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| Course Title | **Living Utopias** |

**Rationale:**

The word “Development” is associated with the spread of “Industrialism” --- an ideology of ever increasing material growth and consumption through faster and faster exploitation of Nature , using the wonders of large scale Science and Technology, guided by powerful Nation States and Corporations, accompanied with rising Global Trade and Individualism. This has brought the world to the brink of ecological collapse, depths of socio-economic inequalities and despair, increasingly dysfunctional political institutions, and hugely stressed socio-cultural systems.

This course argues that efforts to bring justice, equity, sustainability in the idea of development in the preceding few decades can be classified into two broad categories : One is changes *within* the existing Industrialism paradigm such as the Human Development Index (HDI) , Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Green Growth, Triple Bottom Line etc. And there is a second category which are *radical challenges* or *alternatives* to the very premise of Industrialism in all spheres of human civilization ---- economic,  technological, political, socio-cultural, and its core value system.

Most of us, including students of development and activists, are not sufficiently aware about many of these new alternatives and networks. This course is about engaging with these ***living examples of alternatives to Industrialism, in the hope that another world is possible. The aim of the course is to open up novel, liberating possibilities in a world sitting on the brink of ecological disasters and hence the name “Living Utopias”.***

**Intended Learning Objectives**

1. Interpret and elaborate on the various frameworks of a ‘good society’ that have emerged out of a critique of Industrialism.
2. Deconstruct anti-industrialism ideas, concepts
3. Learn about existing alternatives in the thematic areas of economy, technology, politics, society & culture.

**Pedagogy**

The introductory unit which is about alternative imaginations of a good society will introduce contemporary and relevant discourses and frameworks to the students. The current ecological crisis is the overarching context in which the discussions will take place. Each of the four subsequent units are designed on the lines of the different spheres of a civilization i.e economic sphere, political sphere, technological sphere and socio- cultural sphere. In each unit specific alternative examples from India as well as the world will be discussed in detail through a combination of documentaries/film clips, readings, and in a few instances, guest lectures.

**Unit 1: Core Values of Alternative Imaginations (3 weeks)**

This unit will present and discuss some key frameworks/ideologies/imaginations contrary to Industrialism like Gandhi and Tagore’s vision in India, Anarchism in Europe, Ubuntu in Africa, Buen Vivir and Sumak Kawsay in Latin America. As the crisis deepens, newer ones are appearing – Toffler’s Wave Analysis , Ecofeminism, the De-growth movement in Europe, Radical Ecological Democracy (RED) in India, Rights of Nature in Latin America to name a few. Networks of these alternatives are emerging to try to radically transform collapsing Industrialism with the hope that solutions can and will arise and spread fast to overcome the crisis. All of these talk about a ***world which consists of just, equitable, healthy, happy, peaceful , creative, caring , sharing, self- sufficient, self- governing, eco-sustainable, non-exploiting, rural and urban communities*.**

**Compulsory Readings**:

1. Gandhi, M. K. (1999). *Letter to Nehru* Collected works of Mahatma Gandhi. Vol 88, p 118-119.
2. Tagore R. (1924).  *City and Village.*  Viswa Bharati Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 3 (October, 1924), pp. 215-227.
3. Sinha S. and Varma-Patil P. The Gandhi Notebook. Bangalore: Azim Premji University. (Excerpts)
4. Toffler, A. (1980).Introduction, In *The Third Wave.* New York: Bantam Books, *pp-4-11*
5. Salleh, A. (1997/2017) *Ecofeminism as Politics: nature, Marx, and the postmodern*. London: Zed books. (excerpts)
6. Kallis, Giorgos & Paulson, Susan & D'Alisa, Giacomo & Demaria, Federico. (2020). "The case for degrowth" (Polity Press)
7. Kalpavriksh. (2017). *Alternatives Transformation Format: A Process for Self-Assessment and Facilitation towards Radical Change*. Retrieved from : <http://www.vikalpsangam.org/static/media/uploads/Resources/alternatives_transformation_framework_revised_20.2.2017.pdf> ( February 9, 2018)

**AV material**

1. Attenborough, D. (2020). A Life on Our Planet.
2. The Story of Stuff <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GorqroigqM>
3. Modern Times. Film clips
4. Episode 7 : What could Possibly go Right? Resilience. Available at: https://www.resilience.org/stories/2020-07-09/what-could-possibly-go-right-episode-7-tim-dechristopher/

