Hello IDS Students and Affiliated Faculty!
The semester is well underway and I’m enjoying being the IDS Director and the opportunities it gives me to spend time with you all. Professor Sobieszczyk left the program in wonderful shape, with a new MOU signed with the Peace Corps and the graduate certificate ready to roll out. Thank you for all of your hard work and leadership, Teresa, and I hope you have a wonderful year in Thailand. It has been great to meet so many of our new IDS students in person this term, when you’ve come by to register for the minor, submit your forms for graduation, or just hang out and talk.

For those I haven’t had the chance to meet yet, I’m a medical anthropologist with project sites in Nepal and Uganda. My undergraduate and graduate students work in each of these sites, either in person or using data that we need help analyzing. In my classes, I teach on those regions, and about international development, demography, and applied medical anthropology. Working over the last twenty years on multi-disciplinary teams engaged in community and health development projects has taught me some important and humbling lessons about the international development industry. These lessons underpin my commitment to educating our students with the conceptual and methodological background that will help both them and their projects succeed.

I’m excited about our IDS Program and about the initiatives that we are working on, including a new app for connecting you with internships, and also an MOU between UM and the UN. Stay tuned as these exciting opportunities progress...and if any of you is looking for an internship opportunity to help with these two initiatives, please let me know!

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FIRST IDS RUBRIC COURSE!
International Development Studies has received an on campus IDS rubric so that we can now offer IDS specific courses! The first IDS course to be approved is IDS 490: Monitoring and Evaluation in International Development. The course will be taught this spring by IDS Director Kimber McKay with support from IDS faculty affiliate Elon Gilbert who has decades of international development field experience. The course is designed to enhance students’ understanding of important methods used in the evaluation of international development programs. The toolkit of a student completing this course will include knowledge of basic methods, standard systems used worldwide for conducting such evaluations and the ability to design, conduct, report on and orally present findings donors, project planners or other stakeholders. This course is a must take for anyone interested in working on international development projects!
A 2012 graduate of the IDS program, Julie DeSoto has made her way around the world working on development projects using and building upon the knowledge and skills she gained at UM – from global health initiatives with Syrian refugees in Jordan to employment programs for youth in Egypt. She first fulfilled her Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Jordan, while working part-time at the Institute for Family Health in Sweileh, Jordan. Moving on to Egypt, she worked as a program manager for youth employability programs with a focus on women with Education for Employment.

She is now working for World Vision in Washington, D.C. in program design and management for the Global Health Team. Her most recent project was one for rural sanitation in Rwanda. Working together with a partner organization and local field staff, she designed a program that responds to the specific context and needs of local people. In Rwanda, approximately 2% of the population participate open defecation (ODF), there is extremely limited waste removal, no water systems in most rural areas, and the majority of families survive on a small plot of land through subsistence farming. Family members, especially women and children, spend hours each day carrying drinking water in small, yellow, re-used plastic cooking oil containers. Carrying water for increased sanitation without nearby water sources is extremely difficult for many.

Although many water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) programs in rural areas focus on the construction of ventilated pit latrines (VIP), for many families in Rwanda this is not feasible because they do not participate in the money economy (they rely on person-to-person trade to get what they need). Because families are unable to purchase latrines in Rwanda, alternatives such as the Arbor Loo have been used. Arbor Loos are dry pit latrines that serve also as a composting pit through the use of ash or other vegetation to keep them dry. Once these pits reach capacity, they are covered over with dirt and a fruit tree is planted on top. These trees often have a yield up to three times of that of a tree planted without compost.
Often rural families have pit latrines, but many are haphazard, unclean, and unsafe. These existing latrines often are dug so deeply that they meet the water table and lead to the spread of typhoid and other diseases. When young children use unimproved (often dirt with a brick ring at the top) latrines that are not cleaned properly, they are exposed to diseases from the waste, which has been shown to contribute to very high rates of malnutrition in the country for young children.

In order to respond to the context, the proposed program includes behavior change communication (BCC), innovative financing for low-income households, and linking small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs with financing to start small sanitation and hygiene supply businesses.

