

**POL447H
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF DEVELOPMENT
FALL 2025**

**Department of Political Science
Faculty of Arts and Science
University of Toronto**

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Class Time: Tuesdays 3-5PM
Office Hour: Tuesday 1-2PM or by appointment.

Land Acknowledgment: We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and, most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

1. Overview

This course explores salient issues in the study and practice of international development. It aims to deepen appreciation of major theoretical and substantive debates taking place in the study of the political economy of development. It is organized in roughly two parts: overview of the evolution of major perspectives on the political economy of development and development practice in the post-WW2 era and examination of analysis and debate on some major issues in the field today.

2. Format

The seminar will be mainly driven by student participation and discussion. Emphasis during the seminar will be placed on critical interpretation of assigned readings through the active participation of students in classroom dialogue and debate. Useful participation will be informed by knowledge of the readings and a willingness to share insights and certainties as well as doubts.

This is not a lecture course. I will open each session with a 10-20 min sketch of the main themes for the session. Each session will continue with 2 or 3 students (depending on class size) providing succinct summaries of the required readings to lay the groundwork for

discussion. These presentations will be for a *maximum of 40 minutes for sessions with two presenters (20 minutes each for session presenter) and maximum of 45 mins for session with 3 presenters (15 mins for each presenter) for session with three presenters*. The summaries will specify the key issues being addressed, the main argument(s) of the reading(s) and the supporting evidence and offer an opinion on the strengths and limitations of author(s)' analysis. Presentations will be assessed as part of the participation mark and are separate from the weekly reaction papers required of all. It is expected that you will discuss how to approach the presentation with co-presenter(s) before the session. **GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION TO BE POSTED ON QUERCUS**

This is not a research assignment (unless you want to make it that). I will provide a brief written evaluation of presentations. **Please note that the instructor may cut you off if you exceed the maximum allowable duration** as stated in the guidelines.

The reading requirement for the course is **moderate**. You are expected to complete all the required readings prior to each session. All readings are available electronically either as links through the library's website or as PDFs. You can locate the electronic links and PDF files under library reading list on the left side of the course page in Quercus.

Presentations begin in **Session 3/September 16**.

Please email me with your top three choices of sessions to lead, starting with session 3, by **September 5th**. The schedule of presentations will then be available by the Sept. 9th class. Assignment of sessions will be on a first-come basis. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to guarantee your top choices.

3. Course policies and procedures

Emails: I will attempt to respond to all emails within 48 hours (excluding weekends and holidays). Questions on course material cannot be adequately addressed via email. I will discuss course material or address substantial questions in class meetings, during office hours or by appointment.

Quercus, student email, and course information: This course will use Quercus to disseminate all course related information and assignments. Please ensure you have a valid U of T email. It is your responsibility to log on to Quercus regularly and obtain relevant information. To login, please go to: q.utoronto.ca

Submitting written assignments: All written assignments and responses have to be submitted through Quercus and must be in Word format.

Rough drafts and electronic copies of papers: Students are strongly advised to keep rough/ draft work and electronic copies of their papers before handing them in. These should be kept until marked assignments have been returned to you and the grades posted on ROSI.

4. Course requirements

Attendance and Participation 20%
Steady but quiet attendance yields 40% of the total marks for this component. Active and informed participation yields higher grades. 10% of this component will be based on your presentation.

Weekly Reaction Papers: 10%
Weekly reaction papers of a **maximum** of one single-spaced page (about 300 words) summarizing the arguments in two of the required readings for Sessions 2-11. WRPs are to be posted on Quercus Course page by **8PM** on the day before the relevant session. WRPs are intended to facilitate discussion in seminars. You can use them to ask for clarification of issues in the readings that you do not understand and to raise questions you think are important for the class to consider. WRPs submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. The reactions papers will not be graded, but you will be penalized for failing to post them on time before the relevant session and if they are not clearly written, coherent, and grammatically correct.

The first weekly response paper is due September 08 for Session 2 on September 09.)

Thematic Position Paper (Due October 7) 20%
A 1000 maximum word (approximately 3-4 double-spaced pages) position paper on contending perspectives on a **theme for sessions 2- 6 or later if you prefer. A list of themes will be provided or you can focus on one of the main issues for different sessions.** You will use the relevant required readings (additional sources if you wish to use them are acceptable) for this assignment. The emphasis is on concise, focused thought. You **must state** a clear position with respect to the perspectives and defend your position through a critical engagement with the literature: what are the main tenets of the contending perspectives, which of them do you side with, and why do you find the perspective you side with more persuasive. If you have an idea of the topic for your final essay, you can use this assignment as groundwork for the essay. **SEE GUIDELINES POSTED ON QUERCUS**

Analytical Paper (October 28) 15%
Treat this assignment as the first part of your final paper (see below). The analytical paper will be a maximum of 5 double-spaced pages. It will: (1) specify the issue you will write your paper on and why it is important; (2) present your main hypothesis or arguments; (3) sketch and briefly justify your intended conceptual/theoretical approach; (4) discuss the type(s) of evidence you will use to sustain your analysis; and (5) provide a sample bibliography of a minimum of seven items (articles in academic journals, books and/book chapters) you will

use for the paper. Secure my approval of your essay topic before beginning work on this assignment.

