

(HUMAN) SECURITY AND (SUSTAINABLE) DEVELOPMENT

2025-2026 academic year, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Vilnius University.

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Time and location: Thursdays, 18.30-20.00, Room: 305

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course analyzes the interrelation between security and sustainable development. During the course, students will learn the main concepts related to sustainability and security: *sustainable development, human security, responsibility to protect, vulnerability, and resilience*. During the first part of the course, students will be familiarized with different development theories and concepts. The second part of the course focuses on development practices – policies, tools and approaches applied by the leading international actors willing to solve the most pressing developmental and security-related challenges. The final part of the course focuses on intersection of climate, migration and development - topics, showing the complexity of contemporary challenges to global development and security.

Aims and objectives

This course aims to provide students with theoretical arguments and analytical tools to analyze sustainable development and human security, particularly on the EU external policies. It is expected that after finishing the course, students:

- Will have an in-depth knowledge of the main concepts and theories related to (sustainable) development;
- Will understand relations and contradictions between different elements of sustainable development;
- Will understand how different types of security relate to sustainable development;
- Will be able to analyze data and propose policies for sustainable development in chosen policy/development areas.

Course requirements

Attendance at seminars is obligatory. Students who miss more than three meetings are obliged to take an extra assignment. The final assessment shall not be positive if attendance is below 50%, or any other assignment is missing.

Assessment

- *40% final exam*, written form, will be discussed during the course.
- *30% performance in seminars*: a) knowledge of reading materials (good preparation: the ability to explain the key concepts presented, ability to understand theoretical assumptions, ability to present research questions and conclusions), b) ability to connect different concepts with empirical evidence/apply theories for the analysis of empirical reality c) ability to express your thoughts in a well-argued manner.

- *30% practical task*: preparation of problem and solutions trees (visual and up to 2500 words description) of a given real-life problem.

The requirements for problem/solution tree description are attached to this program.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Students may use AI tools in their studies, provided this is done in accordance with the requirements outlined in the methodological guidelines of the Institute of International Relations and Political Science (IIRPS), Vilnius University. All written assignments must include a clear declaration of AI use.

Lecturers may also employ AI for purposes such as generating ideas for assignments, discussing the structure and flow of lectures, and formulating more constructive feedback. However, students' submitted work will never be evaluated by AI, and lecturers will not share any personal information about students with AI platforms.

SCHEDULE

Concepts	
1. Introduction to the course. Sustainable development	09 04
2. History of development thought I	09 11
3. History of development thought II	09 18
4. Human security: the good, the bad and the ugly	09 25
5. Conflict, security, and development: do we have a responsibility/obligation to protect?	10 02
Practice	
6. Securitization of development: development and security nexus in development cooperation	10 09
7. Working in fragile conflicts. Peacebuilding	10 16
8. Development “industry” and its critiques. EU development cooperation	10 23
9. Implementing development projects. Monitoring & Evaluation. Problem tree I	10 30
10. Problem tree II & Solution tree. Explanation of the final assignment	11 06
Cases and debates	
11. Climate adaptation and human security	11 13
12. Migration I. Migration as development problem vs. development strategy	11 20
November 27 no class	
13. Migration II. Migration as security challenge vs. opportunity	12 04
14. Wrap up of the course	12 11

READINGS

A. CONCEPTS

1. Sustainable development

Issues to be discussed: Sustainable development: what we want to preserve, what we want to develop, how long. Course requirements & introduction to the case studies

2. History of development: theory and practice I

Issues to be discussed: how does our ideology shape our belief of what is development (both what is the main problem and how it can be addressed)? How has it changed over the years? How limited are our ways of thinking about development?

Take away for a practical task: different ways of defining the key development problem & acceptable solutions

Readings:

- Benjamin Knutsson (2009). "The Intellectual History of Development Towards a Widening Potential Repertoire", *Perspectives*, no. 13, pp. 1-8 (*in e-learning system*)
- Hopwood, Bill Mellor, Marry, O'Brien, Geoff (2005) "Sustainable Development: Mapping Different Approaches," *Sustainable Development*, 13, 38–52, https://www.open.edu/openlearn/ocw/pluginfile.php/630982/mod_resource/content/1/t863_2_reading2.pdf

3. History of development: theory and practice II

Issues to be discussed: Different theories of development – similarities, differences, and status quo.

Take away for a practical task: connect your case to different theories of development and note how each theory frames causes and possible solutions.

Readings:

- Benjamin Knutsson (2009) "The Intellectual History of Development Towards a Widening Potential Repertoire", *Perspectives*, no. 13, the rest of the article

Group 1

- Fukuda-Parr, S. (2016). *From the Millennium Development Goals to the Sustainable Development Goals: shifts in purpose, concept, and politics of global goal setting for development*. *Gender & Development*, 24(1), 43–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552074.2016.1145895>

Group 2

- Kothari, Ashish, Salleh, Ariel, Escobar, Arturo, Demaria, Federico & Acosta, Alberto (2019). *Pluriverse: A Post-Development Dictionary (Introduction + Development and its crises, global experience pp. 3-18)*. <https://radicalecologicaldemocracy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Pluriverse-full-printable-version-July-2019.pdf>

4. Human security: the good, the bad & the ugly

Issues to be discussed: What is Human Security, how it differs from traditional approaches, and what does the emergence of the concept mean for development (theory and practice)? How human security paved the way for securitization logics in development policy?

Take away for a practical task: reframe your case using the human security lens — which vulnerabilities and actors emerge compared to traditional security approaches?

