

# Political Economy of Development

## PSC 30500 • Fall 2020

Mondays and Wednesdays  
2:00 - 3:15 pm  
Zoom link [here](#)  
Meeting ID: XXX XXX XXX  
Password: XXXX

Professor: Diana Greenwald  
Email: [dgreenwald@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:dgreenwald@ccny.cuny.edu)  
Virtual office hours: M/W, 3:30-5:00 PM, sign-up [here](#)

### 1. Course Description

In this class, we will study how political institutions and behavior affect economic outcomes, and, conversely, how economic factors can shape politics. To understand development – or how societies achieve economic prosperity and well-being – we will often compare across countries. However, we will also see how a comparative approach can allow us to explain differences across regions, across segments of the population, or within the same country over time. We will examine existing theories and findings in social science research regarding: the drivers of poverty and inequality; the legacies of colonialism; the role of foreign aid and natural resources in development; the relationship between democracy and development; and the causes and effects of civil conflict, among other things. This course will introduce various methods of causal inference and analysis, including both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

### 2. Assessment and Deadlines

<i>Item</i>	<i>Due</i>	<i>Maximum points</i>
Exercise #1*	Sep 21	10
Exercise #2*	Oct 7	10
Midterm exam	Oct 21	25
Exercise #3*	Nov 18	10
Final research project		
1. Topic submission	Nov 18	5
2. Presentation	Nov 30-Dec 9	15
3. Final paper	Dec 16	25
Participation		10
		<b>100 + up to 10 extra credit</b>

\*Two exercises are required. Completion of a third exercise will count as extra credit.

### 3. Class Attendance and Participation

Our class will meet online, Mondays and Wednesdays from 2:00 to 3:15 pm, in accordance with the college academic calendar. Attendance will be taken at every online

meeting. Recordings of all class meetings will be posted after class on Blackboard. Absences for illness, emergency, religious observance, and select professional development or career-related opportunities will be excused with appropriate communication. The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unprecedented challenges for many of us. Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your loved ones, must be your highest priorities. I simply ask that you do your best to communicate with me about any extended absences you may need to take during the semester. If you are absent for more than three (3) online meetings without explanation, your participation grade will be affected.

Class participation is defined broadly, and includes: regular attendance; completing readings in advance of class; actively participating in class discussions; and engaging with your peers in an attentive and respectful manner. If you find it hard to ignore internet distractions during class, I highly recommend downloading an app such as [Freedom](#) that will temporarily block your access to certain websites (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, etc).

#### 4. Readings

Please consult the schedule below for the assigned readings. You are not required to purchase any books. Electronic copies of all assigned readings will be provided via Blackboard. (Also, note that many resources are available to you for free online via [the CCNY library](#).<sup>1</sup>) You are unlikely to pass the course if you attend class but do not do the readings. Similarly, you are also unlikely to pass the course if you do the readings but do not attend class.

We will be reading some advanced social science research. Some of this work draws on quantitative analysis. No pre-existing knowledge of mathematics or statistics is assumed or required for this course. If you are struggling with the reading material, please find a time to meet with me early in the semester.

#### 5. Midterm Exam

The take-home midterm exam will be distributed on October 14 and due on **October 21**. It will include two (2) components:

1. Online discussion posts (2 posts, max 200 words each, 40 points maximum)
2. Short essays (2 short essays, max 500 words each, 60 points maximum)

You will have full access to your readings and notes for the exam. You are required to complete the exam by yourself. More details will be provided as the date approaches.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, follow the links below to access the following books in their entirety: **1)** Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo. 2012. [Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty](#). New York: PublicAffairs. **2)** Peter Evans. 1995. [Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation](#). Princeton: Princeton University Press. **4)** Morton Jerven. [Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What to Do About It](#). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

## 6. Exercises

You will have three (3) take-home exercises – you are required to complete two (2), and the third will be extra credit. You will have one week to complete each take-home exercise. Each exercise will ask you to respond to a prompt or set of prompts. Your response should be approximately 2 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font, 1” margins) excluding any graphs or figures. Each exercise should take no more than 2-3 hours. You are required to complete take-home exercises by yourself.

## 7. Final Research Project

The largest assignment of the course is your own research project, culminating in a final paper due on **December 16**. Your project must relate to a substantive topic that we have covered in class. It should seek to improve our understanding of something related to the political economy of development. In short, think about how relations of power shape economic development or how economic factors shape politics. You may conduct a single-country analysis, a cross-country comparison, or another research design with my approval. The assignment has three (3) components, summarized below. More details will be provided for each component.

1. You must submit a one-paragraph summary of your topic for approval by November 18. I will provide feedback on your topic after receiving your summary.
2. You will provide an 6-minute video presentation of your topic during class time between November 30 and December 9.
3. Your final paper should be 7-9 pages (double-spaced, 12 point font, 1” margins).

## 8. Virtual Office Hours and Email

A link to sign up for my virtual office hours can be found at the top of this syllabus. Office hour appointments can be held on Zoom or by phone, depending on the student’s preference. Office hours are periods of time that professors specifically dedicate to you, the students, to review course material and answer any questions you may have. Please come to office hours as often as you wish. If you cannot attend my regularly scheduled office hours due to a conflict, please email me to find another mutually convenient time to meet.

