

POL 201
Politics of Development: Issues and Controversies
Fall 2025

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Course overview

Welcome to POL201, The Politics of Development. This course critically analyzes the politics of development in the global south, including issues and country cases that span Asia, Africa and Latin America. The course maintains a balance between abstract notions and theories of development, and real-world issues and challenges in development politics. The course begins with a focus on the conceptual, historical, and theoretical study of development and underdevelopment, then moves to specific factors that explain patterns of prosperity and poverty as well as challenges that developing countries typically confront at the national and local levels.

Overview

This class will be conducted in-person. You must attend weekly lectures and weekly tutorials. **Students should plan to do the reading before the lecture each week.**

Readings

All the readings for the course are available online or posted on Quercus. The reading load for this course is not heavy, but some of it will be written in a style that is not familiar.

Tutorials

Tutorials will involve a combination of group discussions, small group work, and opportunities to practice and get feedback on important writing-related skills.

Each tutorial group is assigned a TA who will lead the discussions and be available to you for office hours (in person or online) and by email. *Your TA should be your primary point of contact for any questions about this course.*

GRADING SCHEME

Writing assignments: 40% (20%, 20%)

Tutorial and lecture participation: 25%

Final exam: 35%

Due Dates

Assignment 1. Week of October 6, 2025

Assignment 2. Week of November 10, 2025

Final exam: during final exam period, not yet determined

Participation – 25%

Your participation in tutorial will be graded based on attendance, participation in discussions and group work, evidence that you have completed the reading and attended the lecture, and occasional in class assignments. Your participation in lecture will be based on submission of the “ticket out the door” at the end of each lecture.

Makeup policy

If you are absent from tutorial on the day of a writing assignment, you will be allowed to complete the assignment during a makeup session.

Corrupted files policy

It is virtually impossible for a file to become corrupted through submission to Quercus. Therefore “corrupted files” will be penalized as late submissions. If you are concerned about your file being corrupted, please copy and paste the text of your assignment into the text box of an email and send it to the TA at the time of your submission. This way, if anything happens to your file, you can show that it was completed on time.

Grade Appeals

If you believe that an error has been made in one of your assignment grades, you should send an email or private Quercus message to your TA explaining the error, with clear reference to the answer key or rubric for the assignment. It is your responsibility to demonstrate that your work merits a higher grade.

Grade appeals must be raised within seven (7) days of the assignment being returned to you.

If you are unable to resolve the issue with the grading TA, you may appeal to the Head TA. Your appeal should clearly explain why the work you submitted warrants a higher grade than it received, with clear and explicit reference to the answer key and/or rubric.

If you believe an error has been made with your participation grade, you may appeal to your tutorial TA. Tutorial TAs have total discretion over participation grades; you may not appeal to the Head TA or Course instructor to overturn a TA’s decision regarding tutorial participation grades.

Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offences. University policy requires that course instructors refer suspected plagiarism cases to the Office of Academic Integrity for resolution. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto’s policy on plagiarism at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

You are not allowed to use AI to do your work in this course.

Resources

Accessibility Services: The course is fully committed to providing students with fair access to their courses. Students with special needs or disabilities are strongly encouraged to register with Accessibility Services to arrange for needed accommodations.

Writing Support: Students can attend workshops and arrange one-on-one appointments for feedback on their written work. Students can visit www.writing.utoronto.ca for information and advice on all aspects of academic writing. Students are encouraged to make use of the college writing centers for individualized consultations on their written assignments. Interested students

should book their appointments with the writing centers early, as they fill up fast. Information about the writing centers is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. Students can also take advantage of the Library's free "Writing Plus" academic skills workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>. International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL), which includes practice opportunities for improving oral communication and critical reading skills, at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>.

Registrar Support: Students are encouraged to contact their registrar promptly if they experience unexpected challenges during the course that may require accommodations.

Health and Wellness: Students can access a wide range of programs and services to support their health and wellbeing. Many of these programs are listed at: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/departments/health-wellness/> 6

Crisis Support: Students in distress can access a range of free crisis lines available from the University of Toronto and the City of Toronto, as listed below:

- University of Toronto: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feel-distressed/>
- City of Toronto: <https://www.toronto.ca/311/knowledgebase/kb/docs/articles/311-toronto/information-and-business-development/crisis-lines-suicide-depression-telephone-support-lines-non-crisis-mental-health-services.html>

Most of these **crisis lines** are available 24 hours a day and some address specific problems that students may be experiencing. Immediate assistance is available as follows:

- My SSP for University of Toronto Students: 1-844-451-9700.
- Good 2 Talk Student Helpline: 1-866-925-5454
- Gerstein Crisis Centre: 416-929-5200
- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto: 416-408-HELP (4357)
- The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): 250 College Street (walk-in)

You are not alone: please get help if you're experiencing difficulties or are in distress.

