

# POLISCI 141: The Political Economy of Development

Spring 2023

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 9:00-10:20am

Lathrop 299

## Contact Information

Instructor:

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Sections:

- Friday 11:30am-12:20pm; Encina West 108
- Friday 3:30-4:20pm; 20-21B (Main Quad)

## 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 and 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.
- Understand a political-economic framework for evaluating these issues.
- 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	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
	5/26	Governance

9	5/30	
	6/1	Environment
10	6/6	Prospects for the future

## Course Structure

The class will meet for lectures on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00-10:20am. 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 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 5 units of credit, which means students should expect to complete up to 15 hours of work per week, including class time. This leaves approximately 11 hours of work outside of lectures and sections.

Students will be assessed based on their participation in the course, a midterm exam, and a course project that consists of five assignments to be submitted to your section head. The midterm exam will evaluate students' understanding of the reading and lecture materials. 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 (5%)** - 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. **Midterm Exam (20%)** – The midterm exam will take place in class on **Tuesday 5/23**, and will cover material from the readings and lectures up to that point.
4. **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 **Tuesday 4/18 by 11:59pm** via Canvas.
  - **Lecture Response (5%)** – You will choose one week 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 four readings from the course in your analysis. The response memo should be roughly 300 words.
  - **Public-facing Problem Presentation and Feedback (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 w/ other countries or w/in a region, etc.) to convince the general public that this is a challenge and then outline possible solutions. You will be expected to present your analysis and provide feedback on other presentations to a peer group in your section. Both your presentation and feedback will be assessed. Your problem presentation is due by **Friday 5/5 by 11:59pm** via Canvas.
  - **Proposal Abstract (10%)** - 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. The proposal abstract is due by **Friday 5/12 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 **Monday 6/12 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 are political economy and development?

#### Tuesday - What is political economy?

- Video: Hans Rosling in [The best stats you've ever seen](#).
- Podcast: William Easterly on [What Must We Do to End Poverty?](#)
- Kenneth A. Shepsle. *Analyzing politics*. New York: Norton, 2010. Chs 1 and 2.
- *Suggested*: Clark, William, Matt Golder, and Sona Golder, 2018. "What is Science?" *Principles of Comparative Politics*, pp. 15-27.

#### Thursday - What is development?

- 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](#).
- *Suggested*: Video: Timothy Besley in [Political Economy and Development: a progress report](#); watch from 16:25-41:00.

### Week 2:

#### Tuesday - What is development?

- Catch up on readings from week 1.

#### Thursday - Geography

- Excerpt from "Guns Germs and Steel" by Jared Diamond: "[A natural experiment of history: How geography molded societies on Polynesian islands](#)"
- Sachs, Jeffrey D, "Government, Geography, and Growth: The True Drivers of Economic Development," *Foreign Affairs*, 91:5 (2012), pp. 142-150.
- Video: Michael Ross in "[The Oil Curse](#)"
- Hausmann, Ricardo, "Prisoners of Geography," *Foreign Policy*, 122 (2001), pp. 44-53

**Country brief due by 11:59pm on Tuesday 4/18 via Canvas**

### Week 3: Institutions

#### Tuesday

- Acemoglu, Daron, and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, Profile Books, 2012, pp. 45-56 and 70-95.

- Chalmers Johnson, “Political Institutions and Economic Performance: The Government-Business Relationship in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan.” In *Deyo, ed, The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialism*, pp. 136-164.
- Przeworski and Limongi, “Political Regimes and Economic Growth,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 7:3 (1993), pp. 51-60.

#### Thursday

- Satia, Priya, “[Guns and the British Empire](#),” *Aeon*, February 14, 2018.
- Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and slavery*. UNC Press Books, 2021. Foreword (by William A. Darity Jr.) and Ch 1.

### **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.
- Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. “The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation.” *American economic review* 91.5 (2001): 1369-1401.
- 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

- Michalopoulos, Stelios and Elias Papaioannou. 2015. “The Long-Run Effects of the Scramble for Africa.” *American Economic Review* (2015).
- Dell, Melissa. “[The persistent effects of Peru's mining mita](#).” *Econometrica* 78.6 (2010): 1863-1903.
- Iyer, Lakshmi. “Direct versus indirect colonial rule in India: Long-term consequences.” *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 92.4 (2010): 693-713.

### **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.
- Chandra, Kanchan. “What is ethnic identity and does it matter?.” *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 9 (2006): 397-424.
- 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.
- Marble, William, Salma Mousa, and Alexandra A. Siegel. “Can exposure to celebrities reduce prejudice? The effect of Mohamed Salah on islamophobic behaviors and attitudes.” *American Political Science Review* 115.4 (2021): 1111-1128.
- Noah, Trevor. *Born a crime: Stories from a South African childhood*. Doubleday Canada, 2016. Chs 2 and 4. (Audiobook option available).

**Public-facing problem presentation due by 11:59pm on Friday 5/5 via Canvas**

### **Week 6: Gender**

#### Tuesday

- Kandiyoti, Deniz. “Bargaining with patriarchy.” *Gender & society* 2.3 (1988): 274-290.
- 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.
- Perez, Caroline Criado. *Invisible women: Data bias in a world designed for men*. Abrams, 2019. Ch 1.
- *Suggested*: Chattopadhyay, Raghavendra, and Esther Duflo. “Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India.” *Econometrica* 72.5 (2004): 1409-1443.

**Proposal Abstract due by 11:59pm on Friday 5/12 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.
- Nunn, Nathan. "Restraining Ourselves: Helping by Not Hurting," *Economists for Inclusive Prosperity* (2020).

### Thursday

- Page, Lucy and Rohini Pande. "Ending Global Poverty: Why money isn't enough," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (2018), pp. 173-200.
- Faye, Michael, and Paul Niehaus. "Political aid cycles." *American Economic Review* 102.7 (2012): 3516-3530.

## Week 8: Governance

### Tuesday

#### **In-Class Midterm Exam**

### Thursday

- 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.
- Video: Lant Pritchett in [Doing Development Differently](#).

## Week 9: Governance and Environment

### Tuesday - Governance

- 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.
- Tsai, Lily L. "Solidary groups, informal accountability, and local public goods provision in rural China." *American Political Science Review* 101.2 (2007): 355-372.
- Dunning et al., "[Metaketa I: Information and Accountability](#)," *EGAP*, July 9, 2019.

### Thursday - 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.
- *Suggested:* Lipscomb, Molly, and Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak. "Decentralization and pollution spillovers: evidence from the re-drawing of county borders in Brazil." *The Review of Economic Studies* 84.1 (2016): 464-502.

### **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 Policy Proposal due by 11:59pm on Monday 6/12 via Canvas**