_____

Boundless Horizons: African & Global Development Field Studies (Ghana)
DEST 401: Building Sustainable Futures: Community Development Theory and Practice Inside Out"

GFC Hours 3-0
Spring 2026

Instructor: Dr. R. Apentiik
Phone (Calgary): 403-473-4473 & 403-220-6688
Email: rapentii@ucalgary.ca
Lecture Location: Ghana

Prerequisite(s): None

Course Description
This course provides a comprehensive exploration of community development, integrating theoretical foundations with practical applications. Students will critically engage with various models, theories, and approaches to community development, evaluating their effectiveness across diverse socio-cultural contexts. Through immersive fieldwork, students will have the opportunity to engage with local communities and development experts at both local and national levels. They will gain valuable insights into how these stakeholders address real-world challenges and work towards promoting sustainable development. The course may include field trips and hands-on activities, requiring adherence to safety protocols and ethical considerations.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Critically analyze key theories and models of community development.
- Understand the role of stakeholders and power dynamics in development initiatives.
- Apply theoretical knowledge to real-world community development projects.
- Evaluate the impact of community interventions on social, economic, and environmental outcomes.
- Develop interdisciplinary collaboration and communication skills for effective community engagement.
- Demonstrate ethical and culturally sensitive approaches to development work.

Readings and Textbooks
Required and Recommended Readings will be available on D2L.

Additional Resource:
- *Journal of Community Development*
- *Development in Practice*

Course Requirements and Assessments
1. Pre-Departure Exercises/assignments (40%):
To prepare for the field study, students must complete pre-departure exercises designed to enhance their understanding of theoretical frameworks, socio-cultural dynamics, and ethical considerations in community development.

Exercises 1.: Critical Review Assignment (20%): Due May 8, 2026, via D2L)
This assignment requires you to submit a 2-page critical review of the designated article (*marked article *****). This assignment provides an opportunity to deeply engage with academic literature, refine your analytical and writing skills, and to prepare you for the ethical dilemmas and complex situations you may encounter in the field. Ensure that you adhere to the specified word count and formatting guidelines.
Format & Structure: Your paper must:
- **Title Page**: Include the title of the paper, course code, instructor's name, student ID, and date of submission.
- **Length**: Be no more than 2 pages, excluding the final list of references (bibliography and brief appendix are not included in the length restrictions). All pages should be numbered. Exceeding the maximum page length may result in a grade penalty (e.g., A- to B+) or a deduction of two (2) points, depending on the extent of the overage.
- **Formatting**: Your submission should use 12-point Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing, and standard 1.5-inch margins.
- **References**: Include a minimum of 1-2 properly cited scholarly peer-reviewed references, in addition to the article used for the assignment. Use APA citation format for both in-text citations and the final list of references (detailed examples provided on D2L).

Your task is to carefully read, summarize and analyze the article while engaging with its key arguments and themes.
Critical Review Assignment Requirements:
- A summary of the article's key points
- Provide a thorough analysis of the article by evaluating its main arguments, methodology, and contributions to the field.
- A critical analysis that engages with the article's arguments, drawing connections to broader concepts or theories of community development ethics
- Highlight both the strengths and weaknesses of the article. Consider aspects such as the relevance of the topic, the soundness of the evidence provided, and the clarity of the argumentation.
- Proper citation -both intext and final reference list.
Assessment/ Evaluation Criteria:
   Your paper will be evaluated based on:
- **Content Quality**: A well-informed review or discussion of the articles, with a coherent argument and logical progression of ideas
     --demonstrate a clear understanding of the article's content and its implications (comprehension)

- **Clarity and Quality Writing Skills (e.g. grammar and clarity)**: Clear expression and correct use of grammar.
  --Clarity: Ensure that your writing is coherent, well-structured, and free of grammatical errors.
- **Critical Analysis**: Demonstrates a critical, rather than descriptive, analysis.
  --Critical Thinking: Show depth of thought by analyzing the article's significance and critically evaluating its strengths and limitations.
- **Integration of Course Material**: Effective use of information from lectures, readings, and other relevant literature.
  --Relevance: Relate your analysis to course concepts or broader discussions in the field of community development ethics
- **Citation and Formatting**: Properly formatted in-text citations and a final list of references.
  --Substantial marks will be deducted for improper citation and bibliographical formatting.
  --Use APA formatting for citations and references.

