Policy Topics: Sustainable Development
Carnegie Mellon University
Heinz College of Public Policy
444 North Capitol St., NW, Suite 399
Washington, DC 20001

Fall 2023 Mini-Course - 6 Units
October 21 – December 9, 2024
Mondays 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm EST
Consultation Hours: By Appointment

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Ryan's Bio

Course Description

Since the dawn of the 21st century, the world has experienced tremendous advances in human development and technology, while simultaneously suffering from continuous upheaval. This class examines how those intertwining trends have affected the lives of billions of humans and the natural environment – and how their impacts are most likely to reverberate in the future.

The United Nations projects that by 2050, the global population will reach 9.7 billion people.[1] To feed an increasingly affluent and populous world, the international community will need to produce more food despite the finite limits of available water and arable land. Some of these tradeoffs will come at the expense of existing natural systems, even as the planet is undergoing vast biological and physical changes due to climate change and environmental degradation.

As we plunge into these topics in the fall of 2024, the future of the United States and its role on the world stage seem deeply uncertain. From 2017 to early 2021, Donald Trump's presidency and "America First" approach to global leadership overshadowed many aspects of broad-based international cooperation. Since then, President Biden's administration has attempted to reverse many of those trends despite the increasingly bitter U.S.-China competition, the Russia-Ukraine war with its accompanying disruption to global food and energy supplies, and the complex, seemingly endless conflict between the State of Israel, stateless Palestinians, and other players in the Middle East and beyond.

Over the same period, the COVID-19 pandemic and its accompanying economic and social reverberations have reversed years of development gains. Democratic backsliding and rising autocracy threaten basic freedoms around the globe, while the misuse of information sows doubt

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[1] United Nations, "Global Issues: Population," https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/population#:~:text=The%20world%20in%202100,and%2011.2%20billion%20by%202100, accessed on August 27, 2023.

about what sources can be trusted. Innovations such as artificial intelligence and green technology seem promising to some, threatening to others, and likely to create disruptions both positive and negative in the years to come.

All these factors dramatically complicate the challenge of achieving **sustainable development** – that is, <u>making sustainable and equitable improvements in human well-being without irreparable damage to the natural environment</u> – while simultaneously making it more urgent than ever.

Why Take This Course?

This course examines a few critical questions for you as young leaders. What motivations drive the international development community to transfer billions of dollars' worth of aid each year? Why do ordinary Americans (and other nationalities) routinely give generously to better the lives of strangers on other continents? What role do history, economics, race, and politics play in sustainable development? How do various leaders, advocates, spoilers, and opportunists wield and withhold power in the global system? And most importantly, is our highly intelligent yet fractious human species even capable of transcending our current differences to achieve a better future for everyone?

The path we will take in exploring these questions is to analyze and interrogate the rapidly changing world of global development, with a focus on how to achieve development outcomes without wrecking the planet. The challenge we will explore together is how to design a 21st century strategy in an environment of competing priorities and paradigms, complex problems, diverse constituents, and multiple domestic and international stakeholders.

The course requires no previous experience in, or substantial prior knowledge of global development. Upon completion, students should be able to demonstrate: 1) a much broader and deeper understanding of sustainable development issues and stakeholders; 2) analytical skills to serve more effectively as a policy-maker or influencer; and 3) subject-matter expertise in at least one sustainable development challenge and the solution(s) needed to tackle it.

Course Calendar

All class periods are in-person (as of this writing, and subject to change per CMU and/or DC policies in the event of another resurgence of COVID-19), and will take place at the Heinz College Washington, DC Office on Monday evenings, 6:00 pm to 8:50 pm EST.

October 21	October 28	November 4	November 11
Sustainable Development Fundamentals	Origins and Legacies of Global Development: The Western Aid Model	Critical Thinking about Development: Power, Privilege, and Belonging	The U.N. Sustainable Development Goals: Global, National, and Local
Select a Sustainable Development Goal or issue area to track		**Discussion of Policy Pitch and Memo Assignment**	**SDG briefing paper due before class**

November 18	November 25	December 2	December 9
The People's Republic of China: A New Global Development Model and Player	Conflict Prevention and Stabilization	Action, Activism, and Imagining the Future: Where Do We Go from Here? **Discussion board blog posts due before class**	**POLICY PITCHES** and Wrap-Up **Final Policy Memo due December 12 @ 11:59pm**

Tracking Sustainable Development Goals and Other Issue Areas

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a useful menu for describing most, but not all, of the issue areas related to development. We will use the SDGs throughout the course as a rubric for exploring sustainable development topics, but we'll also add **conflict prevention and stabilization**, which have become increasingly relevant to sustainable development since the SDGs were created in 2015.

Keeping track of all 17 SDGs plus this additional issue area can be mind-boggling. Thus, during the first class session, each student will select an issue area that interests her/them/him to concentrate on for the remainder of the course. This will be "your Goal" to track, and the lens through which to focus your attention as we read, view, and discuss sustainable development in general. Come to class prepared to share your perspectives on readings, videos, and current events in the context of "your Goal."

