Course Objectives:
- To improve understanding of NGOs and development in Africa. The course will critically analyse NGOs and the various contexts in which they operate (humanitarian situations, development projects, advocacy work).
- To develop a broad understanding of the policy and practice of NGOs in relation to internal systems and structures, principal activities and relationships with other actors. For example, the role of NGOs in Rwanda’s genocide and after, the work of Danish NGOs in Ethiopia, the role of Ghanaian home-town associations, and the role of international advocacy in humanitarian work in Sudan.
- To understand and apply relevant concepts and theories drawn from several research fields (development studies, social policy, anthropology, sociology, political theory) to NGO questions and problems.
- To relate individual student’s own experience to current research on NGOs wherever possible.

Key course outcomes:
- Gain an analytical understanding of the NGO literature on Africa.
- Gain a working understanding of the literature concerned with civil society and state-society relations in Africa.
- Develop a critical understanding of selected relevant concepts from the wider social science literature.

Teaching approach and methods:
Alongside a lecture by the session organiser, the sessions will also include student presentations, group exercises, writing exercises and other teaching related activities. The intention is to generate an engaged and participatory learning environment. The success of this approach depends very much on the overall level of commitment of those involved in terms of reading, preparing, class participation and debate. We expect all students to participate actively in class, to do the readings, and to be ready to discuss these in class voluntarily or when called upon. We have organized the course on the premise that there are a range of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds that can be built upon and shared.

In what is outlined below, we list the readings compulsory for the session. Some of the readings will be available on Absalon, and others you will have to get access to online via REX. Presentations, other relevant course material, and information regarding the course will be posted on Absalon. We expect you to access Absalon on a regular basis.

There is also a brief description of the group work that takes place in the second half of the sessions. We expect you to make some advance preparations for the group work.
Course outline (please note that some sessions are two hour sessions and other sessions are three hour sessions)

1. 6/2 Introduction to the course (10.00-12.00) KJL
2. 13/2 State and society in Africa (10.00 – 12.00) KJL
3. 20/2 FILM: ‘Pray the devil back to hell’ (10.00 – 12.00) KJL
4. 27/2 NGOs and development projects (9.00–12.00) KJL
5. 6/3 Case study: Rwanda (9.00–12.00) BWJ
6. 13/3 NGOs, global civil society and advocacy (9.00–12.00) BWJ
7. 20/3 NGOs between state, donors and community (9.00–12.00) SJ
8. 27/3 NGOs and Human Rights (9.00–12.00) SJ
9. 10/4 NGOs and Humanitarian Relief (9.00–12.00) KJL
10. 17/4 Religion, NGOs and development (10.00–12.00) KJL
11. 24/4 Ethics, accountability and conclusion (10.00–12.00) KJL

BWJ (Ben Jones), Senior Lecturer, University of East Anglia, UK
KJL (Karen Lauterbach), part-time lecturer, University of Copenhagen, postdoc at Lund University
SJ (Steffen Jensen), Senior Researcher, Danish Institute Against Torture
Course plan and readings

1. Introduction – 6 February 2015 (10.15-12.00)

This session introduces the course. We will set out the parameters of how the sessions will be organised, and what we have proposed as the learning format and the forms of assessment for the module. We will go through the structure and the approach of the course. We are also interested to know your professional experience and background in relation to NGOs and development, as well as your expectations for the course. We will discuss how civil society has been perceived in development thinking and policy and among NGOs working in Africa and discuss what the implications are these perceptions might be.

Readings:


Supplementary readings:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark. (2014) Policy for Danish Support to Civil Society, Danida, pp. 1-38. [38 pages] [text available on Absalon]


Much of the “failure” of Africa today is blamed on the state. The “good governance” agenda, “capacity building” and “anti-corruption politics” of the past two decades have all aimed at reforming the state in Africa. The lecture is framed by two texts from the 1990s: Mahmood Mamdani’s Citizen and Subject and Bayart’s The Politics of the Belly. Their arguments – on the experience of colonialism and the importance of external relations – will be examined in detail. These analytical frameworks also inform later lectures. To what extent do past experiences work as a way of understanding the performance of present-day governments?
Readings:


Supplementary readings:


3. **FILM ‘Pray the Devil Back to Hell’ – 20 February 2015**

In this session we will watch the award-winning documentary 'Pray the Devil Back to Hell', which looks at the role of a women's movement during the peace process in Liberia in 2003.