Exercises 2.: Community Engagement Assignment (20%): Due May 8, 2026, via D2L),
This exercise aims to inspire students to actively engage with the community development challenges they might face during their field studies in Ghana. The evaluation will focus on the quality of research, creativity, feasibility, and the depth of analysis demonstrated in their proposed solutions. Choice one of the topics/problems below and provide 2-page response:

i) *Problem:* Many communities in Ghana struggle with access to clean and safe drinking water.
   - *Exercise:* Create a 2-page proposal for a sustainable water solution for a rural community, considering cost, accessibility, and local needs.
   - *Grading:* Assess the feasibility of their proposal, including research, budget, and sustainability

ii) **Problem:** Youth unemployment is a significant challenge in Ghana, especially in rural areas.
   - *Exercise:* Create research programs or initiatives aimed at addressing youth unemployment and propose an improvement or new solution.
   - *Grading:* Evaluate their understanding of the issue and creativity in proposing a solution.

iii) **Problem:** Gender Equality or disparities in education, particularly in rural Ghana, limit opportunities for girls.
   - *Exercise:* Write a 2-page or create a presentation that examines gender gaps in education in a specific region of Ghana and propose ways to promote gender equality.
   - *Grading:* Assess research, analysis, and the practicality of proposed solutions.

iv) **Problem:** Many rural communities in Ghana face challenges in accessing healthcare, with limited clinics and medical professionals.
   - *Exercise:* design a community health outreach program that addresses healthcare accessibility in a remote area.
   - *Grading:* Assess the practicality and creativity of the proposed outreach program, considering logistics and community engagement.

V) **Problem:** Poor sanitation and waste management systems in many urban and rural areas affect public health.
   - **Exercise:** develop a community-based waste management plan, incorporating recycling, composting, and local waste collection.
   - **Grading:** Evaluate the sustainability, community involvement, and practicality of the plan.

Vi) **Problem:** Climate change is impacting agricultural productivity, water resources, and natural ecosystems in Ghana.
   - **Exercise:** create a campaign to raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation in a local community.
   - **Grading:** Evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign's messaging and its potential for community impact.

2. Participation and Team Assignments (20%)
Active engagement in class discussions, debrief sessions, and fieldwork is essential. Collaboration within teams is critical, and professional conflict resolution is encouraged when necessary.

Guidelines for Meaningful Participation:
- Attendance and contribution to discussions, fieldwork, and guest lectures.
- Participation in weekly and one-on-one debrief sessions with the instructor-reflections and knowledge exchange.
- One-on-one debrief sessions with the instructor.
- Use of participation tracking tools to assess engagement.

3. Reflective Journal Paper 40% (Due: June 3, 2026 via D2L)
This assignment requires students to produce a Reflective Journal Paper based on their *Daily Journal Entries* and *Field Analysis*, which document personal learning experiences and cultural observations during the trip. This means that in the course students are expected to maintain a journal throughout the trip, recording their reflections, insights, and personal experiences regularly. These journal entries should demonstrate thoughtful integration of course concepts with fieldwork observations. This component of the course assignment is providing students with the opportunity to critically analyze their fieldwork experiences while connecting theoretical knowledge to real-world applications.

Format & Structure:
Your paper must:
- **Title Page**: Include the title of the paper, course code, instructor's name, student ID, and date of submission.
- **Length**: Be no more than 10 pages, excluding the final list of references (bibliography and brief appendix are not included in the length restrictions). All pages should be numbered. Exceeding the maximum page length may result in a grade penalty (e.g., A- to B+) or a deduction of two (2) points, depending on the extent of the overage.
- **Formatting**: Your submission should use 12-point Times New Roman font, 1.5 line spacing, and standard 1.5-inch margins.
- **References**: Include a minimum of 1-2 properly cited scholarly peer-reviewed references, in addition to the article used for the assignment. Use APA citation format for both in-text citations and the final list of references (detailed examples provided on D2L).