More Than Just Data

"They have the guns. We have the poets. Therefore, we will win." – Howard Zinn

Last but not least, you will discover, as we unpack the cerebral-sounding topic of "sustainable development," that we are likely to delve into issues that invite controversy, reveal differences of opinion, touch on our core beliefs, inspire art and poetry, stoke outrage, and excite passions among all of us. After all, development focuses on the human condition in 2024, with all its defects, opportunities, and vulnerabilities. This includes the historical forces and contemporary political, economic and social systems that determine the distribution of resources and power. These are life-or-death issues. They affect us all and shape our respective world views.

As students in a program that accentuates the use of data to inform and solve policy problems, it

can seem that a sober, well-reasoned argument supported by accurate information is sufficient to carry the day. A moment of reflection about the shape and direction of our contemporary world reveals this to be untrue. To be influential in shaping policy, you must also keep in mind the power that abstract ideas, morals, emotions, and basic human psychology can have in persuading individuals, groups, movements, and entire nations to stake out positions on sustainable development challenges. In the margins of this brief survey course, we will explore the role that humor, data visualization, art, poetry, and social media play in shaping public opinion and communicating policy positions in memorable, often visceral ways.

Grading

Grades will be based on four elements:

1. **Discussion Boards / Blog Posts – 20% of total**

Before the first class session, I will establish some discussion boards on Canvas to invite conversation about various sustainable development related topics and themes. Each discussion board will have a set of instructions and an example of an appropriate post to emulate. Students should post a total of four brief submissions (250-500 words each) to any of the discussion boards during the first seven weeks of the mini-course time frame. **You can submit these posts one by one or all at once, but the final post is due by the beginning of class on December 2.**

Please include an embedded link to at least one outside source, and use your post to reflect your own thoughts and opinions in relation to that source material. Your post will be available for other students (and me, of course!) to review and add comments. The writing style need not be formal, but please use proper spelling, grammar and punctuation. Please note I am open to the use of Generative AI for this and other assignments, with restrictions and guidelines as noted in the "course mechanics" section.

In my experience, students usually enjoy this type of assignment more – and suffer from less stress overall – when they provide posts methodically between class periods or "front-load" them in the first few weeks of class. However, you have the freedom to do whatever suits your learning style and allows you to achieve balance in other areas of your life.

Grading Rubric: I will grade each of the four posts at five points each (hence 20 points total), so long as they are
1) provided on time;
2) fall within the correct word length;
3) have relevance to the themes of the course;
4) include links to relevant content; and
5) have very few or no spelling and grammatical errors.

It is not unreasonable for students who go beyond these requirements to expect extra credit, but please discuss with me first if you want to do that.

2. **Sustainable Development Challenge Briefing Paper: 30%.** This paper is due before the start

of the **November 11** class period. Please select a real-world sustainable development challenge affecting human communities and/or the natural world, related to the SDG or issue area you selected in our first class session on October 21. It can be in any country (or countries) you choose and represent a threat, a missed opportunity, or some combination. Please identify the SDG or issue area in your writing so I can keep track!

Answer the following questions:
- What is the challenge and why is it occurring? Please provide evidence and/or a brief vignette to illustrate the challenge.
- What trends can you identify relative to this challenge? Are things getting better, worse, or staying the same? Can you cite projections about where the issue will be at some future date (e.g, by next July, or 2030, or 2100)?
- Who (or what) is negatively affected by this challenge? Does anyone benefit from the status quo or the trends you cited? How do you know?
- What resources are aligned to address the challenge? What resources oppose it?
- How widely known is this issue? What can be done to raise awareness?
- Why does this issue matter to you personally?

The paper should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced and submitted in Word format. Please reach out to me if you have any questions or want to talk through any ideas before submitting the paper. You can also use generative AI to brainstorm ideas as per the guidance in the "course mechanics" part of the syllabus; check that out for more information on writing standards and grading policies.

Rubric for Grading the Briefing Paper

Grading Elements	Excellent (100%)	Acceptable (75%)	Needs Improvement (50%)
Does the paper's content meet the objective of the assignment? (12 points)	The paper adequately addresses the elements outlined in the bullets above within the page limit, using appropriate sources to bolster key arguments.	The paper omits or does not fully cover an element of the assigned scope, is less than a half-page too long or short, and/or fails to provide a citation to where needed to support a key argument.	The paper omits multiple major elements of the assigned content, is more than a half-page shorter or longer than required, and/or has a pattern of insufficient citations and evidence.
Is the paper's style and perspective persuasive and authoritative? (12 points)	The author states key themes clearly and succinctly, leading readers logically from the summary statement through the key arguments to logical and relevant	The author's arguments do not follow a logical flow. Some points are redundant. There is an uneven quality among the summary, key arguments, and	The author's writing style obscures key arguments. Information is presented repetitively or at random, without a logical flow. The paper does not reflect

	recommendations.	conclusions, but the paper communicates the main points.	basic conventions for formal writing (summary, argument, conclusion).
Is the paper correct in terms of spelling, grammar, and citations? (6 points)	Spelling and grammar mistakes are minor or non-existent; citations follow proper format.	Occasional errors weaken the presentation of the material and create surmountable barriers to readers' attention and access to source data.	Significant or repeated errors distract readers' attention from the content or fail to cite sources accurately and accessibly.

