

COLLEGE 105: The Politics of Development

Spring 2023

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 10:30-11:20am

Lathrop 282

Contact Information

Instructor:

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Section 06: W/F, 9:30-10:20am, 200-219

Section 07: W/F, 10:30-11:20am, 200-219

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Section 10: T/H, 3:00-3:50pm, STLC 118

Section 11: T/H, 4:30-5:20pm, 380-381U

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Office Hours: by email appointment

Section 08: T/H, 1:30-2:20pm, Lathrop 296

Section 09: T/H, 3:00-3:50pm, Encina West 108

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 Roadmap for McCoy Sections Weeks 7-10

Section 04: T/H, 1:30-2:20pm, Encina West 202

Section 05: T/H, 3:00-3:50pm, Encina West 202

Course Description

Millions of people have been lifted out of poverty over the last few decades. Yet, millions still are unable to meet even their most basic needs. This course examines the reasons why some countries remain poor and why inequality persists. The course evaluates how social, political, and economic institutions affect prospects for development. We will also examine how practitioners, policy-makers, and academics tackle global development challenges, where they have been successful, and where failure has provided key lessons for the future. We will use the tools of political economy to theorize why some places are more developed than others, to

evaluate why development policies frequently fail, and to propose solutions based on evidence. Students will learn about and explore patterns of development across the world, critically evaluate foundational theories of development, and understand the practical challenges and possible solutions to reducing poverty, creating equality, and ensuring good governance. In course assignments, students will practice analyzing global datasets to build evidence for policy innovation. Students will leave this class with an understanding of the tools and theories of political economy and how they shed light on what works (and does not work) for development.

Course Goals and Learning Objectives

Through active engagement with & successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Develop an understanding of changes in global absolute and relative poverty over the last few decades.
- Document and explain patterns of development across the world.
- Compare, contrast, and critically evaluate models of development and outline the practical challenges and possible solutions to reducing poverty, creating equality, and ensuring good governance.
- Analyze data to detect patterns and make arguments.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic
1	4/4	Introduction
	4/6	What is Development?
2	4/11	
	4/13	Geography
3	4/18	Institutions
	4/20	
4	4/25	Colonialism
	4/27	
5	5/2	Identity and Diversity
	5/4	
6	5/9	Gender
	5/11	
7	5/16	Aid
	5/18	

8	5/23	Governance
	5/26	
9	5/30	Environment
	6/1	Education
10	6/6	Prospects for the Future

Course Structure

The class will meet for lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30-11:20am. Lectures will reinforce the readings and provide novel information and analysis, including through active learning exercises. All students are expected to attend lectures. Students will also participate in twice-weekly discussion sections. Discussion sections are active learning environments in which students will engage with the course material alongside their peers. They will provide a space to formulate, articulate, and re-think opinions and also will allow for peer learning.

Readings

There is no required text to purchase for the course. Readings will be available on the course website in the Modules section. The course includes a lot of reading, however, your TA will share in advance which readings should be read closely.

Assignments and Grades

This course is worth 4 units of credit, which means students should expect to complete up to 12 hours of work per week, including class time. This leaves approximately 8 hours of work outside of lectures and sections.

Students will be assessed based on their participation in the course and a course project that consists of five assignments to be submitted to your section head. The course project provides students with an opportunity to identify a problem related to development in a country of interest and propose evidence-based solutions. More detailed assignment descriptions will be shared in sections ahead of each due date.

1. **Lecture Participation (5%)** - You are expected to attend lectures each week. Attendance will be recorded and validated. If you attend at least 80% of the lectures, you will receive full credit. If you do not, you will receive no credit.
2. **Section Participation and Engagement (10%)** - You should attend and actively participate in the discussion section each week. Be sure to read the assigned texts before the section. If you have to miss a section for reasons beyond your control, please notify your instructor in advance. Missed sections will require the completion of a written assignment on the readings for that section.

3. Course Project:

- **Country Brief (10%)** – You will identify a country to engage with throughout the quarter. Your first assignment for the course project is to write a brief presenting the history, institutions, and important development indicators of your chosen country. Your country brief is due by **Friday 4/14 by 11:59pm** via Canvas.
- **Lecture Response (15%)** – You will choose three weeks to examine how the themes from that week’s lectures pertain to your chosen country. Identify a news article, piece of art, meme, academic article, etc., and analyze it in relation to the readings and lecture for the week. You must reference at least two readings from the course in your analysis and two of the responses must be submitted before week 7. The response memo should be roughly 300-500 words.
- **Public-facing Problem Presentation (20%)** - In the medium of your choice (podcast, video, infographic, op-ed, etc.), you will present a development or policy challenge faced by your country or some group of the population in it. To document this challenge, you will use data (longitudinal, comparative with other countries or within a region, etc.) to convince the general public that this is a challenge and then outline possible solutions. Your problem presentation is due by **Friday 5/12 by 11:59pm** via Canvas.
- **Proposal Abstract and Feedback (15%)** - This assignment has two components, a proposal abstract and peer review feedback. You will write a brief abstract (300-500 words) describing a policy proposal that develops one of the solutions you proposed in the midterm presentation. Both your proposal and feedback will be assessed. The proposal abstract is due by **Friday 5/26 by 11:59pm** via Canvas.
- **Policy Proposal (25%)** - Building on your country brief and midterm project, you will write an 1800-2200 word policy proposal to address the development problem you have identified in your country, taking into account the institutional, financial, and political opportunities and constraints your policy might face. Your policy proposal is due by **Tuesday 6/13 by 11:59pm** via Canvas.