Readings:


4. **NGOs and development projects – 27 February 2015**

Session 4 leads into discussions of thinking about development projects and the work of NGOs in the field. Projects are one of the most obvious arenas in which development workers and beneficiaries make sense of what Norman Long has characterised as the “development encounter”. We look at classical texts in the anthropology of development in Africa: James Ferguson on the Anti-Politics Machine and Olivier de Sardan’s work on development projects.

**Group exercise: “Bitter money” in east Africa?**

This exercise explores different logics to development and change. In preparation it is important you read the article by Olivier de Sardan in *Sociologia Ruralis* as well as the text on “Bitter Money” by Parker Shipton. This group exercise is a stepped exercise and more instructions will be made available at the session itself.

Readings:


**Long N. and Long A. (1992)** *Battlefields of Knowledge: The Interlocking of Theory and Practice*
5. Case study: Rwanda – 6 March 2015

Why is ethnicity so important in African politics and how can we relate this to different civil society actors? This week the particular focus is on Rwanda, the genocide, and the post-genocide efforts at rebuilding society. The literature presents a number of ways of thinking about the events of 1993 and after. There is a strong linkage between this session and the earlier discussion of the state in Africa. In particular arguments about the relationship between genocide, the role of religious institutions and government bureaucracies. We look at Uvin’s work on “aiding genocide” and Longman’s study of the Catholic Church during the genocide.

Presenting group:
Present the main argument of Uvin’s essay. This should not take longer than ten minutes.

Group work
The group exercise examines the role of civil society actors in Rwanda after the genocide. The particular focus is on the education sector and how different aid actors, civil society organizations and the Rwanda state, have approached education as a means of rebuilding Rwanda post-genocide.

Readings:


Uvin, P. (1999). ‘Development Aid and Structural Violence: The case of Rwanda’ Development 42(3) Local/Global Encounters pp. 49-82. [34 pages] [article on Absalon]

Supplementary readings:


6. **NGOs, global civil society and advocacy – 13 March 2015**

The declining significance of the state and the growing significance of processes of globalisation have shifted the terrain around which development policy is formulated. This session examines the growing influence of transnational advocacy networks and their impact on public policy. Drawing on earlier discussions about civil society and the role of the state the session looks at how networks and coalitions shape the provision of public policy in developing countries.

We in particular look at the case of Sudan and the “Save Darfur” campaign. Alongside an understanding of the campaign, its successes and failures, there is a discussion of the history and political economy of Sudan. The intention is to understand the global and local linkages and the complex ways in which advocacy intersects with processes of development and change.

**Group work**

*Sudan and the “Save Darfur” campaign*

What difference has the Save Darfur campaign made? Read the article from *Newsweek* posted on *Absalon* which is a debate between two people who have been engaged in the campaign in different ways:

Who do you find most persuasive? What is their overall argument? What is missing from the analysis?

I would also encourage you to do some background research on both the de Waal and Prendergast position and to study in detail the Abuja peace talks (concerning Darfur), which is the focus for their disagreement. Come to class prepared to debate. You might also want to think about the extent to which the analysis of transnational advocacy networks – in particular the work of Keck and Sikkink – helps us make sense of the “Save Darfur” campaign and the government of Sudan.

**Readings:**


**Supplementary Readings:**


7. NGOs between state, donors and community – 20 March 2015

This session looks at the relationship between donors, local NGOs, states and beneficiary communities. Introducing the theoretical concepts of translation and assemblages, the session will explore a local, South African NGO and how it positions itself and navigate between powerful interests. We will discuss the issue of victimhood and how claim making works in ways that often have quite surprising consequences.

Group work
Each group will assume a different subject position in relation to what we may talk of as the victimhood assemblage as introduced before. On the basis of this exercise, we will discuss dilemmas and paradoxes of local NGOs and other actors.

Readings:
[PDF file uploaded on Absalon].


[PDF file uploaded on Absalon]

[PDF File uploaded to Absalon]

8. NGOs and Human Rights – 27 March 2015

This session looks at Human Rights Based Approaches to Development. With the point of departure in one of the fundamental conventions, the UN Convention Against Torture, the session will discuss what it means to use a RBA to NGO work. We will discuss the theory behind it as it has emerged in the NGO literature, the consequences of applying such an approach and look at a practical example from work in South Africa.

Group work
The groups will examine specific cases of police violence and discuss whether or not they fall under the convention including how cases must be presented in order to satisfy the logic of RBA.
Readings


9. NGOs and Humanitarian Relief – 10 April 2015

This session looks at humanitarianism (ideas) and humanitarian interventions (practices) as a specific arena in which NGOs operate. We go through the history of humanitarianism and relief interventions in Africa. The session examines the particular role of NGOs in this arena and discusses the available criticisms of humanitarian relief. We discuss the inherent dilemma in humanitarian work of, on the one hand claiming neutrality, and on the other operating in highly politicised environments, as well as the link between humanitarian assistance and the more recent securitisation agenda. This session moreover relates to discussions that appear in the closing session on ethics and accountability.