3. Policy Pitch and Memo: 10+30 = 40%.
The Policy Pitch assignment involves two parts: a five-minute presentation to the class on **December 9** (10 percent of total grade), and the submission of another 3-5 page paper in the form of a memorandum to persuade a policy maker to take action on the sustainable development challenge you identified in the earlier briefing paper. Please assume the policy maker will have read your briefing paper, to avoid repetition for this assignment.

The policy memo will be due by **11:59 pm on December 12**, which provides an opportunity to incorporate feedback on the in-class pitch, if desired.

Both the oral and written presentation should demonstrate how you, as a Heinz College student, can combine public policy acumen and use of data and analysis to persuade and influence decision makers to support your conclusions. Please provide:

- The name of the policy maker or organization who will receive the memo;
- A single, "bottom-line-up-front" summary (no more than two sentences!) of the challenge and your recommended action or actions;
- Your rationale for position presented, describing the need, interest, and efficiency considerations that combine to form good sustainable development policy;
- Assessment of potential push-back (which will likely emerge from need, interest, or efficiency concerns – just choose one).

In terms of **grading the Policy Pitch**, I will award two points for each element successfully covered during the five-minute period, plus one point for style of presentation (including length), and one point for Q&A. That equals 10 points total.

Rubric for Grading the Policy Memo

Grading Elements	Excellent (100%)	Acceptable (75%)	Needs Improvement (50%)
Does the paper's	The paper adequately	The paper omits or	The paper omits

content meet the objective of the assignment? (12 points)	addresses the elements outlined in the bullets above within the page limit, using appropriate sources to bolster key arguments. It elaborates on the previous assignment without being repetitive.	does not fully cover an element of the assigned scope, is less than a half-page too long or short, and/or fails to provide a citation to where needed to support a key argument. Some unnecessary repetition may be present.	multiple major elements of the assigned content, is more than a half-page shorter or longer than required, and/or has a pattern of insufficient citations and evidence. Papers that repeat verbatim the earlier assignment fall into this category.
Is the paper's style and perspective persuasive and authoritative? (12 points)	The author states key themes clearly and succinctly, leading readers logically from the summary statement through the key arguments to logical and relevant recommendations.	The author's arguments do not follow a logical flow. Some points are redundant. There is an uneven quality among the summary, key arguments, and conclusions, but the paper communicates the main points.	The author's writing style obscures key arguments. Information is presented repetitively or at random, without a logical flow. The paper does not reflect basic conventions for formal writing (summary, argument, conclusion).
Is the paper correct in terms of spelling, grammar, and citations? (6 points)	Spelling and grammar mistakes are minor or non-existent; citations follow proper format.	Occasional errors weaken the presentation of the material and create surmountable barriers to readers' attention and access to source data.	Significant or repeated errors distract readers' attention from the content or fail to cite sources accurately and accessibly.

4. Class Participation – 10% of total

You and your classmates (and your instructor!) will get the most out of the class if you come prepared and fully participate in the discussions. Think about the tough questions you want to discuss, the issues that are raised by the assigned readings, blog posts, and current events. As noted, there will also be some small-group work and a few outside speakers with whom to engage.

I hope that you will participate actively, but respectfully, in classroom discussions on these heady topics. In doing so, please do not take for granted that everyone in the class shares or supports your perspective. Everyone should feel safe and encouraged to share your truths and opinions as you experience them. I believe that much about our nation can be repaired if Americans re-learn the skills and advantages of civil discourse among those who may disagree, yet are willing to see

the humanity and validity of others. Please use this class to practice those skills. The future of our country and the planet depends on them.

In terms of grading class participation, I will assign ten points to every student. I will only deduct points because of three factors:

> 1) Chronic attendance problems, taking into account reasonable accommodations, uncontrollable things like weather events, and the exigencies of the COVID-19 safety and wellness guidance;
> 2) If I sense you are regularly coming to class unprepared, having neglected readings and other requirements that are not graded in other rubrics; or
> 3) Any major conduct issues that disrupt the class or disrespect fellow students, staff, faculty, or guest speakers.

If I feel the need to deduct points, I will discuss it with you privately, as soon as possible, to try to resolve the issue without penalty.

Course Readings and Videos

Let's be honest. This course competes for your time and attention during a busy, exciting and sometimes stressful period of your academic career at Heinz College. Additionally, each of you brings unique skills and knowledge that will likely supplement or exceed the best-planned syllabus. For that reason, I have tried to be as selective as possible in the course readings and to integrate videos as appropriate alternatives. Part of this strategy is a recognition that sustainable development is evolving in real time – and that implies the need to add a few brief articles here and there to update information or enrich the class discussion.

