UNICUSANO
ROME

Code: GEOG-01/B **Credits: 9**
Subject: Geography of Development and Strategies for Cooperation
Main language of instruction: Italian
Other language of instruction: English

Teaching Staff

Head instructor
Prof. Daniele Paragano - daniele.paragano@unicusano.it

Prerequisites
The course in Geography of Development has no prerequisite requirements.

Objectives
he course in Geography of Development aims to achieve the following learning objectives:

1. To provide a methodological framework for geographical analysis contextualized to the theme of development.
2. To analyze the evolution of the concept of development over time.
3. To highlight key aspects of the development debate, with particular attention to its geographical dimension.
4. To examine the principal actors in development cooperation and their roles in light of the major transformations in the concept of development itself.
5. To critically analyze development discourse.
6. To contextualize development discourse within specific thematic domains.

Competencies:
At the end of the course, students will have acquired a set of competences and critical sensitivities enabling them to understand the principal issues related to development from a geographical perspective. Specifically:
Knowledge and understanding
By the end of the course, students will have expanded their knowledge base in relation to development. In addition to acquiring familiarity with key elements and concepts directly addressed in the course, they will be able to critically analyze the different articulations of the concept of development and its possible implications for many contemporary socio-economic dynamics.
Application of knowledge

The knowledge acquired during the course in Geography of Development may be applied in all contexts in which development contributes to policy-making processes, such as development cooperation. Although the course is primarily theoretical in nature, students will also be able to construct an applied dimension of their learning, including through participation in e-tivities.

Ability to draw conclusions

The course aims, among other objectives, to analyze the evolution of the concept of development. This will enable students to reflect critically on the motivations for, and implications of, such transformations. This analytical approach will foster students' ability to draw conclusions following a process of critical examination of the issues addressed. Such skills may subsequently be applied across the various domains in which students focus their interests.

Communication skills

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to present the topics analyzed in a clear and comprehensive manner, employing appropriate terminology. Students who have actively participated in the course will therefore be able to engage effectively in discussions—including with subject-matter experts—on issues that, in different ways, contribute to the construction of the concept of development.

Learning skills

The course seeks to move beyond a purely descriptive or rote-based understanding of the topics addressed, aiming instead to develop students' critical thinking with respect to each area of study. This approach, extending beyond the specific subjects covered, will enable students to acquire learning and study skills that can be effectively applied both in subsequent disciplinary areas within their degree programme and beyond the completion of their studies.

Syllabus

The course consists, overall, of 11 teaching modules, organized into three parts, in addition to an introductory module. Specifically, the individual modules address the following topics:

Part I – Introductory Elements of Geographical Thought

Module I – Lecture 1 – Introduction to the concept of development and early theories (6 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 5 hours).
This module aims to introduce students to the study of development, contextualizing the scientific and institutional landscape within which it originated. Particular attention is devoted to early theories and to the approach—dominated by the economic dimension—within which they emerged.

Module I – Lecture 2 – The emergence of the Third World and sustainable development (7 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 15 hours).
Building on the previous module, this unit focuses on the principal aspects that characterized the debate on development during the 1960s. The analysis of the concept of the "Third World," as a development beyond the outcomes of the Bandung Conference (1955), leads to an examination of the discursive dimension within the concept of development. At the same time, it enables an analysis of how the spatialization of development has led (and continues to lead) to limitations in its understanding. Similarly, the module examines how the emergence of the sustainability debate—only apparently distinct from development—has reshaped its orientations and produced multiple interpretations, consistent with the adopted perspective.

Module I – Lecture 3 – The neoliberal turn, export orientation, and the debt crisis (6 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 15 hours).
This module addresses issues related to the opening of international markets following a paradigm shift in international relations. In line with the increasingly widespread neoliberal approach, countries (including developing ones) have shown a growing orientation toward international trade. The module analyzes the theoretical processes that led to the diffusion of this model of interaction, its theoretical foundations, and its criticalities.

Module I – Lecture 4 – Globalization, participatory approaches, and development as freedom (11 theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 30 hours).
This module examines the principal approaches to development that characterized the 1980s and 1990s. Globalization, after being contextualized within the course, is analyzed in terms of its influence both on relations among countries and geographical areas, and on the debate surrounding the concept of development and its conceptualizations. Concurrently, there has been a rise in approaches that place the individual at the center, providing development with a more social perspective. Among these, particular attention is devoted to participatory approaches and to the shift in perspective derived from the work of Amartya Sen. Beyond their specific features, these approaches offer an opportunity for a re-interpretation of the very idea of development.