Final Paper (November 25)

35%

Write a critical essay exploring an issue covered in the seminar. Feel free to use a case study or comparison of cases to sharpen your discussion. Either way, the paper will elaborate the conceptual and substantive issues laid out in the analytical paper that is due October 28. Therefore, be sure to get my approval of your essay topic before you start work on the analytical paper.

Maximum length: 15 double-spaced pages (approximately 3,500 words), exclusive of cover page, notes, and bibliography.

5. Note on Plagiarism

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the relevant Code. The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek out additional information from me, or from other available campus resources like the U of T Writing Website. If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to me or seek the advice of your college registrar.

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>.

Ouriginal: "Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays via Ouriginal (integrated into Quercus) for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Ouriginal reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism.

The use of Ouriginal is voluntary. If you object to using Ouriginal you must contact me well ahead of time (i.e. at least three weeks before your essay is due) to establish appropriate alternative arrangements for submission of your written assignments. This will involve devising alternative methods for verifying the originality of your work, likely including submitting rough work along with your essay and having a brief interview about the work with the instructor.

The terms that apply to the University's use of **Original** are described on the [Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site](#).

6. Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

The use of AI tools for all course requirements without prior permission of instructors is strictly prohibited. University policies regarding the unauthorized use of AI tools for course work will be applied.

7. Accessibility Needs

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/> as soon as possible.

8. Late penalty:

Extensions: Extensions will only be granted in extenuating circumstances that could not be anticipated ahead of time.

Late penalty: Assignments handed in at any time after the specified deadline will be treated as late. There will be a penalty of 2% per day late, including weekend. The cut off time for the determination of on-time submissions is 11:59 pm on due date. The late penalty will be strictly enforced.

9.. Submission of written work

Written assignments must be submitted electronically as Word documents.

10. Readings for the Course

This syllabus identifies required readings for each week. Obviously, you must read the required readings for each week if we are to have a stimulating seminar. The required readings are available in electronic format through University of Toronto Libraries and can be accessed via library resources on the course page on Quercus.

11. Other important matters

Code of Conduct: The University of Toronto expects all its members to behave responsibly and with courtesy and respect for others at all times. The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in

this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. Students should make sure to read the University's Student Code of Conduct (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/codestudent-conduct-december-13-2019>) and the University's policy on the Appropriate Use of Information and Communication Technology (<https://www.provost.utoronto.ca/planning-policy/informationcommunication-technology-appropriate-use/>).

Accessibility: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodation, please contact Accessibility Services (studentlife.utoronto.ca/as); Phone: 416-978 8060.

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/> uoft.me/myssp

Crisis support: If you feel distressed, please know that you are not alone and please reach out for help. For further resources, please see: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/task/support-when-you-feeldistressed/>

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1: Sept. 02 Intro, course organization, expectations and evaluation

No readings for the week.

Week 2/ Sept. 09: The Meanings of Development

At Issue: *What does "development" mean? Why is there no agreed upon definition of "development"? How does development theory inform development policy and practice and vis versa?*

Required:

Thomas, A. Chapter 3: Meanings and Views of Development" pp.48-75 in A. Thomas. And T. Allen. eds. *Poverty and Development in the 21st Century*. 3rd ed. Oxford Univ. Press
Sen, A. 1988. "The concept of development." *Handbook of Development Economics* 1: 9-26.

Week 3/Sept. 16: Historical Legacies

At Issue: *Did colonialism contribute to development and/or underdevelopment in societies in the ‘global south’? How useful is the dependency perspective to understanding how development challenges in the global south today are shaped by the legacies of colonialism? How and to what extent does the analysis of Nunn and Acemoglu and Johnson support, complicate or are quite distinct from the dependency perspective?*

Required:

Frank, F. 1966. “The Development of Underdevelopment,” *Monthly Review* 18 (4):17-31

Acemoglu, D., S. Johnson & J. Robinson. 2001. “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development,” *American Economic Review* 91 (5): 1369-1401.

Nunn, N. 2007. “Historical Legacies: A Model linking Africa’s past to its Current Underdevelopment” *Journal of Development Economics* 83 (1): 157-175.