In exchange, I ask you to please read, view, or listen to all the assigned materials, as they will enhance the quality of time together.

Readings as assigned in the syllabus will be posted on Canvas. Please check each week as the readings included in the syllabus may change; I will let you know if and when they do.

Also, I've worked with the CMU Media Services team to create a channel for all videos that do not have organic captioning, for those who need that accommodation. It's available here: https://mediaservices.cmu.edu/channel/90-896%2B-%2BMcCannell/351942402. Per their instructions, "In order to view the videos the student will need to login with their Andrew ID (upper right corner). Next they can click on the video in the playlist. To ensure the captioning is on make sure the 'CC' button is enabled at the bottom of the video player. It's on when there isn't a slash through it." Please report any problems to me as soon as possible so that we can ensure everyone gets access to these resources.

Guest Speakers, Lectures, and Small-Group Work During Class

Except for the first couple of class periods, which require laying some common foundation in the subject matter we are exploring, I intend to limit formal lectures in which I do most of the talking. Rather, my aim is to facilitate discussions with several guest speakers and among students, prompted by questions and comments on the guest speakers' presentations, as well as the

assigned readings, videos, and current events. To keep things interesting and fun, we will break into small groups when possible to discuss the materials and share ideas collaboratively.

Class-by-Class Descriptions

Class 1: October 21 - Sustainable Development Fundamentals

This class provides the basic foundations and terminology to inform the rest of the mini-course.

After student and faculty introductions and some initial housekeeping items, I will introduce the basic concepts of sustainable development and invite students to share what they know already from personal experience or other relevant coursework.

Also during this class, each student will select or be assigned one of the SDGs or other issue areas (conflict and security and artificial intelligence) to track and write about during the remainder of the course.

I strongly recommend downloading - and even printing out! - this handy one-page graphic of the SDGs. We will all refer to it often over the coming weeks.

Readings:
1. Nicolas Kristoff, "Cheer Up! The World Is Better Off Than You Think," *New York Times*, December 31, 2022.
2. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "International aid rises in 2023 with increased support to Ukraine and humanitarian needs," April 12, 2024. Take a quick look at the levels of "official development assistance" as defined by the traditional Western donor countries.
3. Compare this collection of recent articles from around the world on the U.N. Human Development Index (for 2021-22).
   a. For some global context, please see this infographic from the *Economist* (September 8, 2022), as well as local news stories from
   b. Mike Kalumbi, Malawi24.com (September 24, 2022),
   c. Paul Icamina, Malaya Business Insight (September 25, 2022), and
   d. Virginie Mangin, SwissInfo.ch (September 8, 2022).
4. Stephanie Thomson, "What are the Sustainable Development Goals?," *World Economic Forum*, September 16, 2015.

Videos (~10 minutes total viewing time):
5. Hans Rosling 200 Countries, 200 Years, 4 Minutes - The Joy of Stats, British Broadcasting Corporation, November 26, 2010, **(4:47 in length)**.
6. Centre for Collective Action Research, Gothenburg, Sweden, Collective Action 101, December 14, 2018, **(5:55)**.

Class 2: October 28 – Motivations, Origins and Legacies of Global Development: The Western Aid Model

The global effort to raise human living standards, traditionally led by the United States and its Western allies, has induced a complex mix of successes, missed opportunities, and unintended consequences as the field interacts with geopolitics and economics.

This lesson provides a crash course in the ends, ways, and means of international development, with some reflections on how these efforts resonate domestically in the United States.

The first half of the class explores the most basic question about international development: why do we do it in the first place? The "we" in the previous sentence includes almost all of us. If you or your family have ever given funds to a religious organization, the International Red Cross, or other relief groups; paid taxes in the United States or another donor country; served in a humanitarian assistance or disaster relief operation; volunteered for a cause or advocacy group with links to developing countries; or even donated used clothing and other household goods, then most likely you have contributed to international development. What factors prompted you to do so?

By examining what motivates nations, organizations, and individuals to provide aid to societies outside their borders, this lesson gives strategic leaders insight into the culture of the international development industry and profession.

During the second half, I will discuss the history and legacy of international humanitarian and development assistance and some of the "ways and means" that development practitioners employ. Over the course of the last 75 years, donors have tried out numerous approaches to implementing assistance programs with varying degrees of success.

Readings:

1. Ryan McCannell, "International Development 101 for Civil Affairs Personnel: Part One - Why Aid?" Civil Affairs Association, 2019.
2. Oxfam, *Foreign Aid 101*, read pp. 4-13, skim the rest.
3. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, December 10, 1948.
4. Bill and Melinda French Gates Foundation, *The Race to Nourish a Warming World,* September 2024. Please explore the latest estimates of progress across several (unfortunately not all) SDGs. The main intro section, on exploring the linkages between malnutrition and climate change, is also inspiring to read if the subject interests you.