Questions to be discussed in the session and to think about while reading the texts:

- What role have NGOs traditionally played in humanitarian relief?
- How has that changed in recent years and what are the implications of this?

Group work
Each group will discuss one of the three texts listed below (texts will be allocated in class so read all of them in preparation). Afterwards the views, dilemmas and main arguments will be presented and debated in class.

Interview with journalist Linda Polman from The Guardian (25 April 2010):
http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2010/apr/25/humanitarian-aid-war-linda-polman/print

The reply from the Overseas Development Institute (May 2010):

The article (Alms Dealers) from the New Yorker by Philip Gourevitch (11 October 2010):

Readings:


10. Religion, NGOs and Development – 17 April 2015

The argument of this session is that religion is central to how many people conceive of what development means and what is means to be developed. Through a number of case studies we will discuss the relationship between religious ideas and institutions and processes of development and social change. Religion (e.g. faith based organisations) is seen as part of the public sphere in Africa and is part of how power is organised and sustained.

Group work

1. Drawing on one or more example from Africa, discuss the significance of religious beliefs in shaping the work of civil society organizations. In what ways can religious ideas serve as legitimization for development interventions and what are the implications of this?
2. What advantages and disadvantages do religious NGOs, and religious organizations have in promoting development as compared to secular NGOs?

Readings:


Jones, B, and M.J. Petersen (2011) Instrumental, narrow, normative? Reviewing recent work on religion and development, *Third World Quarterly* 32(7): 1291-1306 [16 pages] [link to text on Absalon]


Supplementary reading:


11. Ethics and Accountability and Conclusion – 24 April 2015

In this final session we discuss ethics and accountability in the work of NGOs. This includes questions such as who do NGOs represent, who are they accountable to and how do they assure their legitimacy? We look at concepts such as multiple accountabilities and discuss examples where different forms of accountability are in conflict or competition. The session also includes a discussion of ethics in the work of NGOs.

Readings:


Routley, L. (2011) NGOs and the formation of the public: Grey practices and accountability, African Affairs, 111(442): 116-134. [19 pages] [link to text on absalon]

Supplementary reading:


Reference texts:

For those of you new to the study of Africa, one of the best general guides to the history and politics of the continent in the past half century is:


Nugent provides an overarching narrative that combines detailed case studies with a discussion of the major debates in academic and policy circles. It is written with the idea of being a course textbook and so is readily accessible and written in an engaging way.

Useful book length texts for approaching the study of NGOs and their relationship to the state are:


Much cited studies which look at the question of how to study development processes in the field are:


We have a range of additional texts and references which you are welcome to inquire after, particularly if you are in a presenting group or would like further advice on literature for your exam work.
Websites

There is an increasing amount of information about NGOs contained on the worldwide web. These are some sites:

http://www.ids.ac.uk/id21/
The ID21 site provides summaries of recent development research and is supported by the Department for International Development in the UK.

http://www.edc.org/GLG/CapDev/dosapage.htm
DOSA is an acronym that stands for Discussion-Oriented Organizational Self-Assessment. DOSA was developed in 1997 by Beryl Levinger of Education Development Center and Evan Bloom of Pact with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development/Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (USAID/PVC) and numerous PVO colleagues.

http://www.intrac.org
INTRAC is the International NGO Training and Research Centre and this site is useful to keep in touch with current NGO research.

http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook.htm
The Centre for the Study of Global Governance: here you will find three editions of the Global Civil Society Yearbook, downloadable by chapter as PDFs, as well as information on seminars and public events relating to global civil society.

www.oneworld.net
One World.net is the primary portal for human rights and sustainable development news.

www.civicus.org
Civicus is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

http://www.developmentgateway.org/
The Development Gateway is an interactive site for information on sustainable development and poverty reduction, and a space for communities to share experiences on development efforts.

www.ddrn.dk
DDRN is a network linking research-based knowledge and development within the sectors of agriculture, environment, and governance.

Recommended Journals

The following journals all carry material on NGOs and the development context. They can all be accessed electronically.

Community Development Journal
Democratization
Development in Practice
Development Policy Review
Development and Change
Human Rights Quarterly
Journal of Civil Society
Journal of Democracy
Journal of International Development
Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
Voluntas
World Development