Course Description

This course will examine the political economy of developing countries. It begins by introducing a number of theoretical tools that are often used to explain political and economic outcomes in countries from South and East Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Some of the central questions explored in the course are: Can democracy foster economic development? Why do governments adopt policies that inhibit development? Does geography matter in explaining development outcomes? Understanding how developing countries interact with the international community (particularly multilateral lending institutions) is also a theme that will be explored. Finally, we will evaluate current thinking about how governments in the developing world can best address some of the challenges they face such as corruption, gender inequality in labor markets, and more.

Course Texts

This course has one required book, available for purchase at the Tufts University Bookstore:


All other readings will be made available through Trunk. Many readings are also available via JSTOR or online. If you have difficulties accessing a text please let me know as soon as possible.
Course Requirements

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

1. Class participation (10 percent)
2. Student presentation and bibliography (10 percent)
3. Two short geography quizzes (5 percent each)
4. Midterm (30 percent)
5. Research Paper (40 percent)

Information about Student Presentations

Starting in the second half of the term, students working in teams of two will make a ten-minute presentation to the class. The topic for the presentation is up to you and your partner, but it must relate to some aspect of the political economy of developing countries. After the first couple of weeks you should begin to have a sense of which topics interest you. I will provide some suggestions for topics as well as guidelines for the presentations. Please feel free to stop by my office to chat about possible topics. Prior to your presentation, you are required to submit to me a bibliography of sources that were consulted.

Information about the Geography Quizzes

Two quizzes will be given to test your knowledge of geography in the regions we will cover. The study materials will be provided on Trunk.

Information about the Midterm

There will be a midterm exam that counts for 30 percent of your final grade. The midterm will be taken in class and will consist of short identification questions and essays.

Information about the Research Paper

The major requirement for this course is a 13–15 page research paper on a topic that pertains to the political economy of developing countries. All topics should be developed in consultation with me and I encourage you to come to my office hours to discuss your ideas. The topic for your paper cannot be the same as the one used for your presentation. A 1–2 page proposal outlining your paper is due on October 20. The proposal should do the following: (1) explain what your research question is; (2)
explain your working hypothesis/hypotheses; (3) briefly describe how you will empirically assess your hypothesis. I will then provide feedback on your proposal.

Expectations and Other Notes

1. For any short questions, brief requests, etc., please contact me via email and I will try to respond within 24 hours. For questions about the readings, discussion about research paper topics, etc., I encourage you to visit me during my office hours which are Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 to 4:30 pm in Packard Hall room 306. If your schedule conflicts with these times, I am happy to schedule an appointment with you.

2. Readings should be completed by the class for which they are assigned. Be sure to always bring your readings to class as we will refer to them during discussions.

3. If you are requesting an accommodation, as a result of a documented disability, you must register with the Disability Services Office at the beginning of the semester. To do so, call the Student Services Desk at 617–627–2000 to arrange an appointment with Sandra Baer, Program Director of Disability Services.

4. Please familiarize yourself with the university’s handbook on Academic Integrity: http://uss.tufts.edu/studentaffairs/judicialaffairs/Academic%20Integrity.pdf

5. Nearly everyone experiences some degree of anxiety when speaking in public. However, it is an important skill to cultivate while you are in college because it is needed for most jobs. If you are at all concerned about your ability to present to the class, please talk to me so that we can discuss some strategies.

Important Dates

October 4 — geography quiz 1
October 20 — research paper proposal due
November 10 — midterm
December 1 — geography quiz 2
December 16 — research paper due
TBD — student presentations
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Thurs 9/8: What is “political economy?”
1. Allan Drazen, Chapter 1 from Political Economy in Macroeconomics
2. Elizabeth Gerber, “What is Political Economy?”
3. Elinor Ostrom, “A Letter from the Chair” (starts at bottom of p. 2)

Tues 9/13: “Development” and “Developing Countries,” Part I
1. Lant Pritchett, “Divergence, Big Time”
2. Jeffrey Sachs, “Globalization and Patterns of Economic Development”

Thurs 9/15: “Development” and “Developing Countries,” Part II
1. Amartya Sen, “A Decade of Human Development”
2. Timothy Mitchell, “America’s Egypt”
3. Alan Richard, “America’s Egypt: A Flawed Critique” (read “Mitchell responds”)

Tues 9/20: Overview of the Political Economy of Development, Part I
1. Margaret Levi, “World Bank Institute Learning Briefs” (there are five to read)

Thurs 9/22: Overview of the Political Economy of Development, Part II

Tues 9/27: Government Institutions and Private Institutions, Part I
Thurs 9/29: Government Institutions and Private Institutions, Part II

Tues. 10/4: Government Institutions and Private Institutions, Part III
* Geography Quiz 1 today

1. “Prologue” of Diamond and Robinson book
2. Stephen Haber, “Politics, Banking, and Economic Development” (in Diamond and Robinson book)

Thurs 10/6: Government Institutions and Private Institutions, Part IV

Tues 10/11: Political Regimes, Part I

Thurs 10/13: Political Regimes, Part II
1. Mancur Olson, “Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development”

Tues 10/18: Corruption and Rent–Seeking, Part I
1. Susan Rose–Ackerman, “The Political Economy of Corruption”

Thurs 10/20: Corruption and Rent–Seeking, Part II
* Proposal for Research Paper due today
2. Benjamin Olken, “Corruption and the Costs of Redistribution”

**Tues 10/25: The Political Economy of Taxation, Part I**

1. Margaret Levi, Chapter 1 in *Of Rule and Revenue*
2. Jose Antonio Cheibub, “Political Regimes and the Extractive Capacity of Governments: Taxation in Democracies and Dictatorships”

**Thurs 10/27: The Political Economy of Taxation, Part II**

1. Kimuli Kasara, “Tax Me If You Can”

**Tues 11/1: Development “Miracles” and Diverging Pathways, Part I**


**Thurs 11/3: Development “Miracles” and Diverging Pathways, Part II**


**Thurs 11/10: Midterm**

**Tues 11/15: Underdevelopment, Part I**


**Thurs 11/17: Underdevelopment, Part II**


**Tues 11/22: Gender and Development, Part I**

**Tues 11/29: Gender and Development, Part II**

**Thurs 12/1: Public Goods Delivery**
* Geography Quiz 2 today *

1. Lily Tsai, “Friends or Foes? Nonstate Public Goods Providers and Local State Authorities in Nondemocratic and Transitional Systems”

**Tues 12/6: Development Organizations and Policymakers, Part I**
1. William Easterly, “Can Foreign Aid Buy Growth?”

**Thurs 12/8: Development Organizations and Policymakers, Part II**

Research Paper due Friday, December 16th at 5 pm. Please submit both a hard copy and an email attachment.