**Additional Readings**

# Alexander, S. (2013). Entropia : Life Beyond Industrial Civilisation . Melbourne: Simplicity Institute Publishing

# Kothari et al (Eds.).(2019) Pluriverse: A post Development Dictionary

**Unit 2: Rethinking Economy (2.5 weeks)**

*There is sufficiency in the world for man’s Needs , but not for man’s Greeds –*Gandhi

This unit will focus on alternatives to unlimited growth characterized by and associated with features such as over consumption, private and state capitalism, economic globalization, monetization and privatization, unbridled upward economic mobility and toxic competition. Towards this it will present some examples of localization, producer-consumer partnerships, rising recycling economy, non-monetized forms of trade and exchange based on the values of frugalism-limits-adequacy, well- being for all, equity, and community assets.

**Compulsory Readings**

1. Miller, E. (2010). Solidarity Economy: Key concepts and Issues In Kawano, Emily and Tom Masterson and Jonathan Teller-Ellsberg (eds). *Solidarity Economy I: Building Alternatives for People and Planet*. Amherst, MA: Center for Popular Economics
2. Bhatt, E (2015), Anubandh: Building Hundred-Mile Communities Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA), Navjivan Publishing House
3. Detroit Food & Fitness Collaborative (2014) Economic Analysis of Detroit's Food System.
4. Dittmer, K. (2015) COMMUNITY CURRENCIES In *Degrowth: A vocabulary for a new era*. New York: Routledge
5. Socio Economic Solidarity and Community Exchange in Asia, Africa and Latin America. (2002, December) Retrieved from <http://www.appropriate-economics.org/materials/Community_Exchange_Systems_screen.pdf> (February, 4, 2018)
6. Biodynamics Association*, Community Supported Agriculture: An Introduction to CSA* . Retrieved from <https://www.biodynamics.com/content/community-supported-agriculture-introduction-csa> (February, 4, 2018)
7. North, P. (2010). *Local Money: how to make it happen in your community*. Transition Books/Green Books (Summary)

**AV material**

1. Film on Bristol Pound : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KWZJcUyFspw&feature=emb_logo>
2. Ted Talk , How Urban agriculture is transforming Detroit : <https://www.ted.com/talks/devita_davison_how_urban_agriculture_is_transforming_detroit?utm_campaign=tedspread&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=tedcomshare>
3. NDTV Interview with Ela Bhatt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZvqpUrxB10>

**Additional readings**:

1. Panne, V. (2017, January 12). *Life Without Money in Detroit’s Survival Economy.* Retrieved from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2017-01-12/life-without-money-in-detroit-s-survival-economy> (February, 4, 2018)

**Unit 3: Appropriate Technology (2.5 weeks)**

Every machine that helps every individual has a place, but there should be no place for machines that concentrate power in a few hands and turn the masses into machine-minders, if indeed they do not make them unemployed. —Gandhi

This unit introduce the key principles of ‘Appropriate Technology’ to counter the mega technologies which are eco-harmful and proving to be increasingly jobless. The case studies chosen in the areas of energy, water and construction will highlight the emphasis on decentralized production, appropriate scale, renewable resources, contextual and indigenous efforts taking place all over the world.

**Compulsory Readings:**

1. [Schumacher](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4615523.Ernst_F_Schumacher) E.F. (1973) Small Is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered (Excerpts.)
2. Reddy, A. (2004). *Lessons from the Pura community biogas project*. Energy for Sustainable Development (Vol. VIII No. 3, September 2004). Retrieved from <http://amulya-reddy.org.in/Publication/2004_09_puralessons.pdf> (February, 9, 2018)
3. S,Vishwanath. (2015, July 12). *Go With the Flow: The rainwater harvesting movement is steadily gaining momentum.* Retrieved from <http://indianexpress.com/article/good-news/go-with-the-flow-the-rainwater-harvesting-movement-is-steadily-gaining-momentum/> (February, 9, 2018)
4. Varanasi, S.P (2016, July 29). *Common sense architecture*. Retrieved from[*http://www.thehindu.com/features/homes-and-gardens/Common-sense-architecture/article14515217.ece*](http://www.thehindu.com/features/homes-and-gardens/Common-sense-architecture/article14515217.ece)(February, 9, 2018)
5. Drummond A. (2017). Pedal Power: How One Community Became the Bicycle Capital of the World. MacMillan Publishing Group.