Videos (~30 minutes total viewing time):

1. "Tell 'Em Joe Sent You," The Truman Project and Truman Center, February 5, 2013 **(1:15)**.
2. "Bono from U2 on Generosity," September 24, 2015, **(2:16)**.
3. "An Olive Peace," USAID, May 25, 2016, **(3:01)**.
4. "An Introduction to Amartya Sen's Development as Freedom," Macat Multimedia Series, March 10, 2018, **(3:33)**.
5. "China-proposed GDI promotes inclusive, balanced global development: Pakistani expert," New China TV, June 21, 2022, **(2:01)**.
6. "The Skate Brothers," USAID, May 26, 2016, **(3:24)**.

7. "[Greta Thunberg's full speech to world leaders at UN Climate Action Summit](#)," September 23, 2019, **(5:19)**.
8. "[Shahara Knows Her Rights](#)," USAID, April 18, 2016 **(4:07)**.
9. Fox News: "[Fmr. Marine on Low-Cost Way to Break Cycle of Poverty](#)," FOX News, April 4, 2011, **(2:38)**.
10. "[Kids Discuss America's Global Leadership](#)," U.S. Global Leadership Coalition, n.d., **(1:50)**.

Class 3: November 4 - Critical Thinking about Development: Power, Privilege, and Belonging

The international development industry emerged from the colonial and Cold War period and has continued to be dominated by White, Western, predominantly male subject-matter experts, and a conceptual distinction between the "developed" and "developing" world. The growing backlash from aid critics invite us to think about how sustainable development challenges reflect power and privilege – from the global to the local level.

Like war and politics, international development is fundamentally a human endeavor, with its own sources of friction, fads, and failures. This lesson explores some of the imperfections of international assistance as described by critics of the development line of effort. In general, aid skeptics tend not to question the need for international assistance, but rather the motivations of aid donors and recipients, as well as the ways and means that aid gets delivered. They ask: who gets to participate in determining the future of humanity, and the distribution and use of the planet's scarce resources? Who is excluded from those decisions and why? Why do many of the decision makers resemble your instructor: white males over 50 years of age? These critical voices exert pressure on aid officials to transform the power relationships that still reflect the attitudes, assumptions, and access conferred on aid providers since the colonial period.

To explore these areas with us, we are excited that **Hadeil Ali** (she/her/hers) is joining us as a guest speaker to discuss her work, and other recent efforts, to make international development more inclusive. As you listen to Hadeil's conversation with Ambassador Geeta Rao Gupta, please listen for a few key messages that are key themes of this course:

- The use of data for advocacy
- Elements of identity (gender, ethnicities, religion, national origin, class/social capital, and family background) and how those have provided rich insights in her work
- Connections between gender equality and broader human rights and democracy trajectories

In addition, the policy memo due from each student will be outlined during this class.

Readings and Videos:
1. Shannon Paige, *Time to Decolonise Aid: Insights and Lessons from a Global Consultation* (London: Peace Direct, 2021). **Please read executive summary, as well as pp. 33-41.**
2. Sarika Bansal, "[As travel opens up again, aid voluntourism needs to get real](#)," *The New Humanitarian*, June 14, 2021.

3. Courtney Martin, "The Reductive Seduction of Other People's Problems," *Bright*, June 11, 2016.
4. Hadeil Ali and Rafi Demerath, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: The Forgotten Lessons of the UDHR," Center for Strategic and International Studies, November 30, 2023.
5. Hadeil Ali, "Championing Gender Equality with Amb. Geeta Rao Gupta," Center for Strategic and International Studies, September 10, 2024 **(36:04)**, as well as the Ambassador's official bio.

Class 4: November 11 – The U.N. Sustainable Development Goals: Global, National, and Local

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The SDGs were conceived at the global level and adopted by national governments, but can also provide a common framework and vocabulary for regions, cities, organizations, firms, and individuals to plan and take action on sustainable development.

In September 2015, the United Nations General Assembly approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which established an ambitious set of goals for achieving progress in human development, climate change, and social justice in a prescribed 15-year time frame. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the "Global Goals," represent a new approach by the international community to encourage and facilitate broad-based progress across multiple sectors in every country, regardless of its socioeconomic status. This class coincides with the halfway point of the SDG period, a fitting time to take stock of progress and shortcomings.

The SDGs reflect an optimistic perspective on development, informed by the inputs of millions of people worldwide. They highlight the tremendous progress made in improving the quality of human life during the past 200 years, and in particular since the end of World War II. Building on this record, achieving the SDGs would address the most serious inequities that exist across the globe, including extreme poverty, food insecurity, illiteracy, and inadequate health care.

The Global Goals should also matter to Heinz College students because Carnegie Mellon University has adopted them as a reference point for its own efforts to support a 21st Century approach to sustainable research, learning, and action. CMU's recently completed Voluntary University Review, the first of its kind anywhere in the world, gauges the extent to which the CMU community aligns education, research, and practice with the Global Goals.