Course outline

September 3: Introduction (no reading)

September 10: What is development, how do we measure it?

Mark McGillivray, "What is development?" in *International development: issues and challenges*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012, pp.23-52

Austin Frakt and Aaron Carroll, "Giant Strides in World Health but it could be so much better" *New York Times*, Feb 4, 2019

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/04/upshot/giant-strides-in-world-health-but-it-could-be-so-much-better.html?searchResultPosition=11>

September 17: The Industrial Revolution as a model of development

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book 1, Chapter 2

<http://geolib.com/smith.adam/won1-02.html>

September 24: Modernization, the hegemonic theory of development

Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49, no. 2 (1997): pp. 155-183.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25053996>

October 1: Dependency theory, a critique of modernization

J. Samuel Valenzuela and Arturo Valenzuela, "Modernization and Dependency: Alternative Perspectives in the Study of Latin American Underdevelopment," *Comparative Politics* 10, 4 (July 1978), pp. 535-552.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/421571.pdf>

October 8: Solving the core-periphery problem

Eliana Cardoso and Ann Helwege, "Import Substitution Industrialization," in *Modern Political Economy and Latin America*, eds. Jeffrey Frieden, Manuel Pastor, Jr. and Michael Tomz (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), pp. 155-164. (Quercus)

Anil Hira, "Did ISI fail and is neoliberalism the answer for Latin America? Reassessing common wisdom regarding economic policies in the region," *Brazilian Journal of Political Economy*, 27 (3) September 2007

<https://www.scielo.br/j/rep/a/pXGCjxCZcSLXPfN4p3fMhsJ/?lang=en>

October 15: Neoliberal development

John Williamson, "What Washington Means by Policy Reform," in *Latin American Adjustment: How Much has Happened?* Ed. John Williamson (Washington, D.C., Institute for International Economics, 1990). (Quercus)

William Finnegan, "The Economics of Empire: What Washington Means by the Washington Consensus," *Harper's Magazine* Vol.306, No.1836, May 2003 (Quercus)

October 22: Debt and debt servicing

Elliot Harris and Chris Lane, "Debt as an Obstacle to the Sustainable Development Goals," UN Blog post <https://www.un.org/pt/desa/debt-obstacle-sustainable-development-goals>

Augusto Lopez Claros, “Debt and Development: A Crisis for the Global South,” Global Governance Forum blog post, June 24, 2025 <https://globalgovernanceforum.org/debt-and-development-a-crisis-for-the-global-south/>

October 29: Fall reading week, no classes

November 5: Critical Development Studies

Arturo Escobar, “Development and the Anthropology of Modernity,” in *Encountering Development: the Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton University Press, 1993)

Ashok Kumbamu “The philanthropic-corporate-state complex: imperial strategies of dispossession from the ‘Green Revolution’ to the ‘Gene Revolution’,” *Globalizations*, 17(4) February 2020
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339484483_The_philanthropic-corporate-state_complex_imperial_strategies_of_dispossession_from_the_'Green_Revolution'_to_the_'Gene_Revolution'

November 12: Climate Change and Development

Afroz, T., Sikder, P.K., Naser, M.M. (2024). The Climate Change-Development Nexus: A New Development Landscape for Bangladesh. In: Uddin, M. (eds) *International Law, Climate Change and Bangladesh*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-71297-5_20

Marcus Taylor, “Climate Smart Agriculture: What is it good for?” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 45(1) 89-107 <https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2017.1312355>

November 19: Guest Lecture: Professor Sanjay Ruparelia; “Is the decline of the world order a bad thing?”

November 26: The impact of Covid on global south economies

Carmen Reinhart and Vincent Reinhart, “The Pandemic Depression: The Global Economy will Never be the Same,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2020
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-08-06/coronavirus-depression-global-economy?utm_medium=promo_email&utm_source=pre_release&utm_campaign=mktg_reguser_reinhart_pandemic_depression&utm_content=20200806&utm_term=registrant-prerelease

Frederic Megret, “Covid 19 Symposium: Returning “Home” – Nationalist International Law in the Time of the Coronavirus,” *OpinioJuris* 03/30.2020
<http://opiniojuris.org/2020/03/30/covid-19-symposium-returning-home-nationalist-international-law-in-the-time-of-the-coronavirus/>