MSc Rural Development Module (May 2009)

Module coordinator
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Summary
This course provides an introduction to the theory and practice of rural development. It uses examples of topical issues from developed and developing nations to illustrate the range of challenges facing rural areas in different parts of the world. The origins of key issues and the factors influencing the ways in which solutions are identified and implemented are analysed through a series of case studies. Teaching methods consist of: lectures; discussion; student presentations; a half day field trip. A typical timetable is given below.

Week	*Topic*	*Notes*
Week 1	Introduction to rural development	M.MacLeod, SAC
Week 2	Measuring development	M MacLeod, SAC
Week 3	Energy and rural development The Common Agricultural Policy	M MacLeod, SAC
Week 4	Kirkton field trip: upland farming, diversification	M.MacLeod, SAC
Week 5	Student presentations	M MacLeod, SAC
Week 6	WTO, trade and rural development Community participation in environmental monitoring: forestry in Nepal	Cesar Revoredo, SAC Sam Staddon, Uni of Ed.
Week 7	Ecotourism and rural development	C.Zografos, Universidad de Barcelona
Week 8	Fisheries and rural livelihoods Community land purchases	Abdulai Fofana, SAC S Thompson, SAC
Week 9	The local food opportunity Farmers' Markets and direct food marketing	M MacLeod, SAC
Week 10	Revision	Revision session

Assignments

The assessment for this module consists of (a) an essay and (b) a presentation. The specific topics used in 2008-09 are given below for illustration.

Essay

Write a 3000 word essay that answers either A, B or C:

A.   Rural development has been described as:

"…an ongoing and essentially interventionist process of qualitative, quantitative and/or distributional change leading to some degree of betterment for groups of people" (Buller and Wright 1990)

Evaluate the success of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy in contributing to this vision of rural development.

OR

B.   *"GDP should really stand for grossly deceptive product"*
Quoted in The Economist (1997) "Guide to Economic Indicators" 3rd Edition, p25

Provide a critique of GDP as a way of measuring development. Outline an alternative way of measuring development, and compare its strengths and weaknesses with those of GDP.

OR

C.   In the context of development, small is considered by some to be beautiful. Discuss the relative merits of small scale versus large scale projects in rural development.

Presentations

Length: 10 minutes/ ~300 words

Select an issue relevant to rural development. Examples are given below; you may choose one of these or any other relevant topic (apart from the topic that you choose for your written assignment). Let me know the topic of your presentation by 28/1.

Prepare (a) a 10 minute presentation, and (b) a short abstract (~300 words) summarising your talk. A data projector and overhead projector will be available.

Your presentation should:

- Give a brief outline of the issue and its origins;
- Outline the relevance of the issue to rural areas;
- Outline the implications of the issue for rural development.

Example Issues
Scotland
- Farm Diversification
- Housing and housing policy in rural Scotland
- The Scottish Rural Development Plan
- Wind farm development.
- The Land Reform Bill

Europe
- Natura 2000
- EU Enlargement
- (Reform of) The Common Fisheries Policy

Developing Countries
- GM technology
- The Green Revolution
- Food Security and Food Aid

Assessment of the Assignments

The assignments make up 100% of the total marks for the module.

Component	*Marks*
Presentation	25%
Essay	75%

Essay

The essay is worth 75% of the total marks for the module. It will be assessed according to the following criteria:

1. Adequately addressing the question, i.e. sticking to the topic and fully answering it (20%).

2. Context and background: providing a concise and clear summary of the issue (20%).

3. Analysis: providing reasoned arguments and adequate evidence to back up statements and conclusions (20%).

4. Demonstrating insight and evidence of wide reading (20%).

5.   Appropriate essay structure and correct use of figures, tables, references etc. (10%).

6.   Clarity of writing (10%).

Presentation

Overall, the oral presentation is worth 25% of the total marks for the module. The abstracts will not be assessed - these will be compiled into a document, which will be given to participants on the day. The criteria used in assessing the oral presentation are given below:

1.   Adequately addressing the question, i.e. sticking to the topic and fully answering it (25%).

2.   Context and background: providing a concise and clear summary of the issue (25%).

3.   Analysis: providing reasoned arguments and adequate evidence to back up statements and conclusions (25%).

4.   Clarity and structure of the presentation (25%)