I make every effort to respond to email within 24 hours (or, if over the weekend, the next business day). There are two exceptions. First: Emails sent less than 48 hours prior to the midterm or final paper due date are not guaranteed a response. Second: Questions whose answer is clearly stated on this syllabus are not guaranteed a response.

## 9. Grade Grievances

If you believe a grade you have received is unfair or in error, you will need to:

- Wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before approaching me.
- Within one week (7 days) of receiving the grade, provide an explanation in writing for why you believe the grade you received was unfair or in error and submit it with the original assignment. The entire assignment will be re-graded. Note that this may raise or lower your grade.

For more information on appealing grades, please consult the Office of Academic Standards' website [here](#).

## **10. Academic Integrity**

Cheating – including plagiarism – will not be tolerated in this class. Plagiarism means presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own without giving credit. Plagiarism is very easy to avoid by giving recognition to the original author or source from which the material came. Academic misconduct, such as cheating or plagiarism, will result in a zero grade for that assignment and possibly trigger disciplinary action. The CUNY Academic Integrity Policy is available [here](#). If you have made it this far through the syllabus, please [email](#) me a cute animal picture or meme.

## **11. Disability and Accessibility Accommodations**

The AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services (AAC/SDS) ensures equal access and full participation to all of City College's programs, services, and activities by coordinating and implementing appropriate accommodations. AAC/SDS continues to operate remotely. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations and services, please contact AAC/SDS via email ([disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu)).

## **12. Student Mental Health and Well-Being**

Your health and well-being is important to me, your other professors, your colleagues and friends, and the City College community. CCNY's Counseling Center is now providing remote services to students, including screening and assessment, crisis intervention, individual short-term counseling, group counseling, referral and case management, and workshops. Contact the Counseling Center via email at [counseling@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:counseling@ccny.cuny.edu). The email address is checked during normal business hours. Please include your phone number in the email. See the Counseling Center web page [here](#) for more information and resources. CCNY's Gender Resources has also moved to a virtual platform. For general questions or information about their services, including supporting survivors of violence and members of the LGBTIA+ community, contact them via email at [genderresources@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:genderresources@ccny.cuny.edu). See the Gender Resources web page [here](#) for more information and resources.

## 13. Reading and Assignment Schedule

### August 26: Introductions

#### **Part 1: Poverty and Development: Conceptualization and Operationalization**

#### **August 31: Poverty**

- Jeffrey Sachs. 2005. *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time*. New York: Penguin Books. Chapters 1 and 3: “A Global Family Portrait”, “Why Some Countries Fail to Thrive”.
- Max Roser. “[Global Economic Inequality](#).” *Our World in Data*.

#### **September 2: Development (I)**

- **Watch:** Marginal Revolution University. “[Amartya Sen #1 on Capabilities](#).” August 17, 2015.
- Amartya Sen. 1999. *Development As Freedom*. Chapters 1 and 2: “The Perspective of Freedom”, and “The Ends and the Means of Development”.

#### **September 7: NO CLASS (College closed)**

#### **September 9: Development (II)**

- **Read webpage, including Frequently Asked Questions:** United Nations. “[The Sustainable Development Agenda](#).”
- **Choose 2 of the 17 goals to read about in detail:** United Nations. “[The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020](#).”
- Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and Bhumi Muchhala. 2020. “The Southern origins of sustainable development goals: Ideas, actors, aspirations.” *World Development* 126: 1-11.

#### **September 14: Critiques**

- William Easterly. 2006. *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: Penguin. Chapter 1: “Planners Versus Searchers”.
- Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo. 2012. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. New York: PublicAffairs. Chapter 3: “Low-Hanging Fruit for Better (Global) Health?”.

#### *Recommended:*

- Philip Alston. “The parlous state of poverty eradication: Report of the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.” July 2, 2020.

#### **Part 2: Social Science Research**

#### **September 16: What Is Science?**

- William R. Clark, Matt Golder and Sona N. Golder. 2018. “What is Science?” in *Principles of Comparative Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

**September 21: EXERCISE #1 DUE**

**Causal Inference**

- Macartan Humphreys. "[10 Things to Know About Causal Inference.](#)" Evidence in Governance and Politics Methods Guide.
- Macartan Humphreys. "[10 Strategies for Figuring out if X Caused Y.](#)" Evidence in Governance and Politics Methods Guide.

**September 23: Process Tracing**

- David Collier. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44(4): 823-830.

**September 28: NO CLASS (No classes scheduled)**

**Part 3: Theories of Poverty and Development**

**September 29<sup>2</sup>: Geography and the Environment**

- Jared M. Diamond. 1997. *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. New York: W.W. Norton. Prologue, Chapter 4, and Chapter 10: "Yali's Question", "Farmer Power", "Spacious Skies and Tilted Axes".

**September 30: Catch-up Day**

- Review reading from September 29 or get ahead on reading for October 5.

