

DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

Spring 2021

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Course Description

Why are some countries high- while others low-income? In this class, we explore this question by drawing on the experience of countries throughout the world, examining the diverging paths they've taken along their development trajectory.

Analytically, our approach is one of political economy. This means that we privilege explanations that consider how individual and collective economic outcomes are determined by a mix of political choices, arrangements, and institutions. Since this is a course in political science many of the ideas we will encounter come from political science (with an assist from economics), but because development is complex, we will also draw on other disciplines, such as public policy, sociology, anthropology, and geography.

Aside from learning about theories of development, a key goal of this course is to get you to critically engage with big debates. There is probably no right answer to the question "Can we engineer development?" But after taking this class you will be able to unpack this (and other) questions' assumptions and simplifications, putting forth a carefully reasoned answer. This important skill will be useful to you in settings beyond this course.

We cover four key topics. First, we pay attention to concepts. For instance, how do we define poverty? What is meant by development? Second, we consider competing explanations for country wealth. What are common explanations for the wealth gap between low-income and high-income countries? Third, we navigate the intellectual history of development thinking. How have low-income countries tried to catch up to the rich, and where do these ideas come from? We conclude the class by discussing contemporary topics in development and public policy. After so many years, what have we learned about "what works" in development?

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should be able to:

- Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of existent measures of poverty and inequality,
- Discuss the ways in which geographical and historical legacies constrain the political and economic development of countries,
- Critically assess major theories of economic development and trace their development over time,
- Make explicit connections between public policy challenges faced in high-income and low-income countries,
- Engage big debates by critically evaluating assumptions, simplifications, and limitations and offering carefully reasoned responses.

Required Materials and Texts

All readings will be posted on Avenue to Learn, **you do not need to purchase additional books.**

Class Format

This course will be lecture-based. While I will lecture every class, expect to break often for short group discussions. On occasion, we will have more interactive activities and simulations.

Course Evaluation – Overview

1. Participation and Attendance – 20%
2. Short Papers (3 each worth 10) – 30%
3. Group Presentation and Memo – 20 %
4. Take-Home Final – 30%

Course Evaluation – Details

Participation and Attendance (20%)

I expect you to show up to class prepared. Doing the readings will help you grapple with the material more effectively than just sitting in class—it might even make the lecture more interesting and compel you to voice your opinion!

Every time we meet you will be asked to complete a single low-stakes assignment in class. This assignment can take many shapes. For example, a small reflection paper on a class discussion, written questions about the readings, a data interpretation exercise, etc. I will grade these assignments on good-faith completion, meaning I will award you full credit for a properly completed assignment. To get the full attendance and participation points you must complete no fewer than 12/14 assignments. Otherwise, you will lose 2 points off per assignment missed, until there are no more points to lose. The point of these assignments is to get you to engage with course material and reward your attendance to class.

Short Papers (3 each worth 10%, for a total of 30%)

These 2-page assignments will be handed out in class. This means that you must come to class to find out what they are about. The table below provides information on when the papers will be assigned and when they are due. These assignments will ask you to apply concepts and theories developed in class to analyze a particular issue in development.

	Assigned Date	Due Date
Short Paper 1	May 6 th	May 13 th by 2:30pm
Short Paper 2	May 13 th	May 20 th by 2:30pm
Short Paper 3	May 20 th	May 27 th by 2:30pm

Group Presentation and Memo (20%)

Students will be divided into small groups for this presentation. Students in the group will play the role of development experts tasked with providing recommendations to policymakers (the rest of the class) on a specific policy problem in a particular country. They will give a 20-minute presentation on the issue alongside three possible courses of action. Aside from the presentation, the groups will prepare a summary paper (2 pages max) outlining the issue and three possible solutions to hand out to the class. Following the presentation, the class will discuss the policy recommendations and vote on a course of action. Groups will be expected to do outside research. We will go over topics, countries, group size, and other details on the third day of class; students will share their groups' grade. I will provide time during class for groups to meet and do their assigned work. The purpose of these presentations is to give you time to reflect on the development challenges of other countries, and to provide hypothetical solutions that consider the material we have covered.