Week 4/ Sept. 23: Post War Development Project 1: Modernization and Nation-Statist Development in Theory and Practice

At Issue: *Why and how did development promotion become a key component of the post-war international order. How are the rise and decline of dominant paradigms and policy orientations shaped by the intersection of politics, power, and ideas/ideology?*

Required:

Rostow, W. W. 1962. “The Five Stages of Growth – a Summary.” In *the Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge University Press, p. 4-16.

D. Williams, 2012. *International Development and Global Politics: History, theory and practice* London and New York: Routledge, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, pp. 11-46

Escobar, A. 1995/2012. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (chapter 2: The problematization of poverty: the tale of the three worlds).

Week 5/Sept. 30: Post-War Development Project 2: Emergence and Architecture of the Neoliberal Order and Beyond

At Issue: *What confluence of factors undergirded the emergence of the neoliberal paradigm? What were the theoretical foundations of the Washington Consensus and why did it become so influential? Was the Post-Washington Consensus actually, as the term suggests, a replacement of the Washington Consensus or is it rather an augmentation of the latter? Is there a post-Washington consensus development regime and what are its defining characteristics?*

Required:

Williams, D. 2012. *International Development and Global Politics: History, theory and practice* London and New York: Routledge, Chapter 5: The Liberal Order”

Williamson, J. 2000. “What Washington Means by Policy Reform,” pp. 18-25 in J. Frieden, M. Pastor Jr. and M. Tomz, eds. *Modern Political Economy and Latin America*. London: Routledge

Kingstone, P. 2018. "The Rise and Fall (and Rise Again?) of Neoliberalism in Latin America" pp. 480-492 in C. Cahill et al, ed. *The SAGE Handbook of Neoliberalism*. Sage Publications.

Alami I, Dixon AD and Mawdsley E (2021) State Capitalism and the New Global D/development Regime," *Antipode* 53 (5), 1294–1318.

Week 6/Oct. 07: State Capacity and Development Trajectories

At Issue: *How central is the state to shaping development trajectories? What are the defining characteristics of the developmental state? What factors support and hinder the emergence of developmental states in some regions/societies and not others? Is the developmental state "dead"?*

Required:

Evans, P. 1992. "The State as Problem and Solution: Predation, Embedded Autonomy and Structural Change." In S. Haggard and R. Kaufman, *The Politics of Economic Adjustment*. Princeton University Press, p. 140-181

Stubbs, R. 2017. "The Origins of East Asia's Developmental State and Pressures for Change." Pp. 29-50 in Carrol, T. and D. Jarvis, ed. *Asia after the Developmental State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Mkandawire, T. 2001. "Thinking about Developmental States in Africa," *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 25 (3): 289-314.

Week 7/ Oct. 14: Democracy and Development

At Issue: *What are the core premises of Sen's advocacy of democracy as a universal value rather than an instrument for economic growth/development? Are democratic regimes better at promoting economic development or not? How successful has the use of development aid to promote development been?*

Required:

A Sen. 1999. "Democracy as a Universal Value." *Journal of Democracy* 10 (3): 3-15

Halperin, M., J. Siegle & M. Weinstein. 2005. *The Democracy Advantage: how democracies promote prosperity and peace*. London: Routledge, chap. 1; peruse chapter 2 time permitting.

Dunning, T. (2004). Conditioning the effects of aid: Cold war politics, donor credibility, and democracy in Africa. *International Organization*, 58(2), 409–423.

Abrahamsen, R. 2016. "Discourses of democracy, practices of autocracy: shifting meanings of democracy in the aid–authoritarianism nexus", pp. 21-43 in T. Hagmann and F. Reyntjens, ed. *Aid and authoritarianism in Africa: Development without democracy*. London: Zed

Week 8/ Oct 21: Gendering Development

At Issue: *Roots of resilience of gendered economic inequalities; contributions of feminist scholarship to development theory and practice; dynamic of gender inequalities in the age of neoliberal globalization and economic restructuring.*

Required:

- L. Beneria, G. Berik, and Maria Floro. 2016. *Gender, Development and Globalization: Economics as if all People Mattered*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge. (Ch. 1: Gender and Development: A historical Overview” pp. 1-35; if you have the time, peruse Chapter 3: Gender and neoliberalism, pp. 93-130)
- Bandiera, O. and Ashwini Natraj. 2013. “Does Gender Inequality Hinder Development and Economic Growth: Evidence and Policy Implication.” *World Bank Research Observer* 28:2-21.
- Boeri, N. 2018. Challenging the gendered entrepreneurial subject: gender, development, and the informal economy in India. *Gender & Society*, 32(2), 157-179
- Chant, S. and C. Sweetman. 2012. “Fixing women or fixing the world? ‘Smarteconomics’, efficiency approaches, and gender equality in development,” *Gender and Development* 20 (33):517-529

