

Global Development Graduate Capstone



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GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT CAPSTONE

INTA 8803 - MB

Spring 2024

Instructor: Michael L. Best

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Timing: Fridays 11:00am – 1:45pm

Location: CODA E1413

About the Course

Students will synthesize across their previous course (and for many, real world) experiences with global development and apply this knowledge within a team project. The team project will address multidisciplinary problems that fall within the scope of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These might involve novel approaches towards sustainability, globalization, food security, infrastructure, capacity building, health, water, sanitation, hygiene, ecosystem resilience, services, capacity building, and urbanization. Teams will develop solutions in response to problems identified in sustainable global development policy. All solutions must be suitable, sustainable, and potentially scale-able. This experience will allow the students to experience engagement in context.

We will study in depth cases that have examined particular domains of global development, trying to analyze how they evolved, paying special attention to their successes and failures. Students will leave the course with a sensitivity to understanding the needs of underserved and under-represented individuals and communities in contexts different from their own, and an enhanced ability to do something with it.

Grading

Grading policies are non-negotiable. To get an A, students must demonstrate *excellent* understanding of subject material and actively contribute to a stimulating classroom environment. This means that they must show up to all class meetings, participate in class discussions, not give in to phone/laptop distractions, think critically in their assignments, and produce high quality work. Students should expect a B if they complete all requirements for assignments reasonably well, and show some aptitude (but not mastery) of the material. They can expect a C if they fail to complete requirements for assignments, e.g., if they 'forget' to submit their final project report.

Grades will be computed based upon the following set of deliverables:

Reflections (15%) will draw on readings we will do as a class. They will be roughly 500 words long. Each reflection should demonstrate mastery of the readings while also linking to some experience outside of the reading, for instance from a previous course or activity. Each reflection will be assigned a grade out of three points: 1 point for clarity, 1 point for depth and sophistication shown around the readings, and 1 point for depth and sophistication shown to some sort of external experience.

Presentations (20%) will involve individual or small groups of students presenting on issues related to their group project. Presentation plans may be dynamic and responsive to the needs of the project as it evolves throughout the term; in other words, the presentation plan may not have been fully developed on the first day of class. A single grade will be applied uniformly to all students who form a group. Each presentation will be graded out of four points: 1 point for quality and clarity of the presentation itself, 2 points for the sophistication and usefulness of the material (remember presentations will focus on specific research needs of your project), and 1 point for your references and bibliography. A written bibliography, including readings highlighted for the entire class to undertake, will be a required submission for most presentations.

The Final Project (50%) is designed to allow each student group to demonstrate their ability to work as an effective scholar-practitioner in global development. The final project is the outcome of an entire term working on a real-world problem as a coherent and effective group. The project deliverables will be as below:

: Checkpoint 1: Project Plan (10%)

After an initial period of group formation and project development and refinement, each project group will submit a robust project plan. The plan is likely to be at least 5 pages and will include a detailed problem statement, a description of any external clients or partners, a clear description of the actions and activities to be undertaken for the rest of the term ending in the final project deliverable, and a detailed timeline for these activities. This will be scored on 3 points, 1 for clarity of material and 2 points for the thoughtfulness, reasonableness, depth, achievability, and overall quality of the project plan.

: Checkpoint 2: Initial Presentation (10%)

This is a chance to dry-run your ideas, ask questions, identify problems. You will present in front of a special group of global development minded students. Grading will be on 4 points, 1 point for quality and clarity of presentation, 2 points for depth of thought and solutions, and 1 point for ability to interact with the student audience.

: Checkpoint 3: Final Presentation (10%)

Students will be required to do a class presentation (plus Q&A) on their project. They should submit as a document their presentation as well. This presentation will be in front of clients as available. Grading will be on 4 points, 1 point for quality and clarity of presentation, 2 points for depth of thought and solutions, and 1 point for ability to interact with the client audience.

: Checkpoint 4: Final Report (25%)

This final paper asks students teams to detail their projects and lessons learned. The report should endeavor to answer the questions posed in the project plan. The best final reports will include material readable and useful to the client (which could be the entire document or could be an executive subset) and could also aim for a submission worthy publication. A rubric will be shared a few weeks before the due date.

Class Participation (10%) will be assessed based on attendance and in-class engagement. These components are explained below:

: Attendance (5%) is important. Students should come to every class, on time, and stay for the entire duration of the class. If for any reason students must miss class or a portion of it (15 minutes or more), they should notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance and have some institute recognized reason. Failure to do so will cost them 1% of their grade each time.

: In-Class Engagement (5%) will be required. Students are expected to participate fully in class exercises throughout the semester. Engagement comes in various ways and will be subjectively evaluated by the course instructor. Students will receive a mid-course

evaluation as to their engagement and if deficiencies are noted an improvement plan will be offered.