Take-Home Final (30%) – Due June 18, 2021

I require an 8-page final paper instead of an in-class final. The paper will be in response to a prompt and will be open-note and open-book. You may not consult with your classmates or other people. Prompts will be distributed in class on June 1. The finished product is due June 18, 2021 by 11:59pm. The purpose of this exam is to give you an opportunity to reflect on major issues in development. To get a good grade no additional reading beyond what is in this syllabus is required. The best exams will draw meaningful connections from across the topics and units covered in class.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

I. Concepts and Measurement

Week 1 (5/3-5/7)

5/4 – Introduction

Readings:

- Abby Long, “10 Things to Know About Reading a Regression Table,” *EGAP Methods Guide* (blog), n.d., <https://egap.org/resource/10-things-to-know-about-reading-a-regression-table/>.

Guiding Questions: Where are high-income countries located, where are low-income countries located? Are high-income countries evenly wealthy, are low-income countries evenly poor?

5/6 – Conceptualizing Poverty

Readings:

- Esther Duflo, “Human Values and the Design of the Fight Against Poverty” (Tanner Lectures, Cambridge, MA, 2012), https://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/documents/TannerLectures_EstherDuflo_draft.pdf. (Lecture 1.)
- Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011). (Introduction.)

Guiding Questions: What is poverty? What is freedom? How are these concepts related to each other and to the concept of development? How do we measure poverty at the individual level? What are income and wealth inequality, how are they measured, and what do they tell us that poverty rates do not?

Week 2 (5/10-5/14)

5/11 – Measuring Poverty

Readings: None

Notes: I will lecture on estimating poverty counts and measuring inequality. Following the lecture, we will be calculating poverty counts, deciding on the best measure of wealth across several contexts, and discussing the implications of these measures for policy practice.

5/13 – Classifying Countries on Income

Readings:

- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* (Profile Books, 2012). (Chapter 1.)
- Lant Pritchett, “Divergence, Big Time,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 11, no. 3 (September 1997): 3–17, <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.11.3.3>.

Guiding Questions: How do we decide whether a country is low- or high-income? How is this related to individual wealth and prosperity? How did rich countries get rich? What sorts of other “good things” are correlated with wealth?

II. Resources and Institutions

Week 3 (5/17-5/21)

5/18 – Geographical and Social Endowments

Readings:

- Jared Diamond, “What Makes Countries Rich or Poor?,” *The New York Review of Books*, June 7, 2012, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2012/06/07/what-makes-countries-rich-or-poor/>.
- Terry Lynn Karl, “Overcoming the Resource Curse” (Energy Seminar Presentation, Stanford University, 2009), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORkgMaHkv6U>. (Minutes 5-)
- Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1994). (Introduction.)

Guiding Questions: How well can geography explain why some countries are low- or high-income? How does it account for inequality in wealth within countries? What does it miss? What is social capital, and how is it related to politics and development?

5/20 – Colonial Origins

Readings:

- Atul Kohli, ed., “The Colonial Origins of a Modern Political Economy: The Japanese Lineage of Korea’s Cohesive-Capitalist State,” in *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27–61, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511754371.003>.
- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation,” *American Economic Review* 91, no. 5 (2001): 1369–1401, <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.91.5.1369>.

Guiding Questions: What are political institutions? Where do they come from? How do they affect economic development? How might a colonial past affect development trajectories?

Week 4 (5/24-5/28)

5/25 – Democracy

Readings:

- Adam Przeworski et al., *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950–1990* (New York City: Cambridge University Press, 2000). (Chapter 2)
- Nancy Bermeo, “Poverty, Inequality, and Democracy (II): Does Electoral Democracy Boost Economic Equality?,” *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 4 (2009): 21–35.

Guiding Questions: What is the relationship between democracy and development? How can we distinguish between two competing arguments: 1) that democracy causes development, 2) that development causes democracy?

5/27 – State Capacity

Readings:

- Barbara Geddes, *Politician’s Dilemma: Building State Capacity in Latin America*, 25 (Univ of California Press, 1994). (Chapter 1)
- Peter Evans, *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation* (Cambridge Univ Press, 1995). (Chapters 1 and 10)

Guiding Questions: Under what conditions can states direct economic development? Are these cases exceptions to the rule?