Each summer since 2015, various U.N. member states present Voluntary Reviews as a formal part of the SDG process during an event known as the High Level Political Forum, convened by the

United Nations. Drawing inspiration from this process, dozens of cities worldwide (led by New York City) have conducted Voluntary Local Reviews using the SDGs as a convenient framework for planning, civic engagement, accountability, and measuring progress on making urban areas more livable and equitable.

We are thrilled to welcome **Alex Hiniker** (she/her/hers), one of the key architects of both the New York City and CMU Voluntary Reviews, as a guest speaker to kick off a discussion in class about these developments.

Also, note that SDG briefing papers are due before class begins.

Readings and Videos:
1. "[We the People for the Global Goals](#)", United Nations, September 2015, **(2:58)**.
2. The White House, *[U.S. Strategy on Global Development](#)*, September 2024. Note the references to SDGs throughout this very recent (some would say "very late") policy document.
3. U.S. Agency for International Development, "[The U.S. Commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals](#)," August 30, 2023. Please take a look at the progress USAID is making on your selected SDG.
4. Alexandra Hiniker, "[How to Align City Strategies with the SDGs](#)," Brookings Institution Center for Sustainable Development, July 2021.
5. *[Carnegie Mellon University Sustainability Dashboard](#)*, 2024 (current website). Please explore, with attention to the SDG you are tracking, if applicable.
   - Again, what does this have to do with sustainable development?
   - How does your life as a Heinz School student relate to this VUR? Is it relevant? Does it motive you (or confuse or discourage you)?

Class 5: November 18 – The People's Republic of China (PRC): A New Global Development Model and Player

The emerging role of the PRC as an international donor creates challenges and opportunities for aid recipients and other aid donors alike.

The PRC's January 2021 white paper on international development opens with a bang: "China is the largest developing country in the world." This statement immediately strikes a contrast between the PRC and traditional donor countries, many of which oppressed parts of what is now the developing world for centuries as colonizers or regional hegemons. In addition, the PRC's historically unprecedented success in lifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty in the space of a few decades is both an enviable accomplishment and an unfinished project. This perspective creates a context in which the PRC's emphasis on mutual aid between equal partners overshadows distinctions between official development aid, commerce, and economic coercion.

Traditional donors including the United States have been quick to point out the flaws of the PRC's approach to development and describing their own approaches in correspondingly beneficent

terms. As competition among global powers increases, it is unsurprising that sustainable development has become another aspect of the struggle.

Readings:

1. The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *China's International Development Cooperation in the New Era*, January 2021. Please read the Preface and Section One (approximately ten pages).
2. USAID, "Combatting the Generational Challenge of Chinese Communist Party Aggression: Testimony of Michael Schiffer, USAID Assistant Administrator for Asia, before the House Foreign Affairs Committee," February 28, 2023.
3. International Institute for Sustainable Development, SDG Knowledge Hub, "BRICS Countries Expand Partnership for Sustainable Development," August 30, 2023.
4. Ammar A. Malik, et al., "Banking on the Belt and Road: Insights from a New Global Dataset of 13,427 Chinese Development Projects: Executive Summary," AidData at William and Mary, September 29, 2021.
5. Ian Urbina, "The Smell of Money,"(print edition title; online version is titled "Fish Farming Is Feeding the Globe. What's the Cost for Locals?"), *New Yorker*, March 1, 2021. Note there is also an audio version available that takes about **30 minutes** to listen to. Both are available via the link.
6. Peter Hartcher, "China could be the first country to get old before it gets rich and the implications are profound," Sydney Morning Post, May 18, 2021.

Class 6: November 25 – Conflict Prevention and Stabilization

Helping countries and communities prevent conflict and promote stability is one of the most challenging aspects of sustainable development – particularly as our world becomes more dangerous and disordered.

Development economist Paul Collier is known for saying that "war is development in reverse." Yet the United States and its allies have become accustomed to deploying warriors, diplomats, and development workers side by side in countries as diverse as Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Niger, and Somalia. What makes recovering from conflict so difficult? What is the appropriate role of the international community in preventing, suppressing, or mitigating violent conflict? What have recent reconstruction and stabilization efforts taught us?

Readings:

1. John F. Sopko (Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction), *What We Need to Learn: Lessons from Twenty Years of Afghan Reconstruction*, August 2021. Please read the Executive Summary: pp. VII to XIII.
2. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *More Effective Development Co-operation and Fragility: DAC Perspectives on Effective Development Co-operation*, September 20, 2023, pp. 3-15.
3. *U.S. Strategy to Prevent Conflict and Promote Stability*, 2020, pp. 1-10.

4. Stanislava P. Mladelova, *When Rambo Meets the Red Cross: Civil-Military Engagement in Fragile States*, (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2024), pp. 46-55.
5. "Building peace, from the bottom up: A Q&A with Séverine Autesserre," *The New Humanitarian*, May 13, 2021.
6. Obi Anyadike, "The changing face of peacekeeping: What's gone wrong with the UN?" *The New Humanitarian*, July 9, 2024.

Class 7: December 2 - Action, Activism, and Imagining the Future: Where Do We Go from Here?

