

Global challenge for the 21st Century

The view from the South

“ Perhaps one day the world, our world, won't be upside down, and then any newborn human being will be welcome. Saying, 'Welcome. Come. Come in. Enter. The entire earth will be your kingdom. Your legs will be your passport, valid forever.' ”

EDUARDO GALEANO
URUGUAYAN AUTHOR AND HISTORIAN



Course Title: Global Challenges for the 21st Century: The View from the South

Course Tutor: Prof. Jeremy Lester [jer.p.lester@gmail.com]

Dates: April 2024

Dipartimento di Studi Umanistici

Summary:

Long before the Covid 19 pandemic erupted with such terrible and disastrous effects across every length and breadth of the globe, followed by the wars between Russia and Ukraine and Israel and Gaza/Palestine, it had been very clear that the 21st century would confront humanity with a whole number of extremely major challenges, which would determine not only the future of our species but the very future of life itself on planet Earth. With the additional challenges now of ever-recurring pandemics (old and new) and ever more conflicts around the world, all these challenges have become even more acute, especially given the manner in which each individual challenge interacts and impacts with all the others. Notwithstanding the huge potential consequences for all of our personal, individual lives and life-styles, for most of us the way we see and interpret these challenges, and especially the solutions that will be put forward, will be determined by the major political powers and socio-economic forces of the developed world, along with the global institutions that they control – the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation etc. But will the solutions be the right ones — not just for us but even more particularly for the less developed countries of the world located principally in the southern hemisphere, which are actually going to be the ones most affected by most of the coming challenges? Will the powerful states and institutions of the ‘North’ take on board the situation in the ‘South’? Will the southern hemisphere countries and their peoples be given a real voice to express themselves? How in fact do these challenges and problems look from *their* perspective? Do they look different? What if they have alternative solutions to put forward, what might these be? How and from where might these alternative solutions be formulated? Might any alternative solutions also have potential positive consequences for us, if they are allowed to be put forward and adopted? It is these kinds of issues (and others) that will be at the heart of this course.

Outline of course

There will be **8 meetings** (with each meeting lasting 2-3 academic hours). Each meeting will take the form of a short talk followed by collective discussion. It is very much hoped that there will be lots of discussion and debate between all of us as equal participants in the seminars. There will also be some audio and video material for each seminar (in either English or Italian) and reading material will be provided for each seminar. The key topics for discussion are designed to generate and provoke critical thought and reflection and it is therefore very much hoped that all students will be motivated to participate actively.

Timetable

Seminario 1 – martedì 23 aprile ore 14.30-17.30 - General introduction and major themes of the course.
Seminario 2 – mercoledì 24 aprile ore 08.30-11.30 - The challenge of global poverty.
Seminario 3 – lunedì 29 aprile ore 14.30-17.30 - Population growth and the challenge to feed the world.
Seminario 4 – martedì 30 aprile ore 08.30-11.30 - The challenge of sustainable life for the future.
Seminario 5 – martedì 7 maggio ore 16.15-19.15 - The challenge of urban slums.
Seminario 6 – mercoledì 8 maggio ore 08.30-11.30 - The challenge of mass migration.
Seminario 7 – martedì 14 maggio ore 14.30-17.30 - The challenge of present and future pandemics.
Seminario 8 – mercoledì 15 maggio ore 08.30-11.30 - What future lies ahead?

All seminars will be held at Università per Stranieri di Siena, Piazza Carlo Rosselli 27/28, aula 3.