INTL 8340: Seminar in Developing Political Systems

Department of International Affairs
University of Georgia
Spring 2025
W 3:00-6:10pm
Room 117, 202 Herty Drive (IA Building)

Instructor:
Dr. Laura Zimmermann
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Contact Notes: The best way to contact me is via e-mail.
Office Hours: By appointment
Office Location: Room 323, 202 Herty Drive (IA Building) and B410 Amos Hall (Business Learning Community)

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This course provides students with an understanding of how political factors influence development experiences worldwide. We start with exploring the factors underlying government (un)responsiveness on matters of economic development. We then focus on some of the most important issues and debates surrounding development strategies, including development aid, the influence of external institutions, and corruption. This will allow us to better understand the complex systems that developing countries operate in.

By the end of this course, you should be able to

1. analyze real-life political situations by setting up a system of actors and finding the current equilibrium
2. propose policy changes that could lead to better development outcomes
3. discuss the role leaders, voters, and political dynamics play in the development process
4. understand and critique some of the most commonly used empirical research methods in recent quantitative political science research

Course Description as on UGA Bulletin

Theory of creating integrated, viable, modernizing political systems in a world of economic inequalities. The focus is on the kinds of political institutions that can help manage the social stress of racial, ethnic, cultural, social, economic, technological, and ideological diversity.
Not open to students with credit in POLS 8340

Materials

The readings for the class will be largely based on recent journal articles, and among the most important goals of the course are the abilities to understand some of the most commonly used theoretical concepts and empirical techniques in current research, to synthesize information and ideas from different sources, and to strengthen critical thinking abilities. The readings will be

combined with additional materials during class time. Unless stated otherwise, all readings for the course will be available online through eLearning Commons (eLC).

If you are interested in reading more about development issues, the *World Bank Development Impact Blog* and *VoxDev* are excellent places to remain up to date with recent debates on development issues. Outlets like *The Economist* regularly publish news stories from around the world, and *Economics and Political Weekly* provides an interdisciplinary view at current political, social and cultural issues in South Asia. Sham Jaff's weekly news round-up "what happened last week" is an excellent source for news from Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Course Requirements

Attendance Policy and Class Participation
As a graduate seminar, this course heavily relies on active learning and discussions during class time. Class participation therefore counts for 25% of the course grade. Students are expected to attend and participate in all of the class meetings. Consistently high-quality (i.e. thoughtful, nuanced and/or creative) comments and questions will lead to the highest participation grade. You are expected to have completed all of the assigned readings for a given lecture before coming to class and to be ready to discuss them.

eLC Questions or Comments on Assigned Material
To facilitate the process of in-class discussion and learning, every student will post 2 questions or comments on eLC in the corresponding discussion thread for that day by 11:59pm on the day before class. They will count for 10% of the course grade. The best comments or questions will typically demonstrate one or more of the following: that the readings have been read and digested thoroughly; have been reflected on critically to identify shortcomings or raise nuanced questions; have been linked to one another or to prior course material in new and interesting ways.
While not required, I strongly suggest that you take notes on the assigned readings as you do them and create your own summaries of the papers together with any questions. This will allow you to refer to these notes during class meetings.

Homework Assignments
An important part of the course is to learn how to read, understand and evaluate recent research in development, and we will build up an understanding of research design, concepts and practical real-life concerns throughout the semester. Two homework assignments will allow you to practice applying key concepts from class. They make up 25% of the final course grade.

System of Actors Design and Analysis
The main assignment in this course is to apply the systems approach to development to a topic of your own choice not covered in class. It will build on the homework assignment and counts for 40% of your final grade. The assignment should include a brief justification for why the topic is important and a literature review on the issue. It should also contain a short description of the key stakeholders, each stakeholder's decision environment (goals, constraints, strategies), a system of actors diagram, and a discussion of whether the interaction between the stakeholders leads to an equilibrium. Lastly, the assignment should discuss any potential policy implications that arise from

the analysis and what (if anything) the system of actor analysis adds to the existing literature and/or policy debate on the topic.

Late Assignments
Students are expected to submit the assignments on the dates given in the schedule below by the deadline. I will not accept late assignments unless you experience an important shock or emergency. In that case, please approach me as soon as possible.

Grades
Grade Breakdown

Class participation:	25%
eLC questions or comments on assigned material:	10%
Homework Assignments:	25%
System of Actors design:	40%

Grade Scale

A	93 – 100
A-	90 – 92
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	73 – 76
C-	70 – 72
D	60 – 69
F	0 – 59

However, the instructor reserves the right to change the letter grade cutoffs.

Other Policies and Resources

Anticipated Challenges
If you have specific concerns or expect specific challenges that will affect your class performance, please get in touch with me as soon as possible. If you are an international student, UGA's International Student Life department may also be an important resource (contact: isl@uga.edu).

Students with Disabilities
If you plan to request accommodations for a disability, please register with the Disability Resource Center. They can be reached by calling 706-542-8719 (voice) or by visiting http://drc.uga.edu. Please do so as early as possible to ensure that course accommodations can be made.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Preferred Name and Pronouns
This class welcomes the open exchange of ideas and values freedom of thought and expression. This class provides a professional environment that recognizes the inherent worth of every person.