The SDGs invite us to envision the world in 2030 and choose a better future. The SDGs provide a menu that informs activism from grassroots to global arenas.

This class explores the essential role of political and social activism as a driving force behind sustainable development goals. Why do some social movements achieve transformative change, while others fail or fade away? What techniques favor or limit success in political activism? Is non-violence still relevant and even achievable in today's polarized domestic political climate and a world where authoritarian regimes seem to be gaining the upper hand? What is our responsibility as global citizens to lead, participate in, or become responsive to activism around sustainable development goals we care about?

For this class, we will use a domestic U.S. example of activism and policy making, focused on the politics of climate change at the federal level during the past several decades. We are honored to have the researcher and author Chelsea Henderson (she/her/hers) as a guest speaker for this class.

Readings and Videos:
1. Marge Piercy, "The Low Road," a poem performed by Staceyann Chin, September 26, 2011, **(1:52).**
2. Duncan Green, *How Change Happens*, pp. 1-27 (2016). Note this is also covered in this TED-Talk-like video, "How Change Happens (and How to Make It Happen) with Duncan Green," May 20, 2016, **(39:49)**.
3. Erica Chenoweth, "The success of nonviolent civil resistance: Erica Chenoweth at TEDxBoulder," November 4, 2013, **(12:33)**.
4. Chelsea Henderson, *Glacial: The Inside Story of Climate Politics*, (Nashville: Turner Publishing Company, 2024), pp. 287-302 and 339-340.
5. Jennifer Szalai, "Shrink the Economy, Save the World?" *New York Times*, June 8, 2024.
6. "Three degrees of global warming is quite plausible and truly disastrous," *The Economist*, July 24, 2021.
7. Noah Smith, "You're not going to like what comes after Pax Americana," Noahpinion Blog, October 7, 2023.

Class 8: December 9 – Class Presentations and Wrap-Up

We will devote this class to students' making their **policy pitches,** which will take the place of a final exam. Students should come prepared to make a five minute presentation followed by up to three minutes of question/answer. This presentation should ideally be based on your first draft of your **five-page memo** that will be due by 11:59 pm on December 12 (i.e., the Thursday following this final Monday class). Power Point presentations are encouraged but **only if they are sent to Robin Cole to upload by noon on December 9.**

Resource for Project Preparation:

1. Carmine Gallo, "[Richard Branson's 5 Elements of a Good Pitch]()," *Forbes*, October 23, 2012.

Course Mechanics

Grading, Writing and Citation Standards at a Glance:

Grading Scale:

A, A- 100-90% (excellent)

B+,B, B- 89-80% (good)

C+, C, C- 79-70% (satisfactory)

D 69-60% (passing)

R 59% and below (not passing)

Open to use of Generative AI with Restrictions/Guidelines

You are welcome to use generative AI programs (ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) in this class. These programs can be powerful tools for learning and other productive pursuits, including completion of some assignments in less time, helping you generate new ideas, or serving as a personalized learning tool. Additionally, you will almost certainly use these technologies in your career.

However, your responsibilities as a student remain the same. **You must follow the academic integrity guidelines of the university and of this class**. If you use one of these generative AI tools to develop content for an assignment, you are required to cite the tool's contribution to your work. In practice, cutting and pasting content from any source without citation is plagiarism. Likewise, paraphrasing content from a generative AI without citation is plagiarism. Similarly, using any generative AI tool without appropriate acknowledgement will be treated as plagiarism. The [university's policy on plagiarism]() applies to all uncited or improperly cited use of work, whether that work is created by human beings alone or in collaboration with a generative AI.

In this class, you may use generative AI programs to:

- Brainstorm new ideas
- Develop example outlines or approaches to your work
- Research topics, or generate different ways to talk about a problem

You may not use generative AI programs to:

- Generate content that you cut and paste into an assignment with a written component without quotations and a citation
- Generate content that is not adequately paraphrased without a citation
- Generate bibliographies for topics that you haven't researched yourself
- Generate other content (images, video, others) unless expressly permitted and following provided guidance
- Otherwise use or present generative AI content that you pass off as your own work, when really it is not.

Finally, it is important that you recognize that large language models frequently provide users with incorrect information, create professional-looking citations that are not real, generate contradictory statements, incorporate copyrighted material without appropriate attribution, and can sometimes integrate biased concepts. Code generation models may produce inaccurate outputs. Image generation models may create misleading or offensive content.

While you may use these tools in the work you create for this class, it is important to note that you understand **you are ultimately responsible for the content that you submit.** Work that is inaccurate, biased, unethical, offensive, plagiarized, or incorrect will be penalized.

Citation guidance: If you are quoting someone, you must indicate that you are indeed quoting someone. Please use footnotes rather than end notes. Footnotes should be placed at the end of a sentence after the period.[2] For an article: First name last name, "Title of Article," *Journal*, volume, (Date), available at: add link here. For a book: First name last name, *Title of Book* (Place: Publisher, year), pages x-y. Make sure to use Chicago citation style. If you have any doubts about this citation style, please consult https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Papers that do not properly quote or leave out citations will be penalized.