Raising awareness about proper hygiene and sanitation through media and radio (i.e. BCC) is not enough in this context. Many families realize that they need handwashing stations, soap, and concrete slabs for their pit latrines but currently are unable to get them as they are extremely expensive. Even if sanitation and hygiene materials were readily available, most rural families carry their goods to and from the market on their heads, or if they are more fortunate, can balance heavier items on prized bicycles. There are no horses or donkeys in the country, and the cows and goats that are present are prized for their milk and breeding potential. Because of this, moving a concrete slab needed for an easily cleaned latrine is impossible for most families due to the weight. The program will also create supply of affordable products (locally made handwashing stations, regionally supplied soap, and simple San Plats) through the private sector to respond to demand.

Usually, this is where the private sector steps in in order to fulfill demand. However, most vendors or entrepreneurs are not aware that there is potential in the sanitation market. Even if they did, they are not able to get loans for sanitation and hygiene items in Rwanda because local investors don’t recognize it as a lucrative investment.

When looking at program design for a context such as Rwanda, it’s always important to look at it through this critical lens. First, to map the current assets in both human capital and products. Then, to ask the rural people and local health authorities what the challenges are that they face, then to look at closing the gap between the need and what is currently in place. Some program designers enter the country and expect that a model applied in Ethiopia or Kenya will also be applicable in Rwanda, but that is not the case.

Once these pits reach capacity, they are covered over with dirt and a fruit tree is planted on top
STUDYING CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MEKONG DELTA OF VIETNAM

By Dan Spencer

Seventeen UM students joined IDS professor Dan Spencer (Environmental Studies) for 4 weeks in Vietnam to examine current and anticipated effects of climate change on the people, lands and waterways of the Mekong Delta. Each of the students explored one topic on the course blog site, “Deep in the Delta: Stories from Vietnam” (check them out at: https://umvietnamstudy.wordpress.com). The travel seminar is set up to explore both the socio-cultural and economic dimensions of climate change – particularly its impact on socially vulnerable communities – and on efforts to adapt to the effects of climate change.

While we covered a lot of territory in our time there, three sets of experiences stand out. First, we focused a good deal on coastal areas affected by sea level rise and the loss of mangrove forests to both the effects of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War and intensive shrimp aquaculture in recent years. At Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve near Ho Chi Minh City we met with shrimp farmers involved in conserving the restored mangroves, and participated in a mangrove restoration project. Due to widespread restoration efforts, for the first time in at least 75 years, Vietnam is showing an increase – very modest – in mangrove forests.

Second, we interacted frequently with students from Can Tho University who do environmental projects and activities through the Delta Youth Alliance. Directed by Mr. Ly Quoc Dang – a Mansfield Center fellow here at UM in Fall 2015 – for three years now UM students have worked with DYA students on joint field trips and projects in the Mekong Delta. This year we spent a day examining a proposed ecotourism development project on Son Island west of Can Tho City, and traveled together to look at community conservation efforts in the Rừng Trâm Trà Sư - Melaleuca Forest Agritourism project in An Giang province. Due to the wonders of Facebook, the friendships we established with the DYA students continue beyond the confines of the trip.

Finally, we are very fortunate to be able to examine first hand conservation and climate change adaptation efforts in the rice paddies and small, but vital National Parks that are sprinkled around the Mekong Delta. Examining integrated shrimp aquaculture and mangrove preservation projects in Ca Mau National Park, peat-melaleuca forest conservation and adaptation to increase fire regimes in U Minh Thong National Park, and developing an ecotourism infrastructure to facilitate bird watching and traditional rice harvesting in
NEW IDS GRADUATE CERTIFICATE

Starting this semester IDS is pleased to announce our new International Development Graduate Certificate. The IDS Graduate Certificate is designed for graduate students across disciplines who are interested in using their graduate degrees in an international setting. Students seeking a UM Graduate Certificate in International Development Studies are required to complete a total of 12 credit hours including at least 6 credits from the menu of Core Courses and up to 6 credits from the menu of Content Courses. For more information visit the IDS website!

The New Face of UM’s Peace Corps Prep Program

The University of Montana’s PC Prep Program has had an overhaul to better align UM’s PC Prep program to the wave of new PC Prep programs across the country. The new PC Prep program requires 3 sector specific courses, 3 intercultural competency courses, 50 hours of sector specific experience, and participation in a leadership role as well as professional development.