Academic Accommodation

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: <http://oae.stanford.edu>).

Course Policies

Attendance Policy

Attendance at lectures and sections is essential for success in the class. You are allowed one unexcused absence from section, no questions asked. Additional absences will only be granted if

you can provide justification for your absence in advance. You are allowed three unexcused absences (20%) from lecture. No additional accommodations will be made except in very rare instances. Insufficient attendance will affect your grade and may result in not passing the class.

Late Assignment Policy

There is a built-in two-day grace period on all deadlines. If you need more time to complete an assignment, please let your section head know in advance by email. Work turned in late without an extension may be marked down, and very late work may not receive credit or may lead to your needing to withdraw from the course during Week 8.

Course Expectations

What you can expect from us

We are here to guide your learning and will challenge you to actively engage in the course and to grow as scholars. We will strive for an inclusive and collaborative classroom and welcome any suggestions for improvement. Our principal goal is to foster productive and uplifting conversations about challenging topics. If you have ideas for how this course could work better, please convey them to your section head. We will offer mid-quarter feedback surveys and will also have an anonymous suggestion box if you have something that you want to share but want to remain confidential. We will do our best to give you the tools, feedback, and support to succeed. There is a lot of material that we will not be able to cover, given the complexity of these topics. We aim to motivate students to seek out more information and will provide additional resources to do so. We highly encourage everyone to visit us during office hours, even if you don't feel that you have questions. We want to get to know you and support you in this learning experience!

What we expect from you

We expect you to take an active role in your learning by coming to class prepared and being ready to share your ideas in sections through discussion with your classmates. To get the most out of the class, you should be prepared to share your ideas, ask questions, and listen actively. This class will cover a wide range of topics and will present materials on a range of perspectives on each. Each member of this class has different ideas and perspectives that will enrich the experience for everyone else, so sharing your perspectives and listening actively to others' contributions is an important part of this class. In addition, we expect you to be respectful and thoughtful in your interactions with your peers and instructors. We believe that this class will be most valuable if you are willing to consider all perspectives and be challenged in your thinking, even if uncomfortable.

Course Readings

Week 1: What is development?

Tuesday

- Video: Hans Rosling in The best stats you've ever seen.
- Podcast: William Easterly on What Must We Do to End Poverty?
- Clark, William, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder, 2018. "What is Science?" *Principles of Comparative Politics*, pp. 15-27.

Thursday

- Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Oxford University Press, 1999. Preface (pp. xi-xiv), Introduction (pp. 1-11), and Chapter 1 (pp. 13-34).
- Ravallion, Martin. "Good and bad growth: The human development reports." *World Development* 25.5 (1997): 631-638.
- Video: The Daily Show featuring Trevor Noah in Spot the Africa.

Week 2:

Tuesday

- Suggested Video: Anirudh Krishna on [Why people become poor](#)

Thursday - Geography

- Excerpt from "Guns Germs and Steel" by Jared Diamond: "A natural experiment of history: How geography molded societies on Polynesian islands"
- Video: Michael Ross in "The Oil Curse"
- Hausmann, Ricardo, "Prisoners of Geography," *Foreign Policy*, 122 (2001), pp. 44-53

Country brief due by Friday 4/14 by 11:59pm via Canvas

Week 3: Institutions

Tuesday

- Acemoglu, Daron and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, Profile Books, 2012, pp. 45-56 and 70-95.
- Przeworski and Limongi, "Political Regimes and Economic Growth," *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 7:3 (1993), pp. 51-60.
- Allison, Graham. The Lee Kuan Yew Conundrum. *The Atlantic*. March 30, 2015.

Thursday (Guest Lecture: [Priya Satia](#))

- Satia, Priya, "Guns and the British Empire," *Aeon*, February 14, 2018.
- Satia, Priya, *Empire of guns: the violent making of the industrial revolution*, Stanford University Press, 2019. Introduction.

Week 4: Colonialism

Tuesday

- Nunn, Nathan, “Shackled to the Past: The Causes and Consequences of Africa’s Slave Trades,” in Diamond, Jared and James Robinson (2011), *Natural Experiments of History*, Belknap Press.
- Iyer, Lakshmi, “Direct versus Indirect Colonial Rule in India,” pp. 119 - 124, in Michalopolous, Stelios and Elias Papaioannou, *The Long Economic and Political Shadow of History*, CEPR Press (2017).
- Smith, Clint. *How the word is passed: A reckoning with the history of slavery across America*. Hachette UK, 2021. Chapter: “We were the good guys, right?:” New York City. (Audiobook option available.)