It aims to foster dignity, understanding, and mutual respect among all individuals in the class. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. If you have a preferred name and/or gender pronoun, please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's Student Honor Code: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others". A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at www.uga.edu/ovpi

All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty". Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. You should expect severe punishments for cheating, plagiarism, trying to pass off someone else's work for your own, and other unethical academic conduct. I will report all cases to the responsible university authorities. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit https://sco.uga.edu. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.

UGA has several resources for a student seeking mental health services (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) or crisis support (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies).

If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and health coaching led by licensed clinicians and health educators in the University Health Center. Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.

Changes to the Syllabus

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. Students are expected to read the class policies and requirements carefully.

Class Recordings

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.

- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

Use of AI Technologies

ChatGPT and other AI generators can be very useful tools for learning, research, and writing. We will encounter examples on AI-generated output and use cases throughout this semester. You are encouraged to use these tools in this class, but please be aware of AI limitations and practice critical thinking when applying AI to your own work. AI generators still make mistakes, so check claims against reliable sources. AI-generated output may be based on insufficient data, outdated data or otherwise biased because the data AI generators were trained on was biased against certain groups or lacked contributions from diverse communities. And the output you get depends importantly on the quality of your prompts, so be prepared to work iteratively and to refine your prompts as you learn. Use your best judgement to determine if and when to use these tools. They do not always make your tasks easier or better.

If you use AI generators for an assignment, please include a paragraph at the end, explaining what you used AI for and what prompts you used to get the results. This will be helpful for your own records and learning and is a good habit to build professionally for your future career to avoid charges of plagiarism or cheating in this rapidly moving area.

Class Materials

All content for this course, including handouts, assignments, and lectures are the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be reproduced or sold without prior permission from the instructor. A student may use the material for reasonable educational and professional purposes extending beyond class, such as studying for a comprehensive or qualifying examination in a degree program, preparing for a professional or certification examination, or to assist in fulfilling responsibilities at a job or internship.

Homework Assignments

Assignments need to be turned in either in person or online in the corresponding dropbox folder on eLC by the due date. Assignments submitted online via eLC should be uploaded in Word or PDF format. Please check the instructions on eLC for details.

Grade Appeals

If you think that your assignment has been graded wrongly, you can submit a written justification to appeal your grade. Appeals will be accepted only in writing and only in the week after the assignment was returned. Note that I will not accept comparisons to other students' work as a valid explanation. I will re-grade your work after receiving your appeal, and determine a final grade which may be higher, lower, or the same as your original grade.

If you just have questions about evaluation criteria or about how to improve your performance in the course, I am always willing to meet with you to discuss these issues.

Schedule

Important Deadlines:

eLC Comments:	Midnight before each class
Homework Assignment I:	February 5
Homework Assignment II:	March 19
System of Actors Design:	May 1

Course Outline and Tentative Schedule

* Optional

For up-to-date information and details, please visit our eLC course page

Module 1: Introduction and Key Concepts

Lecture 1

Module 2: An Introduction to Scientific Policy Advice

Lecture 2

European Commission Joint Research Centre (2019). Understanding Our Political Nature – How to Put Knowledge and Reason at the Heart of Political Decision-Making, Executive Summary, *Science for Policy Report*.

Šucha, Vladimir and Marta Sienkiewicz (Eds.) (2020). Science for Policy Handbook, Amsterdam: *Elsevier*, chapter 1 (pp. 3-13).

Topp, Lene, David Mair, Laura Smillie and Paul Cairney (2018). Knowledge Management for Policy Impact: The Case of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, *Palgrave Communications*, 4:87.

* OECD (2015). Scientific Advice for Policy Making: The Role and Responsibility of Expert Bodies and Individual Scientists, OECD Science, Technology and Industry Policy Papers, No. 21, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Module 3: The Role of Government for Development I

Lecture 3

Krueger, Anne O (1990). Government Failures in Development, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 4(3): 9-23.

Rizio, Stephanie and Ahmed Skali (2020). How Often Do Dictators Have Positive Economic Effects? Global Evidence, 1858-2010. *The Leadership Quarterly*.

Module 4: The Role of Government for Development II

Lecture 4

Grossman, Guy and Tara Slough (2022). Government Responsiveness in Developing Countries, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 25: 131-153.

Kosack, Stephen and Archon Fung (2014). Does Transparency Improve Governance? *Annual Review of Political Science*, 17: 65-87.

Module 5: Corruption I

Lecture 5

Brierley, Sarah (2020). Unprincipled Principals: Co-Opted Bureaucrats and Corruption in Ghana, *American Journal of Political Science*, 64(2): 209-222.

Corbacho, Ana, Daniel W. Gingerich, Virginia Oliveros and Mauricio Ruiz-Vega (2016). Corruption as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Costa Rica, *American Journal of Political Science*, 60(4): 1077-1092.