**October 5: Natural Resources**

- Michael Ross. 2012. *The Oil Curse: How Petroleum Wealth Shapes the Development of Nations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 4: "Petroleum Perpetuates Patriarchy."

**October 7: EXERCISE #2 DUE**

**Slavery, Colonialism, and Empire**

- Nathan Nunn. "[Understanding the long-run effects of Africa's slave trades](#)". *VoxEU*. 27 February 2017.
- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. New York: Random House. Chapter 1: "So Close and Yet So Different".

**October 12: NO CLASS (College closed)**

**October 14<sup>3</sup>: Midterm Review Session**

- No new readings assigned

**October 19: Structures of Dependency**

- **Watch:** Then & Now. "[World-Systems Theory, Dependency Theory and Global Inequality.](#)" July 11, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> College classes follow a Monday schedule.

<sup>3</sup> College classes follow a Monday schedule.

Recommended:

- Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto. (Translated by Marjory Mattingly Urquidi.) 1979. *Dependency and Development in Latin America*. Berkeley: University of California. Excerpts.
- Matthew C. Mahutga. 2006. "The Persistence of Structural Inequality?: A Network Analysis of International Trade, 1965-2000." *Social Forces* 84(4): 1863-1889.

**October 21: NO CLASS: MIDTERM EXAM DUE**

**Part 4: Taxing, Spending, and Accountability**

**October 26: The State and Institutions**

- Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*. New York: Random House. Chapter 3: "The Making of Prosperity and Poverty".
- Evans, Peter. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3: "States".

**October 28: Democracy, Autocracy, and Public Goods (II)**

- Catch-up on October 26 readings or get ahead on November 2 readings.

**November 2: Democracy, Autocracy, and Public Goods (I)**

- Brian Min. 2015. *Power and the Vote: Elections and Electricity in the Developing World*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1: "Introduction".
- Lily L. Tsai. 2007. Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China. *American Political Science Review* 101 (2): 355-372.

Recommended:

- Brian Min. 2015. *Power and the Vote: Elections and Electricity in the Developing World*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5: "Democracy and Light".

**November 4: Taxation, Foreign Aid, and Accountability (I)**

- Nicholas Eubank. 2012. "Taxation, Political Accountability and Foreign Aid: Lessons from Somaliland." *The Journal of Development Studies* 48(4): 465-480.
- Brandon de la Cuesta et al. 2019. "Oil and aid revenue produce equal demands for accountability as taxes in Ghana and Uganda." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 116(36): 17717-17722.

**November 9: Taxation, Foreign Aid, and Accountability (I) \*Guest speaker: Lee Howard**

- Thandika Mkandawire. 2010. "Aid, Accountability, and Democracy in Africa." *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 77 (4): 1149-1182.
- Additional reading TBD

**November 11: Clientelism and Accountability**

- Veronica Herrera. "[It's not just lead that's poisoning the water. It's also politics.](#)" *The Washington Post Monkey Cage*. February 28, 2017.

- Wouter Veenendaal and Jack Corbett. 2020. "Clientelism in small states: how smallness influences patron-client networks in the Caribbean and the Pacific." *Democratization* 27(1): 61-80.

**Part 5: Identity, Inequality, and Conflict**

**November 16: Civil Conflict**

- Robert H. Bates. "State failure". *Annual Review of Political Science* 11: 1-12.
- Simeon Djankov and Marta Reynal-Querol. "[Poverty and civil wars](#)." VoxEU. October 29, 2008.
- Håvard Mokleiv Nygård. "[Inequality and conflict—some good news](#)." World Bank Blogs. March 29, 2018.

*Recommended:*

- Kyosuke Kikuta. Forthcoming. "The Environmental Costs of Civil War: A Synthetic Comparison of the Congolese Forests with and without the Great War of Africa." *Journal of Politics*

**November 18: EXERCISE #3 AND FINAL PROJECT TOPIC SUMMARY DUE**

**Diversity and Discrimination**

***Read two (2) out of the following three (3) readings:***

- Jhacova Williams. "[Confederate Streets and Black-White Labor Market Differentials](#)." Working Paper.
- Edward Miguel. 2006. "Ethnic Diversity and Poverty Reduction." In Abhijit V. Banerjee, Roland Bénabou, and Dilip Mookherjee, eds. *Understanding Poverty*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alexander Lee. 2017. "Ethnic Diversity and Ethnic Discrimination: Explaining Local Public Goods Provision." *Comparative Political Studies* 51(10): 1351-1383.

**November 23: Immigration and Development**

- Ebenezer Obadare and Wale Adebani. 2009. "Transnational Resource Flow and the Paradoxes of Belonging: Redirecting the Debate on Transnationalism, Remittances, State and Citizenship in Africa." *Review of African Political Economy* 36 (122): 499-517.
- Margaret Peters. "[How do you create a better asylum policy? We asked the asylum seekers](#)." *The Washington Post Monkey Cage*. April 11, 2019.

**November 25: NO CLASS (Classes follow Friday schedule)**

**November 26-29: Thanksgiving Break**

**November 30, December 2, 7, 9: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS**

**December 16: FINAL PAPER DUE**