Readings:

- Edward Newman (2022) Covid-19: A Human Security Analysis, *Global Society*, 36:4, 431-454, DOI: 10.1080/13600826.2021.2010034
- Paris, Roland. “Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?” *International Security* 26, no. 2 (2001): 87–102. <https://aix1.uottawa.ca/~rparis/Paris.2001.IS.Human%20Security.pdf>.

5. Securitization of development? Conflict, security, and development

Issues to be discussed: Development in post-conflict societies: conflict sensitivity, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding. What is the role of cooperation after the conflict? Humanitarian intervention and R2P.

Take away for a practical task: consider how securitization and intervention logics might appear in your case; note how these frames influence what counts as a “problem” and what counts as a “solution.”

Readings:

- Duffield, Mark (2014) “The Merging of Development and Security”, in *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*. (in e-learning system)
- David Chandler (2016) “Humanitarianism reborn: the shift from governing causes to governing effects” in Volker M. Heins et al (eds.) *Humanitarianism and Challenges of Cooperation*, Routledge, pp. 39-54.

B. PRACTICE

6. Securitization of development: development and security nexus in the EU foreign policy

Issues to be discussed: How does the EU see the security-development nexus? What role in the security strategies do we give to development? Development cooperation as a soft power and imperialism?

Take away for a practical task: identify how your case could be used in external actors’ strategies — is development framed as soft power, security tool, or cooperation logic?

Readings:

- EC (2017) *The New European Consensus on Development*, https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/european-development-policy/european-consensus-development_en
- White House (2021) *U.S. Strategy for Addressing the Root Causes of Migration in Central America* <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Root-Causes-Strategy.pdf>

7. Working in fragile conflicts. Peacebuilding

Issues to be discussed: Different conflict frames, development & fragility, peace building.

Take away for a practical task: sketch the first roots of your problem tree — list at least 3–4 underlying causes of your case, informed by conflict and fragility frames.

Readings:

- Bigdon, Christine, Benedikt Korf (2011) *The Role of Development Aid in Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Empowerment Processes and Community Building*, http://edoc.vifapol.de/opus/volltexte/2011/2590/pdf/bigdon_korf_handbook.pdf
- Okoi (2020) "Peacebuilding and transformational change in Nigeria's oil region," *Conflict resolution quarterly*, Volume37, Issue3 Spring, pp. 223-238, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/crq.21270?casa_token=W_ZprFzs00EFAAAAA%3AXGyT08Be4QIxq7xcvjDsSu-ppGwQkZEiCEaV0Lv1Rsm_XTfKvd2FrF_XGzL7FTBjJ_juvFgWTj9tBQ

8. Development industry and its critiques.

Issues to be discussed: Institutions working for sustainable development and their critique.

Take away for a practical task: identify which institutions or actors (local, national, international) matter in your case, and note where critiques of the "development industry" may apply.

Readings:

- Susanne Koch. (2020) "The Local Consultant Will Not Be Credible": How Epistemic Injustice Is Experienced and Practised in Development Aid." *Social Epistemology* 34:5, pages 478-489.
- Sims (2023) "Background: A Sketch of the Development Industry" in Sims (ed) *Development Delusions and Contradictions An Anatomy of the Foreign Aid Industry*, Springer. (in e-learning system)

9. Implementing development projects. Monitoring & Evaluation. Problem tree I

Issues to be discussed: from ideas to actions. Problem/ solution trees

Readings:

- Planning tools: Problem Tree Analysis, <https://odi.org/en/publications/planning-tools-problem-tree-analysis/>
- Problem Tree / Solution Tree Analysis https://evaluationtoolbox.net.au/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28&Itemid=134
- Step Up. STEP UP Training Materials Glasgow Learning Network <https://www.stepupsmartcities.eu/Portals/51/Tools%20and%20Resources/Training/STEP%20UP%20Glasgow%20-%20Problem-Solution%20Tree%20Analysis%20Guidebook.pdf>

10. Problem tree II & Solution tree. Explanation of the final assignment

Readings will be given before the seminar

C. CASES AND DEBATES

11. Climate adaptation and human security

Issues to be discussed: Putting the security–development nexus into practice on climate. Climate change as a threat (multiplier); does climate change cause conflict and/or migration flows?

Readings:

- Hein de Haas, *How Migration Really Works: A Factful Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics*, pp. 343-358 (Myth 22). (London: Pelican, 2023)
- Selby, Jan, and Clemens Hoffmann. "Rethinking Climate Change, Conflict and Security." *Geoforum* 79 (2016): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2016.06.009>

12. Migration as a development problem vs. Migration as a development strategy

Issues to be discussed: how does migration affect sending countries?

Readings:

- Hein de Haas, *How Migration Really Works: A Factful Guide to the Most Divisive Issue in Politics*. (London: Pelican, 2023) Myth 5, 6 and 13

13. Migration as a security challenge vs. Migration as an opportunity

Issues to be discussed: is migration a security threat?

Readings:

- Şahin-Mencutek, Zeynep, Soner Barthoma, N. Ela Gökalp-Aras, and Anna Triandafyllidou. "A Crisis Mode in Migration Governance: Comparative and Analytical Insights." *Comparative Migration Studies* 10, no. 50 (2022): 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-022-00284-2>.
- Tabellini, Marco. "Gifts of the Immigrants, Woes of the Natives: Lessons from the Age of Mass Migration." *The Review of Economic Studies* 87, no. 1 (2020): 454–486. <https://doi.org/10.1093/restud/rdz027>

14. Wrap up of the course