Phillips, Trisha (2021). Ethics of Field Experiments, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24: 277-300.

Module 6: Corruption II

Lecture 6

Chong, Alberto, Ana L. De La O, Dean Karlan and Leonard Wantchekon (2015). Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope? A Field Experiment in Mexico on Voter Turnout, Choice, and Party Identification, *The Journal of Politics*, 77(1): 55-71.

Prakash, Nishith, Marc Rockmore and Yogesh Uppal (2019). Do Criminally Accused Politicians Affect Economic Outcomes? Evidence from India, *Journal of Development Economics*, 141: 102370.

Bussell, Jennifer (2019). Clients and Constituents – Political Responsiveness in Patronage Democracies, *Oxford University Press*, New York, pp.38-51.

Module 7: Systems Theory

Lecture 7

Meadows, Donnella H. (2008). Thinking in Systems: A Primer, Edited by Diana Wright, *Chelsea Green Publishing*, White River Junction, pp.11-35.

* Tsebelis, George (2002). Veto Players – How Political Institutions Work, *Princeton University Press*, Princeton.

* Stroh, David Peter (2015). Systems Thinking for Social Change: A Practical Guide for Solving Complex Problems, Avoiding Unintended Consequences, and Achieving Lasting Results, *Chelsea Green Publishing*, White River Junction.

Module 8: Setting up a System: The Politics of Famine and Aid

Lecture 8

Franks, Suzanne (2013). Reporting Disasters: Famine, Aid, Politics and the Media, London, England : *Hurst & Company*.

Module 9: Development Aid I

Lecture 9

Faye, Michael and Paul Niehaus (2012). Political Aid Cycles, *American Economic Review*, 102(7): 3516–3530.

Li, Xiaojun (2017). Does Conditionality Still Work? China's Development Assistance and Democracy in Africa, *Chinese Political Science Review*, 2:201-220.

*Qian, Nancy (2015). Making Progress on Foreign Aid, *Annual Review of Economics*, 7: 277-308.

Module 10: Development Aid II

Lecture 10

Sachs, Jeffrey (2014). The Case for Aid, *Foreign Policy*.

Easterly, William (2006). Planners vs. Searchers in Foreign Aid, *Asian Development Review*, 23(2): 1-35.

Moyo, Dambisa (2010). *Dead Aid*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York.

* Wright, Joseph and Matthew Winters (2010). The Politics of Effective Foreign Aid, Annual Review of Political Science, 13: 61-80.

Module 11: External Influence

Lecture 11

Clark, Richard and Lindsay R. Dolan (2021). Pleasing the Principal: U.S. Influence in World Bank Policymaking, *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(1): 36-51.

Mukherjee, Bumba and David Andrew Singer (2010). International Institutions and Domestic Compensation: The IMF and the Politics of Capital Account Liberalization, *American Journal of Political Science*, 54(1): 45-60.

Spence, Michael. (2021). Some Thoughts on the Washington Consensus and Subsequent Global Development Experience, *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 35(3): 67-82.

Module 12: Conflict

Lecture 12

Fergusson, Leopoldo, Pablo Querubin, Nelson A. Ruiz and Juan F. Vargas (2021). The Real Winner's Curse, *American Journal of Political Science*, 65(1): 52-68.

Khanna, Gaurav and Laura Zimmermann (2017). Guns *and* Butter? Fighting Violence with the Promise of Development, *Journal of Development Economics*, 124: 120-141.

Monten, Jonathan and Radha Iyengar Plumb (2022). Is There an "Emboldenment" Effect: Evidence from the Insurgency in Iraq, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 45(4): 615-636.

Module 13: History

Lecture 13

Garfias, Francisco and Emily A. Sellars (2022). When State Building Backfires: Elite Coordination and Popular Grievance in Rebellion, *American Journal of Political Science*, 66(4): 977-992.

Lin, Erin (2022). How War Changes Land: Soil Fertility, Unexploded Bombs, and the Underdevelopment of Cambodia, *American Journal of Political Science*, 66(1): 222-237.

*Chigudu, Simukai (2021). `Colonialism Had Never Really Ended': My Life in the Shadow of Cecil Rhodes, *The Guardian*.

Module 14: External Validity

Lecture 14

Deaton, Angus (2009). Instruments of Development: Randomization in the Tropics, and the Search for the Elusive Keys to Economic Development, working paper.

Findley, Michael G., Kyosuke Kikuta and Michael Denly (2021). External Validity, *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24:365-393.

*Ravallion, Martin (2020). Should the Randomistas (Continue to) Rule?, NBER Working Paper 27554.

Module 15: Global Crises

Lecture 15

Jayachandran, Seema (2022). How Economic Development Influences the Environment, *Annual Review of Economics*, 14: 229-252.
Miguel, Edward and Ahmed Mushfiq Mobarak (2022). The Economics of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Poor Countries, *Annual Review of Economics*, 14: 253-285.
* OECD, Science Advice in Times of Covid-19. https://www.oecd.org/sti/science-technology-innovation-outlook/Science-advice-COVID/