October 28– Reading Week, No Class

WEEK 9: Nov. 4 South-South Cooperation, Global Economic Governance and Development

At Issue: *How have leading emerging economies (often conflated with the BRICS grouping) impacted the evolution of the International Political Economy and institutions of global economic governance? Have emerging economies been able to propose and advance alternative models of development? What has been the response of leading international development institutions to their potential challenges to the neoliberal development model?*

Required:

- McNally, C. 2020. “Chaotic Mélange: Neo-liberalism and Neo-statism in the age of Sino-Capitalism.” *Review of international Political Economy*. 27 (2): 281-301.
- Güven, A. B. 2017. Defending supremacy: How the IMF and the World Bank navigate the challenge of rising powers. *International Affairs* 93(5): 1149–1166
- Mawdsley, E. 2018. “The “Southernisation” of Development?,” *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 59 (2):173-185
- Tang, Q. 2020. *Coevolutionary Pragmatism: Approaches and Impacts of China-Africa Cooperation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-20

Week 10/Nov. 11: Aiding Development: Politics and Rhetoric

At Issue: *What has been the justification for development aid in the post-WW2 era? What are the key determinants of patterns of aid allocation? Has foreign aid been beneficial or harmful to the development prospects of recipients? How and to what extent are emerging aid donors from the global South reshaping the international aid architecture? Is their growing involvement a positive development?*

Required:

Alesina, A. and D. Dollar. 2000. "Who Gives Foreign Aid to Whom and Why?" *Journal of Economic Growth* 5(1): 33-63

Moyo, Dambisa. 2009. "The Myth of Aid", pp.3-28 in *Dead Aid: Why Aid is not Working and How there is a Better Way for Africa*. New York: FSG

Hernandez, D. 2017. Are "new" donors challenging World Bank conditionality? *World Development*, 96, pp. 529-549

Mawdsley E .2019. South-South Cooperation 3.0? Managing the consequences of success in the decade ahead. *Oxford Development Studies* 47(3): 259-274

Usman, Z. 2025. "The End of the Global Aid Industry," *Foreign Affairs* May <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/end-global-aid-industry> (short commentary on Trump 2.0 and the future aid industry)

***Refresh Williams, D. 2012. *International Development and Global Politics: History, theory and practice* London and New York: Routledge, Chapter 5: The Liberal Order" from **September 30**.

Week 11/ Nov. 18: Environment, Sustainability and Development

At Issue: *Evolution of thinking and debate on sustainable development; what are the core premises and limitations of "green growth"? Must considerations of equity and justice be integral to the pursuit of sustainable development at global and national levels? What are the main obstacles to ensuring environmental equity/justice at the global level?*

Required:

Conca, J. and G. Dabelko, eds. 2019. *Green Planet Blues: Four Decades of Global Environmental Politics*. 6th ed. London: Routledge (read pp. 1-12 of K. Conca and G. Dabelko, "Introduction: From Stockholm to Sustainability", J. Castro, chapter 2: Castro, "Environment and Development: The Case for Developing Countries."

Dercon, S. 2014. "Climate Change, Green Growth and Aid Allocation to poor countries." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 30 (3):531-549.

Demaria, F. and Gomez-Baggethun, E. 2023. "Leaving Development Behind- the case for degrowth" pp. 41-56 in B. Bull and M. Aguilar-Stoen, ed. *Handbook on International Development and the Environment*. London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Agarwal, A. and S. Narain. 2015. "Environmental Colonialism: The Perverse Politics of Climate change." Pp.233-237 in S. Nicolson and R. Wapier, ed. *Global Environmental Politics: From Person to Planet*. London: Routledge

Week 12/November 25: Human Rights- Based Approaches to Development

At Issue: *What are the key justifications for rights-based approach(es) to development? What evidence do we have that rights-based approaches are effective at achieving their objectives? What are the tradeoffs associated with a rights-based approach, and do they effectively incorporate concerns for justice with concerns for economic growth? What does accountability in support of human-rights based development entail?*

Required:

Sano, H-O. 2000. "Development and Human Rights: The Necessary, but Partial Intergraion of Development and Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 22 (3): 734-752

Wing, S. 2012. "Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Justice and Legal Fiction in Africa," *Polity*, 44(4): 504-522

Nelson, P. and E. Dorsey. 2018. "Who Practices a Rights Based Approach to Development?: A Progress Report on Work at the Nexus of Human Rights and Development." *World Development*. 104: 97-107.

Reid, Y. 2024. "The Principle of Accountability in Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development: Towards a New Understanding," *Journal of Human Rights* 16 (2): 533–553