**AV material**

1. Ted Talk, A human powered revolution with Pedal Power Hawaii

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WaWMfjGarss>

1. Bunker Roy: Learning from a barefoot movement http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qqqVwM6bMM

**Unit 4: Politics and Governance (3 weeks)**

*Every village will be a republic ---capable of managing its affairs. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbors or the world. In this structure composed of innumerable villages , there will be ever widening , never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual ----the outermost circle will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its strength from it. –* Gandhi

This unit will focus on initiatives that challenge the existing forms of nationhood and concentration of power spawned by Industrialism, its associated instruments of governance and representative democracy. It will introduce the students to the idea and existing efforts of urban participatory democracy, eco-regional democracy, and the new anarchist movements. The values foregrounding this unit are around people’s participation in governance, deep democracy and empowerment of people to govern their own lives.

**Compulsory Readings**:

1. Gandhi, M. (1997). Gandhi: 'Hind Swaraj' and Other Writings (Cambridge Texts in Modern Politics) (A. Parel, Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 188
2. Guha, R. (2007). *India after Gandhi: The history of the world's largest democracy*. London: Macmillan. p. XIV
3. Ostrom, E.(2000) , *Collective Action and the Evolution of Social Norms*, Journal of Economic Perspectives 14 (3) (2000): 137–58
4. Pathak Broome, N. (2018). Mendha Lekha: Forest Rights and Self-Empowerment. In Alternatives in a World of Crisis, Publisher: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Brussels Office and Universidad Andina Simon Bolivar, Ecuador, pp.136-177
5. Keruwala, N. (2013), [*Participatory Budgeting in India -The Pune Experiment*](https://developmentcentral.wordpress.com/2013/07/02/participatory-budgeting-in-india-the-pune-experiment/)[blog post] Retrieved from: <https://developmentcentral.wordpress.com/2013/07/02/participatory-budgeting-in-india-the-pune-experiment/>(February, 9, 2018)
6. Veron, P ( 2018), Why Paris is building the world’s biggest participatory budget? A Report. NewCities. Canada.
7. [Knapp](http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/author/K/M/au25051807.html), M.,  [Flach](http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/author/F/A/au25051821.html), A., & [Ayboga](http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/author/A/E/au25051814.html), E. (2016) . *Revolution in Rojava . Democratic Autonomy and Women’s Liberation in the Syrian Kurdistan.* Pluto Press.

**AV material**

1. Rojava: A Utopia in the Heart of Syria's Chaos, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQh8aRVJnY4>
2. Participatory Budgeting short film : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2nhVXX3nVU>

**Unit 5: Socio- Cultural Futures (2 weeks)**

*A Good Society is one which creates conditions enabling all the people to lead healthy, happy, creative, active lives in harmony with Nature and the rest of Humanity :* Mahbub al Haq (with a very crucial modification!)

This unit will enable participants to examine a few examples of communities in India and the world today which are attempting a new way of life that provide a positive and often a revolutionary alternative in the way social cultural relations are formed and practiced. While discussing these communities, the participants will be guided to explore some of the following questions ---- How are these communities organized? What decision-making processes do they use? How do they finance themselves? What food choices do they make? How much of the food and energy that they need do they produce? How do adults and children interact? What is the role of spirituality in these communities? Are there schools? What is the nature of education in these schools? The values foregrounding this unit are those of self and community, of justice, equity and morality to work towards creating what we term as a ‘good society’.

**Compulsory Readings**

1. Rheingold, H. ( 1999) , “*Look Who’s talking*” , <https://www.wired.com/1999/01/amish/> ( July 11, 2018)
2. Grubačić, A. and O'Hearn, D. (2016). Zappatistas. In *Living at the Edges of Capitalism: Adventures in Exile and Mutual Aid*. Oakland, California: University of California Press.
3. Kothari , A , ( 2015) The Hindu , January 2, “Revisiting the legend of Niyamgiri”
4. Hopkins, Rob. (2015).21 Stories of Transition: how a movement of communities is coming together to reimagine and rebuild our world. Transition Network.

**AV material**

1. Witness film , 1985 (Crime Fiction based on Amish society)
2. [“Inventing Our Life: The Kibbutz Experiment,”](http://www.israelfilmcenter.org/israeli-film-database/films/inventing-our-life-the-kibbutz-experiment) (2010 documentary )