HEALTH, DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN RIGHTS

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Women's Agency & Overpopulation

Instructions 📖

When doing the reading for this class, there are the two basic kinds of information you need to understand:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, it is *information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is *to evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible position on an issue, rather than another.

Reading 📖

Sen, A. (1999). Women's Agency and Social Change. In
    Development as Freedom (pp. 189–203). New York: Knopf.
Sen, A. (1999). Population, Food and Freedom. In *Development
    as Freedom* (pp. 204–226). New York: Knopf.

Questions ❓

1. In "Women's Agency and Social Change", Amartya Sen argues that expanding women's *agency* is a more worthy development goal than simply improving women's *well-being and welfare*.

    What is the difference between agency and well-being? What reasons does Sen provide for a focus on agency over well-being?

2. In "Population, Food and Freedom", Sen presents three questions (on page 210) concerning coercive solutions to tragedies in the commons.

    What are these three questions and how does he answer each of them with respect to overpopulation? How does his account differ from Hardin's?

3. This reading is from Sen's book, *Development as Freedom*.

    Based on the answers to the previous two questions, how does greater freedom seem to encourage or otherwise reach a nation's development goals?

To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages.

    Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.