The Reflective Journal Paper will be evaluated based on the following:
⇒ The regularity of journal entries.
⇒ The depth and clarity of reflections and cultural insights.
⇒ The integration of course concepts with field experiences.
⇒ The comprehensiveness and organization of the documentation.

What Makes a Great Reflective Journal Paper!!
A well-crafted and organized reflective journal paper or field analysis should demonstrate the following:
⇒ Foundation in Daily Journal Entries: The paper must be grounded in daily reflections, capturing personal experiences, observations, and critical reflections on themes related to both community development studies and African studies.
⇒ Depth of Reflection: A strong reflective journal goes beyond merely describing events. It should:
- Demonstrate insightfulness, critical thinking, and meaningful engagement with your observations.
- Connect personal experiences to academic concepts, integrating theory with practice—showcasing how course concepts relate to and inform fieldwork observations.
⇒ Evaluation and Personal Growth: The paper should assess your learning process, highlight self-awareness, and demonstrate personal growth. It should also consider ethical and cultural implications within the African context.
⇒ Clarity and Structure: The journal must have a clear organizational structure, with logical flow, consistency, and completeness. High-quality writing is essential to effectively convey your reflections and analysis.

By meeting these criteria, your reflective journal will illustrate a meaningful connection between field experiences and academic insights while showcasing personal and intellectual development.

Detailed Guidelines for Your Reflective Journal Paper
Introduction (1–2 paragraphs):
- Brief Context: Provide an overview of the fieldwork location—Ghana, West Africa. Summarize your experience from the major areas visited (e.g., Accra, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Bolgatanga, etc.), and explain the purpose behind visiting these locations. Relate these experiences to the rationale and objectives of the Group Study Program.
- Key Themes or Concepts: Briefly highlight the main themes or concepts explored during the program as the relate to development.
- Personal Objectives: State your personal goals for the fieldwork. What were your expectations before beginning this journey?

Body Sections (Thematic Analysis):
Organize the body of your paper around key themes and insights derived from your journal.
- *Cultural Encounters and Observations:*
  ⇒ Reflect on significant cultural aspects you observed, such as customs, traditions, languages, and social norms.
  ⇒ Discuss how these cultural encounters aligned with or challenged your expectations or prior knowledge.
- *Cultural Sensitivity and Reflections:*
  ⇒ Analyze your experience with cultural sensitivity and awareness.
  ⇒ Reflect on how cultural sensitivity influenced your engagement and understanding of the local context.
- *Community Engagement and Power Dynamics:*
  ⇒ Describe your interactions and engagement with community members or local experts.
  ⇒ Reflect on how the community responded to your presence.
  ⇒ Identify and discuss any challenges faced, such as communication barriers, trust-building issues, or ethical concerns.
  ⇒ Examine power dynamics within the community and their implications for development initiatives or projects.
- *Theoretical Connections to Fieldwork*
  ⇒ It may also be useful if you could make theoretical connections to your reflective paper
  ⇒ Applying Academic Concepts: Utilize academic theories and concepts, such as postcolonial theory, indigenous knowledge systems, and development studies paradigms, to interpret and analyze your observations and encounters throughout the trip.
  ⇒ Theory vs. Practice: Compare and contrast how the theories studied in the course align with or differ from the realities you encountered on the ground. Highlight any discrepancies or confirmations.
- *Challenges and Ethical Considerations*
  ⇒ Identifying Dilemmas: Discuss specific dilemmas, conflicts, or misunderstandings you faced, such as ethical concerns or cultural misinterpretations.
  ⇒ Handling Challenges: Explain how you addressed these issues and reflect on the lessons learned through those experiences.
- *Personal Growth and Transformations*
  ⇒ Challenging Assumptions: Reflect on how this experience challenged your preconceptions or shifted your worldview.
  ⇒ Skills and Knowledge: Identify the new skills or knowledge you gained and how they may influence your future endeavors.

Conclusion (1–2 paragraphs):
  ⇒ Key Reflections: Summarize the main reflections and insights gained from the fieldwork, emphasizing how the experience has shaped your academic or professional aspirations.
  ⇒ Future Pathways: Suggest areas for further research, personal growth, or professional development based on your experience.