The PC Prep program is designed for students interested in applying for the US Peace Corps or other positions in international development. Applicants with the PCPP certificate receive special consideration when applying to the Peace Corps and it is an excellent resume builder. PCPP certificates are available in the six US Peace Corp work sectors including Agriculture, Community Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health, and Youth in Development. With careful advising UM students can stack IDS minor and certain PC Prep sector course work to avoid taking additional classes while earning both a PC Prep certificate and IDS minor.

For course lists, and PC Prep advisor contact information visit our website at www.umt.edu/PeaceCorpsPrep. To take full advantage of available advising and other opportunities, please contact the advisor for your preferred sector to register for PC Prep certificate as soon as possible!

CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE MEKONG DELTA Cont

Tram Chim National Park gave us good exposure to current governmental efforts to integrate biodiversity conservation with climate change adaptation.

As always our experience was enriched by our local teachers and guides, the skilled researchers and professors at Can Tho University who generously shared their time and insights with us, and especially our two local Can Tho teaching assistants, Phan My Duyen and Nguyen Quyen.

Students interested in the Wintersession trip to Vietnam can find more information at http://www.cfc.umt.edu/studyabroad/programs/vietnam/default.php or by contacting Dr. Nicky Phear at nicky.phear@umontana.edu.
What is International Development Studies?

International Development Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study focusing on the interconnected processes of social, political, economic, cultural, and environmental change taking place in low-income countries and disadvantaged regions of wealthy countries. Coursework in the minor emphasizes a global perspective on the process of change and development, critical analysis of the role of internal and external influences on the development process, and applications to local (including Montana) situations and challenges. The IDS minor takes advantage of existing faculty expertise and courses to offer an interdisciplinary experience for those students interested in either international or domestic development work. Students minoring in IDS will develop knowledge and skills appropriate for graduate study and for working in non-governmental organizations, international and bilateral government development organizations, the U.S. Peace Corps and other national/international equivalents, and/or community development groups. In addition, the IDS is the home of Peace Corps Prep Program.

FAREWELL FROM OUTGOING IDS DIRECTOR TEREESA SOBIESZCZYK

At the end of June, I left my role as Director of International Development Studies and Peace Corps Prep. Over the past three years, I am pleased to report that IDS has accomplished several important milestones, including our own IDS rubric so that we can have a few IDS-specific classes, ongoing funding for a course on Program Monitoring and Evaluation in International Development, an External Advisory Committee, which will help lead a one-credit lecture series from International Development practitioners in Fall 2016, and a more stable budget now run through the Provost’s Office.

At the request of the national Peace Corps Office, we extensively revised UM's Peace Corps Prep program, and the revised version made its debut on January 1, 2016. But, for a few years, we will run both the old version of that program and the new one until students “grandfathered in” under the old program have graduated. On a sad note, the National Peace Corps office recently announced a decision to cancel our sister programs—the Global Youth Development and International Conservation and Development Peace Corps Master’s degree programs—once currently enrolled students graduate. These programs will be missed!

I wanted to thank all of the students, faculty, External Advisory Committee members, and particularly Delyla Wilson for their hard work in making International Development Studies and Peace Corps Prep a success here at the University of Montana. Please welcome incoming director, Kimber McKay, who began her leadership role on July 1, 2016.

In peace, Teresa Sobieszczyk

IDS FACULTY SARAH HALVERSON RECEIVES FULBRIGHT FELLOWSHIP

Newly elected IDS Steering Committee member Professor Sarah J. Halvorson (Geography), received a Fulbright Fellowship to conduct research on climate change perceptions and adaptation scenarios in the south-central European country of Slovenia. Halvorson will collaborate with other geographers and environmental social scientists to assess experiences and observations of climate change risk and vulnerability among Slovenia’s mountain communities and an analysis the perceived effectiveness of current climate change policies and planning tools. During her stay, she plans to contribute to field courses and work on geography education outreach activities in collaboration with Slovenian colleagues. Stay tuned for updates on Professor Halvorson’s adventures in Slovenia!

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