

CPO 4034 Politics in Developing Nations

M, W, F, Period 7, 1:55-2:45 pm, Anderson 0034

Instructor: Anqi Yang

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Office: Anderson 201B

Office Hours: M & W 12:50-1:50 pm, or by appointment

Make an appointment: <https://calendly.com/anqiyang/officehours>

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Syllabus

Course Description

This course explores foundational theories of development and enduring political challenges across the developing world. We will examine how important structural factors shape the levels and trajectories of development, including state structure, policy, regime type, institutions, colonial legacy, and temporality, among others. We will be revisiting the classic debates of whether development leads to democracy and vice versa.

Rooted in cross-regional cases spanning diverse global regions, the course opens by exploring areas where development seems elusive: What are the causes for development failures? Is there a pathway forward? The course then surveys canonical theories of development, such as modernization theory and the world-system theory, which originated from the historical experiences of Europe's development. Later, the course turns to regions that experience rapid growth, such as developmental Asia, to investigate the historical and structural drivers of their success. Students will further engage in critical analysis of the consequences of high-speed growth and unpack challenges unique to fast-developing nations—most notably ecological degradation and entrenched gender disparities.

By integrating theoretical inquiry with empirical case studies, this course equips students with a comprehensive understanding of academic debates and real-world dynamics surrounding the developing world. Over the semester, students will learn to critically analyze contested scholarly arguments, formulate original research questions, develop evidence-based answers via evidence assessment, and produce professional scholarly writing.

Grading

Participation (10%). Your participation will be assessed by both your attendance and your contributions to class discussions. Students with excused absence must submit documentation within one week of absence. Students who miss more than 30% (around 4 weeks equivalent) of the class will not be able to complete/pass the course.

Weekly Posts (15%). Please post two questions you think are worth further discussion in class **based on the weekly readings** (100 words minimum, in total). The posts should demonstrate that you have done the weekly readings and have put some thoughts into them. The purpose of this exercise is to practice raising good and important questions. Your idea of the final paper can be developed from these weekly questions. It is due **each Monday before class** on Canvas. Late posts and retrospective make-ups are not accepted, but you can skip two weeks of your choice without penalty.

Presentation (10%). Once in the semester, prepare one question for class discussion on Friday based on the weekly topic, and offer your response to and analysis of the question. You can form this question yourself, choose from other people's Canvas discussion questions, or synthesize a question using multiple sources. In your response to the question, please find at least one real-world example, and present it to the class. The presentation will be graded on the quality and relevance of your question as well as the answer you offer.

Quiz 1 (15%). Quiz 1 takes place on **March 7th** during normal class hours through Canvas. You will need to bring your own device to the classroom and take the exam in person.

Quiz 2 (15%). Quiz 2 takes place on **April 21st** during normal class hours through Canvas. You will need to bring your own device to the classroom and take the exam in person.

One-Pager Proposal (10%) & Office Hour (5%). A one-pager proposal for your final paper is due **March 28th 11:59 pm (Week 11)**. Late proposals will be accepted through April 4th 11:59 pm with a deduction of 4 points each day delayed. The format of the proposal will be given to you before mid-term. Afterwards, please make an appointment and discuss it with me during my office hours. (Link: <https://calendly.com/anqiyang/officehours>)

Final Paper (20%). It can take the form of a research proposal or a research paper. The topic of the paper should tie back to one of the themes we have covered in this course, broadly defined, and cite at least **three readings** from the class. A clear research question and an argument (can take the form of a hypothesis) should be developed regardless of the form you choose. The written product should be between 1800 and 2300 words, font 12, single-spaced. You can choose any mainstream citation format. If you have no clue, Chicago style or APSA is suggested. **Due: April 29th 11:59 pm.** Late papers will be accepted through May 3rd 11:59 pm with a deduction of 4 points each day delayed.

Extra Credit Assignment (2%). In the latter half of the semester, we will organize several final paper workshops during Friday (or Wednesday) sessions, depending on the demand. You will receive 2 extra credits (for the course) if you present your idea of the final paper in class. It is a good opportunity for you to get extra feedback. More details will be announced in class. People who have signed up for this opportunity but fail to show up will receive 2 points deduction as penalty.

Grading Scale

A	94 or above	C-	70-73.99
A-	90-93.99	D+	67-69.99
B+	87-89.99	D	64-66.99
B	84-86.99	D-	60-63.99
B-	80-83.99	E	<60
C+	77-79.99	E1	Stopped attending
C	74-76.99	I	Incomplete

Course Schedule

(The instructor may adjust the reading contents as seen fitted during the semester. You will receive a notice in advance if there is a content change.)

Week 1 What is a Developing Nation?

Jan 13 Please read the syllabus.

Jan 15, 17

Acemoglu and Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*, Preface.

Collier, Paul. 2007. *The Bottom Billion*, Preface & Chapter 1.

Week 2 Colonial Legacy

Jan 20 Holiday, No Class

Jan 22, 24

Kohli, Atul. 2020. *Imperialism and the Developing World*, Conclusion.

Acemoglu and Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail*, Chapter 1.