Writing Tips: Begin with a coherent topic sentence and avoid long paragraphs. (Policymakers are busy with little bandwidth; memos should be crisp, clear, precise, and concise.) Use adjectives sparingly. Avoid the passive tense when possible. Grammatical and spelling errors will negatively affect your grade. Support your arguments with evidence.

Format: 1-inch margins, 12 pt. font, double-spaced. Please include page numbers and spell-check your writing assignments before sending.

How to Submit: Please submit writing assignments on or before the due dates in Microsoft Word format via Canvas or directly to me at rmccanne@andrew.cmu.edu with a copy to

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[2] Like this!

ryantogo71@gmail.com. Late assignments will be penalized. If you send me the document via email, please include a subject line containing relevant information (first one pager, final paper, etc).

Emergencies and planned absences: Attending class and active student participation is essential to the success of the course. If for any reason, you anticipate missing a class, please contact me ahead of time. If you have an emergency and can alert me via email before or during class, please do so.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Do writing assignments alone. Collaboration—writing or editing someone else's paper—is considered a violation of academic integrity, although I welcome any opportunity to discuss paper topics in advance to refine or reorient them toward success. Students who plagiarize will receive zero points for the assignment and consequently will fail the class. The instructor will make use of all available University policies. All cases of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean and Program Chair.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you require accommodation due to a disability, please inform me as early in the semester as possible. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations, but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, please contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu.

We must treat every individual with respect. We are diverse in many ways, and this diversity is fundamental to building and maintaining an equitable and inclusive campus community. Diversity can refer to multiple ways that we identify ourselves, including but not limited to race, color, national origin, language, sex, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Each of these diverse identities, along with many others not mentioned here, shape the perspectives our students, faculty, and staff bring to our campus. We, at CMU, will work to promote diversity, equity and inclusion not only because diversity fuels excellence and innovation, but because we want to pursue justice. We acknowledge our imperfections while we also fully commit to the work, inside and outside of our classrooms, of building and sustaining a campus community that increasingly embraces these core values.

Each of us is responsible for creating a safer, more inclusive environment.

Unfortunately, incidents of bias or discrimination do occur, whether intentional or unintentional. They contribute to creating an unwelcoming environment for individuals and groups at the university. Therefore, the university encourages anyone who experiences or observes unfair or hostile treatment on the basis of identity to speak out for justice and support, within the moment of the incident or after the incident has passed. Anyone can share these experiences using the following resources:

Center for Student Diversity and Inclusion: csdi@andrew.cmu.edu, (412) 268-2150

Report-It online anonymous reporting platform: username: tartans / password: plaid

All reports will be documented and deliberated to determine if there should be any following

actions. Regardless of incident type, the university will use all shared experiences to transform our campus climate to be more equitable and just.

Finally… please take care of yourself.

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

Food Security: SDG 1 is succinct: Zero Hunger. That includes all of us in this course, particularly during this time of high inflation. If you are worried about affording food or feeling insecure about food, there are resources on campus that can help. Email the CMU Food Pantry Coordinator to schedule an appointment: cmu-pantry@andrew.cmu.edu, or 412-268-8704 (SLICE office)

Academic Assistance: All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available and an important part of the graduate school experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. **A particularly useful resource is the Student Academic Success Center (SASC). SASC programs to support student learning include:**

- o **Academic Coaching** – This program provides holistic, one-on-one peer support and group workshops to help undergraduate and graduate students implement habits for success. Academic Coaching assists students with time management, productive learning and study habits, organization, stress management, and other skills. Request an initial consultation here.
- o **Peer Tutoring** – Peer Tutoring is offered in two formats for students seeking support related to their coursework. Drop-In tutoring targets our highest demand courses through regularly scheduled open tutoring sessions during the fall and spring semesters. Tutoring by appointment consists of ongoing individualized and small group sessions.You can utilize tutoring to discuss course related content, clarify and ask questions, and work through practice problems. Visit the webpage to see courses currently being supported by Peer Tutoring.
- o **Communication Support** – Communication Support offers free one-on-one communication consulting as well as group workshops to support strong written, oral, and visual communication in texts including IMRaD and thesis-driven essays, data-driven reports, oral presentations, posters and visual design, advanced research, application materials, grant proposals, business and public policy documents, data visualisation, and team projects. Appointments are available to undergraduate and graduate students from any discipline at CMU. Schedule an appointment (in-person or video), attend a workshop, or consult handouts or videos to strengthen communication skills.
- o **Language and Cross-Cultural Support** – This program supports students seeking help with language and cross-cultural skills for academic and professional success through individual and group sessions. Students can get assistance with writing academic emails, learning expectations and strategies for clear academic writing, pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and more. Make an appointment with a Language Development Specialist to get individualized coaching.

<u>Dealing with Stress</u>: If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is there to help: call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/ Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty or family member you trust for aid in getting connected to the support that can help.