III. Development Thinking

Week 5 (5/31-6/4)

6/1 – Modernization Theory

Readings:

- Daniel Lerner, “The Grocer and the Chief: A Parable,” in *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Macmillan Pub Co, 1958).
- Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *The American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 69–105, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1951731>.
- Eva Bellin, “The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective,” *Comparative Politics* 36, no. 2 (2004): 139–57, <https://doi.org/10.2307/4150140>.

Guiding Questions: What is the difference between a traditional and a modern society? How does the rise of urbanization, public education, and mass media affect and change societies? What are the implications of such changes for political and economic developments?

6/3 – Dependency and Critics

Readings:

- Fernando Henrique Cardoso, “Dependency and Development in Latin America,” in *Introduction to the Sociology of “Developing Societies,”* ed. Hamza Alavi and Teodor Shanin, *Sociology of “Developing Societies”* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1982), 112–27, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-16847-7_11.
- Paul R. Krugman, “Is Free Trade Passe?,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 1, no. 2 (December 1987): 131–44, <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.1.2.131>.

Guiding Questions: What are the international determinants of development? More specifically, what role, if any, does international politics play in determining the ability and speed with which countries achieve economic development?

Week 6 (7/7 – 7/11)

7/8 – Neoliberalism, Foreign Aid

Readings:

- John Williamson, “The Washington Consensus as Policy Prescription for Development” (Lecture, World Bank, 2004), <https://www.piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/washington-consensus-policy-prescription-development>.
- Nancy Birdsall, Augusto De La Torre, and Felipe Valencia Caicedo, “The Washington Consensus: Assessing A ‘Damaged Brand,’” in *The Oxford Handbook of Latin American Economics*, ed. Jose Antonio Ocampo and Jaime Ross, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199571048.013.0004>.
- William Easterly, “The West Can’t Save Africa,” February 13, 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/12/AR2006021201150.html>.

Guiding Questions: What is neoliberalism? What are its intellectual origins? As an ideology or movement what are its shortcomings? What role should rich countries play in helping low-income countries develop? What about the role of other low-income countries? What are the political and economic consequences of aid?

7/10 – Micro Approaches to Development

Readings:

- Esther Duflo, “Policies, Politics: Can Evidence Play a Role in the Fight against Poverty?” (Sabot Lecture, Center for Global Development, 2011), <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/policies-politics-can-evidence-play-role-fight-against-poverty-sixth-annual-sabot>.

- Mike Gibson and Anja Sautmann, “Introduction to Randomized Evaluations,” The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), n.d., <https://www.povertyactionlab.org/resource/introduction-randomized-evaluations>.
- Lawrence Haddad, “Five Assumptions of Dominant Thinking in International Development,” *Development* 55, no. 1 (March 1, 2012): 34–44, <https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2011.106>.

Notes: Many prominent scholars and international development experts now advocate for evidence-based policymaking. Typically, they equate high-quality evidence with randomized controlled trials (RCTs). Following a lecture on RCTs, we will perform a small simulation exercise. We will follow the simulation with a discussion of what this micro-turn in development means for development practice moving forward.

IV. Contemporary Policy Challenges

Week 7 (7/14-7/18)

7/15 – Social Policy

Readings:

- Candelaria Garay, *Social Policy Expansion in Latin America* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016). (Chapter 1)
- Melani Cammett and Sukriti Issar, “Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Allocation in Lebanon,” *World Politics* 62, no. 3 (2010): 381–421, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887110000080>.

Guiding Questions: Who provides social goods to poor people in developing countries? Under what incentives are governments likely to target poor people for public service delivery?

7/17 – COVID-19 as Development Challenge

Readings:

- Antonia Noori Farzan, “How Chile’s Vaccination Push Outpaced the Rest of the Western Hemisphere,” *Washington Post*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/03/17/chile-vaccination-success/>.
- Andrew Mertha, “Analysis | Covid-19 Reveals How China’s Internal Politics Now Affect the Whole World,” *Washington Post*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/03/06/covid-19-reveals-how-chinas-internal-politics-now-affect-whole-world/>.

- Aminatou Seydou, "Analysis | Africa Has Started Vaccinating against the Coronavirus. But Do Citizens Trust Their Governments on Vaccine Safety?," *Washington Post*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/03/12/africa-has-started-vaccinating-against-covid-do-citizens-trust-their-governments-vaccine-safety/>.
- Jennifer M. Piscopo and Kendall Funk, "Analysis | Are Women Leaders Better at Fighting the Coronavirus?," *Washington Post*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/08/26/are-female-leaders-better-fighting-covid-19/>.

