theories and concepts used in IR, etc)
- [http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm](http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/handouts/index.cfm) (you can find tons of useful tips on research and writing)
- [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl) (the sections on “The Writing Process”, “General Academic Writing”, “Research and Citations”, and “Grammar and Mechanics” are especially helpful).

No late review will be accepted. For the research paper & ancillary material, late turn-ins will be significantly penalized (one-third of a letter grade per day after the deadline) unless you contact me beforehand to request an extension. Extensions will be given only in the case of documented illness, family emergency, or other crisis situation (please bring any form of documentation available).

Please inform me beforehand if you expect to miss particular class meetings because of religious holiday that forbids work, illness, or family emergency. Please plan to submit an additional review for each session you miss. This extra review will make up for missed participation and it will count towards your participation grade.

**Barnard Honor Code**: Students affirm that all work turned in is their own, and that they have fully and accurately cited every written source, including web-based sources, used in their writing. Students that do not comply with the Honor Code will face appropriate sanctions.

Here are some very helpful websites for all your questions on intellectual property, citing and documenting sources, avoiding disasters, etc (and of course don’t ever hesitate to ask me if you have any doubt):
- [http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess](http://www.library.ucla.edu/bruinsuccess) (the tutorial and fun and very useful)
- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01 (another very helpful site on Avoiding plagiarism)
- http://www.dartmouth.edu/~sources (very detailed information about how and why to cite sources)

Use of laptops in the classroom: The use of laptops in the classroom is allowed only to take notes on the class lectures and discussions. Students are forbidden to use a laptop in the classroom to browse the internet or work on something different from the material discussed in class. Students who want to use a computer should give me a written document promising to never use their laptop in class for something else than taking notes on class lectures / discussion. Cheaters will be severely penalized.

Students with disabilities: Students with disabilities who will be taking this course and may need disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. Disabled students who need test or classroom accommodations must be registered in advance with the Office of Disabilities Services (ODS) in 105 Hewitt.

Pre-requisite: POLS V 1601 (International Politics) or equivalent. Many readings are difficult and/or quite theoretical, so you need to have some background in International Relations theories – or be ready to put in a lot of extra work – if you wish to take this class.
**Week 1 (September 9) – Introduction**

Overview of the class  
Overview of the research methodology for the final paper.

**Aid and Politics**

**Week 2 (September 16) – State-led development**


*Guest Speaker: Jenna Freedman, Coordinator of Reference Services and Zine Librarian at Barnard College Library, on how to find good bibliographic resources on aid in Africa.*

**Recommended**


Porteous, Obie C. 2009. *In Search of Humanity: Blogs of an International Aid Worker.* VirtualBookWorm Publishing.


**Week 3 (September 23) – Humanitarianism in perspective**


*Paper topic due. Maximum length: 150 words.*

**Recommended**


**Week 4 (September 30) – Development as the Negation of Politics**


**Guest speaker: Sergio Vieira, Division of Social Policy and Development, United Nations, on development aid to Africa.**

*Reminder: don’t forget to come and see me during my office hours to discuss your paper topics!*

**Recommended**


**Week 5 (October 7) – Pathologies of international and non-governmental organizations**


**Recommended**


Corinna Kreidler, “Corruption as an internal problem for emergency operations”: Jul 06 . JHA, [http://jha.ac/articles/a190.pdf](http://jha.ac/articles/a190.pdf)


**Aid and Violence: Dilemmas of Aid in Conflict Areas**

**Week 6 (October 14) - Development and Violence**

*Documentary screening: Heart of the Congo*

Revised paper topic and bibliography due. Your statement of topic should still be maximum 150 words. Your bibliography should include at least 10 items in addition to any articles or books from our syllabus that you will be using. After providing the reference for each item, add one sentence (no more) to describe how you will use each source.

**Recommended**


Baron, Patrick; Diprose, Rachael; and Woolcock, Michael. *Local Conflict and Development Projects in Indonesia: part of the problem or part of the solution?* World Bank working paper, 2007.


**Week 7 (October 21) – Humanitarian Aid as an Instrument of War**


*Reminder: plan to come and see me during office hours to discuss the progress on your final paper.*

**Recommended**


**Week 8 (October 28) – Case Study: Famine in Africa**


*Guest Speaker: Karine Milhorgne, Desk Officer for Action Against Hunger / Action Contre la Faim, on manipulation of aid*

**Recommended**


**Aid and Peace: Coherence and “Humanitarian” Interventions**

**Week 9 (November 4) - The New Humanitarianism and Securitization of Humanitarian Aid**


*Paper abstract and outline due. Your paper abstract should be maximum 250 words. Your outline should be no longer than one page. Don’t forget to write your research question at the top of the document.*

**Recommended**


Special issue of Disasters on politics and humanitarian aid (December 2001 - Vol. 25 Issue 4)


Week 10 (November 11) - Humanitarian Interventions and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P): General Issues


*Guest Speaker: Catherine Dumait-Harper, former MSF representative to the United Nations, on diplomacy and humanitarian interventions.*

Recommended


Check out the following websites
- [http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/about.html](http://www.globalcentrer2p.org/about.html)
- [http://www.stimson.org/fopo/?SN=FP20040831715](http://www.stimson.org/fopo/?SN=FP20040831715)
- [http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4521](http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=4521) (section 7 has a great bibliography on R2P)

**Week 11 (November 18) – Humanitarian Interventions and R2P: Role Play on Congo**

Background reading for role play:


*Assignment in preparation for the role-play: prepare a 1-page memo on your actor’s position during the negotiations (bullet points are fine).*

**Recommended**


Week 12 (November 25) – Brainstorming on Students’ Research Papers

Each student will post his/her draft paper on the class website by Saturday, November 21, noon.

Each student will be responsible for preparing a constructive criticism of one of his/her colleagues’ papers, and present his/her feedback orally during the class.

We will devote about 10 minutes to each student’s paper. Each participant will do a 3-5 minutes presentation of his / her research paper (topic, puzzle, main argument), which will be followed by a 3-5 minute presentation by a discussant and (provided there is enough time) by suggestions from the other class members.

Although you are required to read only your peer partner’s paper, you are encouraged to read as many papers as possible (you will learn a lot by reading your colleague’s papers, and it will make this class session much more interesting both for you and for your colleague)

Week 13 (December 2) – Humanitarian Interventions and R2P: Case Study on Darfur


Guest speaker: Steve Crawshaw, UN Advocacy Director for Human Rights Watch, on the international intervention in Darfur.

Recommended readings


Reports on the Save Darfur, Enough, and International Crisis Group’s websites


Alex J. Bellamy, “Responsibility to Protect or Trojan Horse? The Crisis in Darfur and Humanitarian Intervention after Iraq,” Ethics and International Affairs 19, no. 2 (2005): 31-53.


**Concluding thoughts**

**Week 14 (December 9) – Conclusion**

Group work on the main contributions of the class.

*Depending on the interests of the students, the class may have a guest speaker this day: Philippe Rosen, Human Resources Director, Action Against Hunger, on “Careers in Development and Humanitarian Aid.”*

*Final papers due!*