Using structured guidelines will ensure that your reflections are thoughtful, critical, and deeply engaged with the concepts, themes, and experiences from your field trips and engagement with communities and experts .

Gibbs' Reflective Cycle Framework: Best Practices for Writing a Reflection Paper Based on Journal Entries.
You may also want to refer to Gibbs' Reflective Cycle Framework which highlight the following area:
- *Describe the Situation:* Provide a detailed account of the events, interactions, or experiences you are reflecting on.
- *Analyze Feelings and Reactions*: Reflect on your emotions and initial responses during the experience. Consider what influenced these feelings and how they shaped your actions.
- *Evaluate What Went Well or Badly*: Critically assess the outcomes of the situation, identifying both successes and areas that could have been improved.
- *Relate to Theories*: Connect your observations and reflections to relevant theories or academic concepts, particularly those studied in the course or related to African studies and community development.
- C*onclude with Lessons Learned*: Summarize key takeaways from the experience, focusing on what you have learned about yourself, the community, or the field of study.
- *Action Plan for Future Learning*: Outline specific actions you can take to apply your insights and improve your approach in similar future situations.

Sample Reflection Excerpt
During our visit to a rural village in Ghana, I observed how traditional leadership structures influenced local development projects. The chief's authority was widely respected, and decisions were made through consensus within the elders' council. This reminded me of Mahmood Mamdani's argument on decentralized despotism, where colonial legacies shaped governance structures in African communities (Mamdani, 1996). However, I also noticed that younger villagers were more inclined toward modern governance models, signaling a shift in generational perspectives. This observation challenged my assumption that traditional leadership remains rigid and unchanging.

 Final Checklist Before Submission of the Reflective Paper
- ✅ Have you provided specific examples from your journal?
- ✅ Have you critically analyzed rather than just described experiences?
- ✅ Have you connected experiences to academic concepts from the course or theory?
- ✅ Have you structured the paper into clear sections?
- ✅ Have you ensured clarity, coherence, and proper citations (APA/Chicago)?

Final Thoughts
A strong reflective paper should blend experience, theory, and self-awareness, showing both intellectual engagement and cultural sensitivity. This approach allows for deeper learning and contributes meaningfully to discussions on African development and social structures.

Additional Notes:
- ⇒ Completion of all assignments/components is required to pass the course. However, passing each component individually is not necessary to achieve a passing grade overall.
- ⇒ Written assignments will be evaluated, in part, based on writing skills, which encompass surface correctness (grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.), as well as overall clarity and organization.
- ⇒ No extra credit or makeup work is available for this course.
- ⇒ It is your responsibility to retain an electronic copy of each assignment (e.g., research paper) submitted. If requested, you must be prepared to provide a second copy of your assignment. Failure to provide a second copy may result in a zero grade for that portion of the course.

POLICY ON MISSED TESTS & LATE SUBMISSIONS OF ASSIGNMENTS

- Late assignments will incur a penalty of 5% per day, including weekends, if submitted without prior approval from the instructor. This penalty may also result in a loss of up to a full grade (e.g., from A- to B+).
- For deferred final exams (see: Deferred Final Exams).
- If you miss a test, it is your responsibility to contact the instructor via email within 24 hours of the missed test to request a makeup opportunity. The decision to allow a makeup test is at the instructor's discretion. If approval is granted, you must be prepared to take the makeup test within two weeks of the original test date, on a date and time chosen by the instructor. Failure to arrange a makeup test within the 24-hour window forfeits your right to a makeup test.

Documentation Issues: **Supporting Documentation for Exemptions and Special Requests**

Students are not required to provide specific supporting documentation (e.g., medical note) for exemptions or special requests, including missed tests and assignments. However, they may choose to provide such documentation to support their situation. This could include, but is not limited to:

- Prolonged absence from a course where participation is required
- A missed course assessment
- A deferred examination
- An appeal

Students are encouraged to submit documentation that best supports their circumstances. The decision to provide supporting documentation is at the discretion of the student.