Mahoney, James. 2010. *Colonialism and Postcolonial Development*, Chapter 1.

Week 3 Hindrance to Development

Jan 27, 29 Collier, Paul. 2007. *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 2-5.

Jan 31 Discussion

Week 4 Aid & Humanitarianism

Feb 3, 5

Mostowlansky, Till, and Elmira Muratova. 2026. "Introduction: a new politics of humanitarianism." In *Humanitarianism from Below? Universalism and the politics of inhumanity*, eds. Till Mostowlansky and Elmira Muratova, 1-15. London: UCL Press.

Barnett, Michael, and Peter Walker. 2015. "Regime Change for Humanitarian Aid: How to Make Relief More Accountable." *Foreign Affairs* 94 (4): 130-141.

Yrjölä, Riina. 2009. "The Invisible Violence of Celebrity Humanitarianism: Soft Images and Hard Words in the Making and Unmaking of Africa." *World Political Science Review* 5 (1):1-22.

Film Screening (Excerpts): *Poverty Inc.* (2014)

Feb 7 Discussion

Week 5 Theories of Development

Feb 10, 12

Przeworski, Adam, and Fernando Limongi. 1997. "Modernization: Theories and Facts." *World Politics* 49 (2): 155-183.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1996. *Political Order in Changing Societies*, Chapter 1: 1-11, 32-59, 78-92.

Sen, Amartya. 2000. *Development as Freedom*, Introduction & Chapter 1.

Hickel, Jason. 2021. *Less is More: How Degrowth Will Save the World*. Windmill Books, Chapters 1-3.

Feb 14 Discussion

Week 6 State & Institutions

Feb 17, 19

Kohli, Atul. 2017. *State-Directed Development*, introduction.

Doner, Richard F., Bryan K. Ritchie, and Dan Slater. 2005. "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective." *International Organization* 59 (2): 327-361.

North, Douglass, and Barry Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England." *Journal of Economic History* 49 (4): 803-832.

Feb 21 Discussion

Week 7 Environmental Politics & Ecological Justice

Feb 24, 26

Grossman, Guy, Audrey Sacks, and Alice Z. Xu. 2026. "The Politics of Climate Change in the Developing World." *Annual Review of Political Science* 29: 101–126.

Riofrancos, Thea. 2025. *Extraction: The Frontiers of Green Capitalism*. W. W. Norton, Chapters 1&4.

Martínez-Aller, Joan. 2002. *The Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Chapters 1&6.

Feb 28 Discussion

Week 8 Review & Discussion

Mar 3 Film Screening (Excerpts): *Blood Diamond* (2006)

Mar 5 Workshop: On Research Proposal & Final Paper

Mar 7 Quiz 1

Week 9 Temporality: World System & Late Development

March 10, 12

Wallerstein, *World-Systems Analysis: An Introduction*, Chapter 1-3.

Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*, Chapter 1.

March 14 Discussion

Week 10 Spring Break/No Class

Week 11 Democracy: As Dependent Variable

March 24, 26

Slater, Dan, and Joseph Wong. 2022. *From Development to Democracy*, Chapter 1.
Tsai, Kelly. 2007. *Capitalism without Democracy*, Chapter 1-2.
Inglehart, Ronald, and Christian Welzel. 2009. "How Development Leads to Democracy: What We Know About Modernization." *Foreign Affairs* 88 (2): 33-48.

March 28 Discussion

Week 12 Democracy: As Independent Variable

March 31, April 2

Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *The American Political Science Review* 87 (3): 567-576.
Ross, Michael. 2006. "Is Democracy Good for the Poor?" *American Journal of Political Science* 50 (4): 860-874.
Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Chapter 6.

April 4 Discussion

Week 13 State-Business Relations

April 7

Rithmire, Meg. 2023. *Precarious Ties: Business and the State in Authoritarian Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press, chapter 1.
Sinanoglu, Semuhi. 2025. "Autocrats and Their Business Allies: The Informal Politics of Defection and Co-optation." *Government and Opposition* 60 (4): 1273-1291.

April 9 Guest Speaker: Navigate Library Research Resources

April 11 Discussion

Week 14 Gender

April 14

Kocabiçak, Ece. 2022. *The Political Economy of Patriarchy in the Global South*. Routledge, Chapter 1.
Elias, Juanita, and Jonathon Louth. 2016. "Producing Migrant Domestic Work: Exploring the Everyday Political Economy of Malaysia's 'Maid Shortage'." *Globalizations* 13 (6): 830-845.
Ross, Michael L. 2008. "Oil, Islam, and Women." *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 107-123

April 16 Discussion

April 18 Final Paper Workshop

Week 15 Summary

April 21 Final Paper Workshop

April 23 Quiz 2

Academic Integrity

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code.](#)

Students Requesting Accommodations

Students with disabilities that may affect your performance in this class should request academic accommodations with the *Disability Resource Center*. It is your responsibility to share the accommodation letter and communicate directly with the instructor at the beginning of the semester (or as soon as the disability occurs).

Recording and Sharing Policy

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Campus Resources

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information](#).

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process](#).