Thursday

- Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and slavery*. UNC Press Books, 2021. Read both the Foreward (by William A. Darity Jr.) and Chapter 1.
- Video: Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination by Adom Getachew

Week 5: Identity and Diversity

Tuesday

- Fearon, James D. “What is identity (as we now use the word).” *Unpublished manuscript, Stanford University, Stanford, Calif* (1999). Skim all.
- Alesina, Alberto, and Eliana La Ferrara. “Ethnic diversity and economic performance.” *Journal of economic literature* 43.3 (2005): 762-800.

Thursday

- Posner, Daniel N. “The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review* 98.4 (2004): 529-545.
- Noah, Trevor. *Born a crime: Stories from a South African childhood*. Doubleday Canada, 2016. Chs 2 and 4. (Audiobook available).

Week 6: Gender

Tuesday

- Duflo, Esther. “Women empowerment and economic development.” *Journal of Economic literature* 50.4 (2012): 1051-79.
- Kabeer, Naila. “Women’s empowerment and economic development: A feminist critique of storytelling practices in “randomista” economics.” *Feminist Economics* 26.2 (2020): 1-26.
- Video: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in We should all be feminists.

Thursday

- Zakaria, Rafia. *Against White Feminism: Notes on Disruption*. WW Norton & Company, 2021. Ch 3.
- Prillaman, Soledad, “When women’s electoral representation matters,” Seminar, April 2022.

Public-facing Problem Presentation due by 11:59pm on Friday 5/12 via Canvas

2 of 3 Lecture Responses due by 11:59pm on Saturday 5/13 via Canvas

Week 7: Aid

Tuesday

- Sach, Jeffrey, “The Case for Aid,” *Foreign Policy*, January 21, 2014.
- Video: William Easterly in The Tyranny of Experts.
- Moyo, Dambisa, Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is a Better Way for Africa, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010. Pages xii-xx; 44-47; 74-76; and 144-154.

Thursday

- Page, Lucy and Rohini Pande. “Ending Global Poverty: Why money isn’t enough,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2018), pp. 173-200.
- Rutazibwa, Olivia Umurerwa. “What’s there to Mourn: Decolonial Reflections on (The End of) Liberal Humanitarianism.” *The Journal of Humanitarian Affairs* 1.1 (2019)

Week 8: Governance

Tuesday

- Diaz-Cayeros, Alberto, Frederico Estévez and Beatriz Magaloni, *The Political Logic of Poverty Relief: Electoral Strategies and Social Policy in Mexico*, Cambridge University Press, 2016, Ch. 1.
- Svensson, Jakob. “Eight questions about corruption.” *Journal of economic perspectives* 19.3 (2005): 19-42.
- Policy Brief: Leonard Wantchekon and Thomas Fujiwara, “Reducing Clientelism in Benin,” *EGAP*, January 15, 2015.

Thursday

- Grindle, Merilee S. “Good enough governance: poverty reduction and reform in developing countries.” *Governance* 17.4 (2004): 525-548.
- Mkandawire, Thandika. “State Capacity, History, Structure, and Political Contestation in Africa.” in *States in the Developing World*, Centeno, Miguel A., Atul Kohli, Deborah J. Yashar, and Dinsha Mistree, eds, Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Video: Lant Pritchett in Doing Development Differently.

Proposal Abstract due by 11:59pm on Friday 5/26 via Canvas

Week 9: Environment and Education

Tuesday - Environment

- Ostrom, Elinor. "Tragedy of the commons." *The new Palgrave dictionary of economics* 2 (2008).
- Baviskar, Amita. *In the belly of the river: Tribal conflicts over development in the Narmada Valley*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2004. Chapter 2, pp. 19-33.
- Ramachandran, Vijaya (2021), Rich Countries' Climate Policies Are Colonialism in Green, Foreign Policy, November 3rd 2021.

Thursday - Education (Stephanie Reist)

- Gadotti, Moacir, and Carlos Alberto Torres. "Paulo Freire: education for development." *Development and change* 40.6 (2009): 1255-1267.
- Muralidharan, Karthik. "Reforming the Indian school education system." *What The Economy Needs Now* (2018): 2015-16.

Week 10: Prospects for the Future

Tuesday

- Levitsky, Steven and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*. Chapter 1, pp. 1-10.
- Banerjee, Abhijit V., and Esther Duflo. *Good economics for hard times*. PublicAffairs, 2019. Ch 1.
- Blumenstock, JE. "Don't forget people in the use of big data for development," *Nature*, 561 (2018), 170-172.
- Eureka Moments - how a luxury item became a tool for global development.

Final Lecture Response due by 11:59pm on Saturday, 06/10 on Canvas

Final Policy Proposal due by 11:59pm on Tuesday 6/13 via Canvas