



UiO : Centre for Development and the Environment
University of Oslo

Critical perspectives on NGOs in development



Ph.D. course organised by

Oslo Academy of Global Governance at the Centre for
Development and the Environment (SUM) and
SUM Research School, University of Oslo, Norway

16 - 18 August, 2017

Application deadline: **31 March, 2017**

Course description

The objective of this interdisciplinary course is to critically analyse the changing role of NGOs in development, focusing especially on health and environment.

In recent decades, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have played an increasingly dominant role in development. The growth of NGOs into a veritable global industry has been accompanied by increased professionalization and a diversification in the types of roles NGOs play in society. In some poor countries, notably in the health sector, they have largely replaced national governments, both in policy formulation and in service delivery. In international fora they exert considerable policy influence as campaigning policy advocates with increasing access to formal policy-making channels.

Against this background, the course will address questions such as:

- What roles do NGO-actors play: for example in communicating local realities to those in power, in representing civil society, or as sub-contractors to donors?
- What are their resources, and sources of power; and how is this power exercised?
- What are the wider implications of the increased influence, proliferation, and professionalization of NGOs?

The ambition of the course is bring together PhD students studying NGOs, especially within health and environment: to assist them to locate their own research within a wider context, viewing the roles and practices of NGOs from a critical perspective that includes issues of governance and legitimacy.

Learning outcomes

Students will:

- Obtain a nuanced understanding of the role of NGOs in theory and in practice;
- Be well acquainted with the major theoretical and empirical approaches to studying NGOs at local, national and global levels;
- Engage in critical discussion, become acquainted with the work of others on the changing role of NGOs in development, and build networks within their chosen field of research.

Lecturers

- **David Lewis**, Professor, London School of Economics and Political Science
- **Ann Swidler**, Professor, University of California, Berkeley
- **Mariel Aguilar-Støen**, Associate professor, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo
- **Katerini Storeng**, Associate professor, Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo

Objectives and Focus

The course will enable doctoral students to better understand key concepts, debates and perspectives on NGOs, based on up-to-date literature – and on recent developments ‘on the ground’.

In addition to lectures, the course will allow those conducting Ph.D. research to present their own work and comment on that of others, guided by senior experienced academics who are themselves working in this field.

Course capacity: 18 students

Language of instruction: English

Syllabus: Approx. 1000 pages of compulsory readings.

Application

Who may [apply](#)?

The interdisciplinary nature of the course will be most suitable for doctoral students engaging with different disciplines within the social sciences – anthropology, sociology, political science, geography, and development studies.

Doctoral students will be prioritised, although other applicants may be considered *only if space permits*.

Funding

The course is free.

Lunches will be provided.

The organisers have some funds available to cover the cost of accommodation (meals not included) for selected students from outside Norway. Similarly, there is funding available for a limited number of travel scholarships for selected students. Please consult point 3 under 'Application procedures'.

Application procedures

Interested students should state their motivation and upload the following via the [Application Form](#):

1. **A cover letter** signed by your Ph.D. supervisor or another person at your institution/workplace, stating your academic background and academic degree(s) held, your research interests and current research projects (if any), including estimated date of submission of doctoral thesis.
2. **CV**
3. Students from outside Norway may apply for a modest travel scholarship and/or accommodation support, **by uploading a separate document** along with their course application. If you wish to apply for a travel scholarship, please also attach a **budget** based on minimum cost travel.

Applications are invited from **February, 2017**.

The application deadline is **31 March, 2017**.

An early application is highly recommended due to space constraints.

Successful applicants will be contacted by **10 April, 2017**.

Preparations

A major purpose of the course is to provide participants with comments on their on-going work. It is therefore obligatory for all participants to submit a draft paper which will be discussed during the course. The paper should be approximately 10 pages long (4000 – 5000 words, excluding the bibliography).

Students who are admitted to the course should submit their draft paper electronically to the course secretariat by **20 June, 2017**.

This paper may be revised and resubmitted for evaluation and approval after the course (please consult the section on 'Credits' below).

All draft paper submissions will be posted on the course's password protected intranet site. All participants are expected to read all draft papers in advance and provide feedback during the course.

Syllabus and programme

A complete reading list (with links to online publications, when possible) of approximately 1000 pages will be available on the course's intranet site by **10 April, 2017**.

Participants are expected to read the syllabus in advance of the course.

Participants are expected to attend morning and afternoon sessions, and evening sessions when relevant, on all three days.

Credits

Course participants will receive a Course Certificate, **recommending** either 10 or 3 ECTS credits, but your own institution must approve credits for the course. We therefore recommend that you contact your Ph.D. coordinator about the issue of credits prior to your participation.

For a Certificate recommending 10 credits, a revised paper of 15 – 20 pages (6000 - 8000 words) must be submitted to the course organisers no later than 8 weeks after completion of the course, and the paper must be graded with 'pass'. (The paper will be evaluated by a course lecturer and assessed within eight weeks after submission).

3 ECTS credits will be recommended for those who participate in full but choose not to submit a revised paper for evaluation (or for those whose revised paper does not pass).

Contact information

Should you have any practical enquiries, please do not hesitate to email the course secretariat at ngodev2017@sum.uio.no.

Check for updates

Please check for updated information at the [Ph.D. course's web pages](#) at the Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM).

