

## **EDS389 Ruling the world by numbers: knowledge and politics in international development**

Course responsible: Morten Jerven and Gaute Simensen

The use of numbers, performance indicators and benchmarks have grown exponentially over the last two decades, particularly in the field of international politics and development. Indicators are now firmly established as a distinct mode of global governance. The process of numbering involves translating complex phenomena into numerical values. The procedure converts what might otherwise be highly contentious normative agendas into numbers that appear technocratic and objective. The politics of numbers has implications for global governance, and particularly so for making norms, rules and regulations in the fields of International Environment and Development Studies. This course provides a critical examination of the implications of ruling the world as if it counts.

### **Lectures and Seminar Topics**

1. Ruling the world by numbers: introduction
2. How to lie with statistics: the basics
3. States and Statistics
4. Counting People: Civil registration, Vital Statistics and Population Census
5. Auditing the world: The IMF
6. Counting the Poor: The World Bank
7. Correlates of War: Studying war and peace by numbers
8. Governance Matters: democracy by numbers
9. A world that counts: from millenium development goals to the sustainable development
10. Evidence Based Policy : Knowledge and Governance requirements
11. Contesting poor numbers: qualitative and quantitative research.
12. Conclusion

Two Term paper (each 10 pages) counts 30% and 30% and final written exam counts 40% of final grade. Exam and term papers must be written in English

Required Readings:

Jerven, M., 2013 *Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do about It*. Cornell University Press, Cornell.

Cooley, A. & Snyder, J., 2015. *Ranking the World: Grading States as a Tool of Global Governance*. Cambridge University Press: New York.

Porter, T.M., 1995. *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

31.01.2017	1. Ruling the world by numbers: introduction
07.02.2017	2. How to lie with statistics : the basics
14.02.2017	3. States and Statistics
21.02.2017	4. Counting People: Civil registration, Vital Statistics and Population Census
28.02.2017	5. Auditing the world: The IMF
07.03.2017	6. Counting the Poor: The World Bank
14.03.2017	7. Correlates of War: Studying war and peace by numbers
21.03.2017	8. Governance Matters: democracy by numbers
28.03.2017	9. A world that counts: from millenium development goals (MDGs) to sustainable development goals (SDGs)
04.04.2017	10. Evidence Based Policy : Knowledge and Governance requirements
11.04.2017	Easter BREAK
18.04.2017	Easter BREAK
25.04.2017	11. Contesting poor numbers : qualitative and quantitative research.
02.05.2017	12. Conclusion