Guiding Questions: Why explains why some countries are better placed to fight off COVID-19 than others? What is the relationship between domestic politics and COVID management?

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

No hard copies! Turn in everything through Avenue to Lean. If Avenue is down, or in case of any other eventuality, email the paper to me. If I can't open the file, then you didn't turn it in.

Important: If you have MSAF accommodations, please come talk to me about them by May 7th.

Formatting Work

Assignments must be formatted with Times New Roman 12-size font, and 1-inch margins all around. Either PDF files or Word documents are fine. I have no preference regarding citation style, but please have citations include title, author, date of publication, and journal/publisher.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
67-69	C+
63-66	C
60-62	C-
57-59	D+

MARK	GRADE
53-56	D
50-52	D-
0-49	F

Late Assignments

At your discretion, you may take a 1-week extension on any personal assignment. You may not take an extension on your group project. I will otherwise not accept late work.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF): In the event of an absence for medical or other reasons, students should review and follow the Academic Regulation in the Undergraduate Calendar “Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work”.

Courses with an On-Line Element

Some courses may use on-line elements (e.g. e-mail, Avenue to Learn (A2L), LearnLink, web pages, capa, Moodle, ThinkingCap, etc.). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of a course using these elements, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in a course that uses on-line elements will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

Online Proctoring

Some courses may use online proctoring software for tests and exams. This software may require students to turn on their video camera, present identification, monitor and record their computer activities, and/or lock/restrict their browser or other applications/software during tests or exams. This software may be required to be installed before the test/exam begins.

Authenticity / Plagiarism Detection

Some courses may use a web-based service (Turnitin.com) to reveal authenticity and ownership of student submitted work. For courses using such software, students will be expected to submit their work electronically either directly to Turnitin.com or via an online learning platform (e.g. A2L, etc.) using plagiarism detection (a service supported by Turnitin.com) so it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Students who do not wish their work to be submitted through the plagiarism detection software must inform the Instructor before the assignment is due. No penalty will be assigned to a student who does not submit work to the plagiarism detection software.

All submitted work is subject to normal verification that standards of academic integrity have been upheld (e.g., on-line search, other software, etc.). For more details

about McMaster's use of Turnitin.com please go to www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

Copyright and Recording

Students are advised that lectures, demonstrations, performances, and any other course material provided by an instructor include copyright protected works. The Copyright Act and copyright law protect every original literary, dramatic, musical and artistic work, **including lectures** by University instructors

The recording of lectures, tutorials, or other methods of instruction may occur during a course. Recording may be done by either the instructor for the purpose of authorized distribution, or by a student for the purpose of personal study. Students should be aware that their voice and/or image may be recorded by others during the class. Please speak with the instructor if this is a concern for you.

Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous or Spiritual Observances (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the [RISO](#) policy. Students should submit their request to their Faculty Office **normally within 10 working days** of the beginning of term in which they anticipate a need for accommodation or to the Registrar's Office prior to their examinations. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity. **It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.**

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#), located at <https://secretariat.mcmaster.ca/university-policies-procedures-guidelines/>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.

- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Conduct Expectations

As a McMaster student, you have the right to experience, and the responsibility to demonstrate, respectful and dignified interactions within all of our living, learning and working communities. These expectations are described in the [Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities](#) (the “Code”). All students share the responsibility of maintaining a positive environment for the academic and personal growth of all McMaster community members, **whether in person or online**.

It is essential that students be mindful of their interactions online, as the Code remains in effect in virtual learning environments. The Code applies to any interactions that adversely affect, disrupt, or interfere with reasonable participation in University activities. Student disruptions or behaviours that interfere with university functions on online platforms (e.g. use of Avenue 2 Learn, WebEx or Zoom for delivery), will be taken very seriously and will be investigated. Outcomes may include restriction or removal of the involved students’ access to these platforms

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require academic accommodation must contact [Student Accessibility Services](#) (SAS) at 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or sas@mcmaster.ca to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. For further information, consult McMaster University’s [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#) policy.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student’s own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Extreme Circumstances

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.