

IAS 3323: Political Economy of Development

Department of International and Area Studies
University of Oklahoma
Fall 2021

Instructor: Professor Natalie Letsa

Class Schedule: M/W 1:30 – 2:45pm; Farzaneh Hall 148

Office: Farzaneh Hall, Room 315

Office Hours: Schedule a Zoom meeting at: <https://calendly.com/nwletsa>

Email me if you need to find a different time to meet!

Email: nwletsa@ou.edu

Course Description

Why are some countries rich and why are some countries poor? Scholars of poverty and development have offered many different approaches to answering this question, and the primary goal of this course will be to understand, unpack, and challenge these different approaches. We will learn about structural, institutional, historical, and cultural approaches to understanding development, with an overarching emphasis on the role of the state. In order to evaluate these foundational theories of economic development, we will focus on the empirical nature of political economy. The course will introduce students to issues of causality as well as provide in-depth case studies from countries across the world.

Required Texts:

- 1) Easterly, William. 2001. *The Elusive Quest for Growth*. The MIT Press.
- 2) Collier, Paul. 2008. *The Bottom Billion*. Oxford University Press.

Assignments and Grading

Assignments in this course are designed for you to learn more about special topics in political economy, practice analytical writing, and demonstrate your knowledge of the course material. The calendar of assignments is below:

Reading Quizzes: Six total (20%); I will drop your lowest score

Group Presentation- Intermezzo: Date TBD (10%)

Midterm: Monday, October 11 (20%)

Response Paper: Wednesday, September 1 *and* Monday, November 8 (20%)

Final Exam: Friday, December 17, 8-10am (30%)

Class Policies: I do not take attendance or base your grade on participation. However, if you choose to be present in class, I expect you to respect the classroom. Your phone should be kept in your bag, and you should use your laptop exclusively for the class; e.g. taking notes, researching an idea or topic we are discussing. I always upload my lectures to Canvas after class, but please note that my lecture slides are a very poor substitution for my actual lecture. I will not accept late assignments unless you have a medical or personal emergency.

Covid-19 Policies: I *emphatically, passionately, and enthusiastically* encourage students to wear face masks at all times—especially in class—and to maintain social distancing. [Current CDC guidance](#) advises all individuals, *even those who are fully vaccinated*, to wear a mask indoors in public if in an area of substantial (orange) or high (red) transmission, according to its [COVID-19 Integrated County View of Data](#). Even though masking isn't required by law, we will hold it as a community expectation of one another to keep us safe and together. If you choose not to wear a mask while in the classroom, then I ask that you do not sit in close proximity to the instructor or others expressing health concerns.

Students who are feeling ill or who have been exposed to an individual who tested positive for Covid-19 are asked to isolate and to notify the University through the [Healthy Together app](#). Accommodations will be provided for those who need to quarantine. Revisions in the course content and design may be needed in case the instructor needs to be away from classes due to Covid-19.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to meet university standards for academic honesty on all course assignments. General information about these standards can be found at <http://integrity.ou.edu/>. You may also wish to consult the Student's Guide to Academic Integrity, which is available at http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html. If you have questions about how to avoid plagiarism, or about any other aspect of the university's policy on academic integrity, please contact me as soon as possible.

Note for Students with Disabilities: The University of Oklahoma is committed to the goal of achieving equal educational opportunity and full participation for students with disabilities. Consistent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended, The University of Oklahoma ensures that no “qualified individual with a disability” will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination solely on the basis of disability under any program or activity offered by The University of Oklahoma. Accommodations on the basis of disability are available by contacting the Disability Resource Center in Room 166, Goddard Center [\(405\) 325-4173](tel:4053254173)/TDD or [\(405\) 325-3852](tel:4053253852) Voice. More information is also available at: <http://www.ou.edu/content/drc.html> .

Course Schedule and Readings

Section I: The Concept of 'Development'

Week 1: Economic Development in Local and Global Context

Monday, August 23

Readings: NONE

Wednesday, August 25

Readings:

The Elusive Quest for Growth, Chapter 1 (pp. 5-19).

Banerjee, Abhijit and Esther Duflo, 2006. "The Economic Lives of the Poor." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 21(1).

Week 2: Measuring 'Economic Development'

Monday, August 30

***Bring a laptop to class today!

Readings:

BBC: "Contrasts in Development"

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zs7wrdm/revision/1>

Deutsche Bank Research, 2006. "Measures of Well-Being: There Is More to It than GDP"

Wednesday, September 1

Readings:

Morten Jerven, 2015. *Africa: Why Economists Get It Wrong*. Chapter 4: pages 103-123.