Note: Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action under the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

Reappraisal of Graded Term Work: I.2 Reappraisal of Graded Term Work | UCalgary Catalog

Reappraisal of Final Grade: I.3 Reappraisal of Final Grades (Final Academic Assessments) | UCalgary Catalog

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology Grading Scheme:

A+	95 – 100%	B+	80 – 84.9%	C+	67 – 70.9%	D+	55 – 58.9%
A	90 – 94.9%	B	75 – 79.9%	C	63 – 66.9%	D	50 – 54.9%
A-	85 – 89.9%	B-	71 – 74.9%	C-	59 – 62.9%	F	< 50%

Land Acknowledgement

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology acknowledges the traditional territories of the people of the Treaty 7 region in Southern Alberta, which includes the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprising the Siksika, Piikani, and Kainai First Nations), as well as the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including the Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Wesley First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to Métis Nation of Alberta, Region 3.

Respect for Diversity and Territorial Acknowledgment

Our classrooms view diversity of identity as a strength and resource. Your experiences and different perspectives are encouraged and add to a rich learning environment that fosters critical thought through respectful discussion and inclusion.

Policies on Course sharing websites and copyright:

Classroom teaching and learning activities, such as lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., conducted by both instructors and students, are protected by copyright and are the intellectual property of their respective authors. All course materials,

including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other resources, are also subject to copyright protection and remain the intellectual property of their respective authors.

Students enrolled in the course are permitted to take notes and make copies of course materials solely for their own educational purposes. However, students are prohibited from reproducing or distributing lecture notes and course materials publicly, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes, without obtaining express written consent from the copyright holder(s).

Please feel welcome to discuss with me any aspect of the course requirements or package you think is unclear to you.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS
Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor or the Department Head. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity. The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student's work as your own, (2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-procedure

For students wishing to know more about what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly cite the work of others, the Department of Geography recommends that they attend Academic Integrity workshops offered through the Student Success Centre: https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing. Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/intellectual-property-policy

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT
Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION
All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy) and requirements of the copyright act (https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND SAFETY
Please visit the Registrar's website at: https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines for additional important information on the following:
- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE (see Itinerary)

It should be noted the schedule is subject to minor changes and revisions

Schedule/Dates	Topic, Activity/Issues, Readings and other important dates
Pre-session **Week 1: May 4-8**	**Topics to be Covered** • Overview of Approaches and Theories of Community Development (CD) • Understanding Community Dynamics and Stakeholder Interests • Approaches in CD Community Development **Required Readings:** Hasan, M. (2022). Community Development Practice: from Canadian and global perspectives - **(open source)**. 　　chapters 1: *Introduction to Community Development Practice.* 　　Chapter 2: *Principles and Process in Community Development.* 　　Chapter 3: *Principles and Process in Community Development.* 　　Chapter 4*: Decolonizing Community Development Practice* 　　Chapter 5: *Asset Based Community Development* ******Banks, S., Shevellar, L., & Narayanan, P. (2023). Ethical issues in community development: Setting the scene. Community Development Journal, 58(1), 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsac043*** **Recommended:** Brydon, L. (2006). Ethical practices in doing development research. In R. Potter & V. Desai (Eds.), *Doing Development Research* (Chapter 3). Sage Publications. Apentiik, C. R. A., & Parpart, J. L. (2006). Working in different cultures: Issues of race, ethnicity, and identity. In R. Potter & V. Desai (Eds.), *Doing Development Research* (chapter 4). Sage Publications.
Week 2: May 11-16	**Topics to be Covered** • Field Visit/Guest Lecture • Ethical issues in Community Development **Required Readings:** Ward, S. (2023). Using theory-based evaluation to understand what works in asset-based community development. *Community Development Journal, 58*(2), 206–225. https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsac041
Week 3: May 18-23	**Topics to be Covered** • Field Trip/Guest Speaker • Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice **Required Readings:** To be posted
Week 4: May 26-31	**Topics to be Covered** • Wrapping up of course work • Reflection on Learning Experiences and Future Implications • Individual consultation with professor • Getting reflective paper finalized
Week 5: 1-3	**Free time for packing and concluding the semester**