The course will focus on a genealogy of “development” in the third world from about the mid-20th century to now. Broadly speaking, the shift can be characterized as moving from a Malthusian dystopia to the “fortune at the bottom of the population pyramid.” In earlier decades, the third world was seen as over-populated, backward, traditional, unscientific and in need of development to avoid catastrophe. In more recent times, with the rise of microfinance, neoliberalism, globalization, and other ideas, the people of the third world are suddenly seen as a large reservoir of consumers, entrepreneurs, and rational economic actors who, if provided with credit through the right means, will flourish as capitalists. Moreover, the younger population and greater numbers (in China and India, for example) is seen as the basis for a new wave of capitalist accumulation in the global economy as a whole. Meanwhile, under the auspices of a new enclosure movement, mining and other industries are devastating tribal and indigenous populations all over the third world through a combination of western and home-grown capitalists. I argue that underlying both the Malthusian dystopia and the contemporary ideas of a demographic dividend is a deep necropolitics that regards much of the third world as dispensable – both amongst western and third world elites. We will look at a bunch of readings that problematize the “economy” and changing discourses of development. Here are some of them: (this is suggestive rather than certain at this point, so please don’t go and buy any of them until I finalize the list – unless you want to buy them anywayz). There’ll be at least another 2-3 recent books which are TBD:

Karen Ho, Liquidated: an ethnography of Wall Street
David Harvey – Accumulation by Dispossession
Hernando De Soto – The Mystery of Capitalism
A fair amount of Marx, Bourdieu, Polanyi, and Foucault in the beginning.