**Response paper due

Week 3: The History of 'Development'

Monday, September 6

LABOR DAY: NO CLASS!

Wednesday, September 8

Readings: *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, Chapters 2, 3 & 6 (pp. 25-70; 101-120)

Section II: The Historical Causes of Development

Week 4: The Formation of States

Monday, September 13

Readings:

Tilly, Charles, 1985. "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in *Bringing the State Back In*. Edited by Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol, Cambridge University Press. Pages 169-187.

Intermezzo: The Peace of Westphalia

Wednesday, September 15

Readings:

Herbst, Jeffrey, 2000. *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1: pages 9-32.

**Reading quiz #1

Intermezzo: Mansa Musa

Week 5: Geography and the Resource Curse

Monday, September 20

Readings: *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 3 (pp.38-52).

Intermezzo: Ken Saro-Wiwa

Wednesday, September 22

Readings: *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 4 (pp. 53-63)

Week 6: Colonialism

Monday, September 27

Readings:

Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson. 2006. "Understanding Prosperity and Poverty: Geography, Institutions, and the Reversal of Fortune" (pp. 169-184) in *Understanding Poverty*, edited by Banerjee, Bénabou and Mookherjee. Oxford University Press.

**Reading quiz #2

Wednesday, September 29

Readings:

Rodney, Walter. 1972. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Verso Books. Chapter 6: 205-238.

Intermezzo: The "Congo Horrors"

Week 7: Diversity, Culture, and Social Capital

Monday, October 4

Readings: *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, Chapter 13.

**Reading Quiz #3

Wednesday, October 6

Readings:

Putnam, Robert, 1994. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton University Press. Chapter 4: pages 83-120.

Intermezzo: The Protestant Work Ethic

Section III: Proximate Causes of Development

Week 8: Poverty Traps

Monday, October 11

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Wednesday, October 13

Readings:

The Bottom Billion, Chapter 1 (pp. 3-13).

The Elusive Quest for Growth, Chapter 8 (pp. 141-170)

Week 9: Violence and Civil War

Monday, October 18

Readings: *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 2 (pp.17-37).

Intermezzo: Sendero Luminoso

Wednesday, October 20

Readings: Listen to this podcast with Russ Roberts and Barry Weingast (EconTalk, August 2013): http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2013/08/weingast_on_the.html#

Week 10: Governments and Corruption

Monday, October 25

Readings: *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, Chapter 11 (pp. 217-240).

Wednesday, October 27

Readings:

The Elusive Quest for Growth, Chapter 12 (pp. 241-253).

The Bottom Billion, Chapter 5 (pp. 64-75).

Intermezzo: Imelda Marcos

Section IV: The Instruments

Week 11: Education and Population

Monday, November 1

Readings: *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, Chapter 4 (pp. 87-121)

**Reading quiz #4

Intermezzo: Pakistani Ghost Schools

Wednesday, November 3

Readings: *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, Chapter 5 (pp. 123-139)

Intermezzo: China's One Child Policy

Week 12: International Aid

Monday, November 8

Readings:

The Elusive Quest for Growth, Chapter 10 (pp. 195-216)

The Bottom Billion, Chapter 7 (pp.99-123).

**Reading Quiz #5

Wednesday, November 10

Readings:

Mkandawire, Thandika, 2010. "Aid, Accountability, and Democracy in Africa." *Social Research*. 77(4) pp. 1149-1182.

Amzat, Ajibola, Maite Vermeulen, and Giacomo Zandonini. "[Europe Spends Billions Stopping Migration. Good Luck Figuring Out Where the Money Actually Goes.](#)" *The Correspondent*. December 2019.

Intermezzo: The Millennium Villages Experiment

Week 13: Other Forms of International Intervention

Monday, November 15

Readings: *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 8 (pp.124-134).

**Reading Quiz #6

Wednesday, November 17

Readings: *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 9 (pp.135-156).

Week 14: International Trade, Globalization, and Technology

Monday, November 22

Readings:

The Bottom Billion, Chapters 6 (pp.79-96)

Stiglitz, Joseph. 2006. *Making Globalization Work*. W.W. Norton & Co., Chapter 3:
pages 61-101.

Intermezzo: The Battle of Seattle

Wednesday, November 24

THANKSGIVING: NO CLASS!

Week 15: Taxation & Revenue; Conclusion

Monday, November 29

Readings:

Besley, Timothy and Torsten Persson, 2014. "Why Do Developing Countries Tax So Little?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 28(4): 99-120.

Wednesday, December 1

Readings: *The Bottom Billion*, Chapter 11 & Postscript (pp. 175-195)

****Final exam is on Friday, December 17 at 8am*