Final Self-reflection (5%) is an opportunity to self-reflect on your work throughout the term. It need not be overly long, though 2000 words might be what is required. In this self-reflection, each student will consider their capstone experience contextualizing it within their overall global development course. This self-reflection will also probe the student's experience with the class project: what leaps were taken, challenges addressed, surprises encountered. This self-reflection will be scored on clarity (1 point) and how the document reflects on the student's self-efficacy and seriousness towards global development (3 points).

Honor Code

By participating in this class, students agree to adhere to the Georgia Tech Honor Code. For additional information see: [↗](#)

<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9> <http://www.honor.gatech.edu/> [↗](#)

<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/plugins/content/index.php?id=9>).

Learning Objectives

In this course, students will:

1. Demonstrate an ability to synthesize across a range of global development issues, methods, and theories and focus this on a multidisciplinary problem.
2. Develop a capacity to work effectively in a team on a global development problem.
3. Develop and articulate an understanding of key global development discourses.
4. Be exposed to successes and failures in the realm of global development.
5. Learn to assess and critique dominant approaches to global development.
6. Effectively engage with a range of project clients.

Learning Accommodations

If needed, we will make classroom accommodations for students with documented disabilities. These accommodations must be arranged in advance and in accordance with the Office of Disability Services (<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu> [↗](#))

(<http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu>).

Course Schedule

| Date | Topic | Readings | Deliverables | Notes |
|-------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1/12 | Introduction to class and to each other | | | |
| 1/19 | Global development renewing foundations | Banerjee and Duflo, 2007; Sen, 1993; Horner, 2017; World Bank, 2021 | | In class be prepared to share your GD “classic” |
| 1/26 | Intro to OMSCS | Green, 2016 Part I; Busted, B. (Nov 10, 2023) | Reflection #1 (on Banerjee, et al.) | Guest presentation by Hannah Moon |
| 2/2 | Country Reports: Nigeria, Liberia, Ghana, ??? | Green, 2016 Part II | Presentation #1 | |
| 2/9 | OMSCS: A critical assessment | Green, 2016 Part III & IV | Presentation #2; Project Plan | |

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|------|--|-----|--------------------------|--|
| 2/16 | Higher education, global development, and Africa | TBD | Reflection #2 (on Green) | |
| 2/23 | Working meetings with client perspectives | | | Hon. Cynthia L. Blandford, TBD |
| 3/1 | Working meetings with client perspectives | | | Amb. Dr. Amina Smaila, offsite, TBD; Mid-course engagement report released |
| 3/8 | | | | Guest presentation; M. Best is out |
| 3/15 | | | Reflection #3 (on OMSCS) | Guest presentation; M. Best is out |
| 3/22 | SPRING BREAK | | | No class |
| 3/29 | Initial presentation with student inputs | | Initial presentation | Student guest audience |
| 4/5 | TBD as needed | | | |
| 4/12 | TBD as needed | | Self-reflection | |

4/19 Final presentation

Final
presentation

Client audience

Initial References (more to come!)

Banerjee, A. V., & Duflo, E. (2007). The Economic Lives of the Poor. *The Journal of Economic Perspective*, 21(1).

Sen, A. (1993). The Economics of Life and Death. *Scientific American*, 268(5), 40–47.

Horner, R. (2017). What is Global Development? (Vol. 2017, No. 20; Global Development Institute Working Paper Series).

World Bank. (2021). *World Development Report 2021: Data for Better Lives. Overview Booklet*. The World Bank.




Green, D. (2016). *How change happens*. Oxford University Press.








Busteed, B. (Nov 10, 2023). *The Greatest Degree Program Ever*. Forbes. Retrieved January 5, 2024, from

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/brandonbusteed/2023/11/10/the-greatest-degree-program-ever/> 

[\(https://www.forbes.com/sites/brandonbusteed/2023/11/10/the-greatest-degree-program-ever/\)](https://www.forbes.com/sites/brandonbusteed/2023/11/10/the-greatest-degree-program-ever/)

Course Summary:

| Date | Details | Due |
|------------------|--|----------------|
| Fri Jan 26, 2024 |  Reflection #1 (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620116) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Feb 2, 2024 |  Presentation #1 (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620122) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Feb 9, 2024 |  Presentation #2 (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620124) | due by 11:59pm |

| Date | Details | Due |
|------------------|---|----------------|
| Fri Feb 16, 2024 |  Project Plan (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620190) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Feb 16, 2024 |  Reflection #2 (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620118) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Mar 15, 2024 |  Reflection #3 (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620120) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Mar 29, 2024 |  Initial Presentation (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620188) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Apr 12, 2024 |  Self-reflection (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620196) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Apr 19, 2024 |  Final Presentation (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620192) | due by 11:59pm |
| Fri Apr 26, 2024 |  Final Report (https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/368376/assignments/1620194) | due by 11:59pm |