Module I – Lecture 5 – Critical geography and post-development (5 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 25 hours).
This module begins with an analysis of the critical approach which, in line with developments in other social sciences, has characterized geographical debate in

recent years. This perspective is then applied to the theme of development, highlighting how it has led many scholars to reinterpret the entire development debate, culminating in a comprehensive reconceptualization.

Module I – Lecture 6 – Measuring development and key indices (7 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 25 hours).
This module examines the various indices that have been used over time to measure development. Alongside their technical analysis, attention is devoted to the connections between these indices and the underlying conceptions of development they represent. This approach makes it possible to trace the evolution of the concept of development through these indices, also highlighting how each index produces a different spatial representation of development.

Module II – Lecture 1 – Demographic dynamics and development (5 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 20 hours).
The demographic dimension constitutes one of the case studies analyzed in light of the theories addressed in the earlier parts of the course. After a general overview of global demographic trends—examining the main characteristics of populations at different scales—the demographic issue is considered in terms of development, analyzing how various theories have engaged with this theme and offered different interpretations.

Module II – Lecture 2 – Population movements (4 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 20 hours).
Migration, as a principal component of population movements, represents a constant feature of social dynamics and a recurring object of study. In this module, the topic is addressed by moving beyond a purely descriptive and normative approach, in order to reflect on the processes that generate and shape migration. As with the other lectures in the second module, the theme is not analyzed in isolation; rather, its relationships with development are explored, highlighting in particular how different approaches to development provide distinct interpretative frameworks and perspectives on the phenomenon.

Module II – Lecture 3 – Cities, urbanization, and urban marginality (4 recorded theoretical lectures, for a total workload of approximately 25 hours).
Cities increasingly represent one of the central elements of geographical debate. Within them, many of the contradictions and dynamics observable at different scales are manifested. This aspect is particularly relevant in relation to development, as urban spaces allow for the reinterpretation of many processes occurring at the global scale; moreover, the sharing of space intensifies many of the contradictions

and distinctive features of development discourse. Particular attention is also devoted to urban marginality, its formation, and its spatial distribution, in light of the different articulations of the concept of development.

Evaluation system and criteria

The examination will be conducted in accordance with the procedures established by the University and is intended to assess the knowledge acquired, in line with the course's learning objectives. As part of the evaluation process, consideration will be given to students' participation in online activities, the successful completion of self-assessment tests, and engagement in e-tivities (maximum of 4 points). The examination will be conducted orally. The achievement of the course's learning objectives will be verified through a series of questions covering the various topics included in the syllabus. In particular, during the oral examination, students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the course content and of the main economic and political issues addressed, situating them within the current geographical debate. At the same time, also through commentary and further elaboration on the content developed in the e-tivities, students must demonstrate that they have acquired a significant capacity for geographical analysis. Particular attention will be paid to the ability to argue and connect the different topics of the course, as well as to the correct use of terminology.

Bibliography and resources

1. *Materials to consult:*

The teaching materials prepared by the instructor and available on the Unicusano platform consist of video lectures in SCORM format, slides, and downloadable texts. When used in their entirety, these materials are fully adequate for thorough preparation for the examination. At the end of each module, a brief supplementary bibliography is also provided, which students may use to explore specific parts of the syllabus in greater depth.

For students taking the examination for a number of ECTS credits exceeding 9 (single courses), it is necessary to contact the instructor no later than the examination registration deadline in order to agree on the required additional components.

2. *Recommended bibliography:*

To improve the study of the modules, students can refers to the following bibliography. Anyway, is warmly suggested to contact the teaching staff to define the best study programme.

Potter R., Conway, D. Development, in Agnew J. A., Livingstone D.N. (eds), The SAGE Handbook of Geographical Knowledge, SAGE, 2011;

Etienne N., Binns T., Lynch K. (eds), The Routledge Handbook of African Development, Routledge, 2017;
Etienne N., Binns T., Elliot J.A., Potter R., Smith D.W., (eds), Geographies of Development: an Introduction to Development studies 4th edition, Routledge, 2017;