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Office Hours: by appointment (typically before class if in person and on Zoom if other times/days)

Prerequisites:
There are no prerequisites, but students may not feel fully prepared unless they have taken Wagner’s core courses and some of the courses required by the international specialization, such as “Institutions, Governance and International Development”, “Politics of International Development,” “Economics of International Development,” and “International Economic Development.”

Course Description:

This course examines the challenges and opportunities of national development in the 21st century, as faced by high-level government officials and heads of state as well as nationally associations and organizations (from business, labor, civil society). The course is divided into two parts. The first lays the groundwork for subsequent discussions. This groundwork includes debates about the role in development policy of capabilities (human, collective, and production), inequality, redistribution and predistribution, the “return of industrial policy,” economic and social upgrading, promotion of labor standards, and political regime dynamics.

In the second part we will take a deeper dive into particular policy challenges and approaches in these same issues areas, adding as well a focus on concerns about environmental sustainability. Both parts will be set against the backdrop of contemporary challenges emerging in the latter part of this first quarter of the 21st century regarding, among others: the reconfiguration of globalization and global value chains (e.g., pressures for nearshoring and for digitalization); current structural trends shaping patterns of within-country and cross-country inequality; and shifting paradigms in thinking about the nexus among economic development, social policy (broadly conceived), and patterns of policymaking and governance.

The course will highlight country and regional examples to illustrate and probe further. Students will interact with various policy-relevant data tools widely used to chart and track progress and conduct comparisons.
Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Explain the importance and challenges associated with equitable development that shape domestic policy and international development assistance;

2. Analyze major debates about trajectories and drivers of development in the 21st century

3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different development strategies and the policy tools associated with them;

4. Articulate a diagnostic and/or strategy of national development for a country of their choice;

Course Format

The course meets 14 times during the semester. For each of these sessions, and unless otherwise noted, students should follow the same sequence: first, read the assigned pieces; then, write and submit the one-page note associated with the readings; and finally, attend the class ready to ask questions and contribute to the discussion.

Assignments and Evaluation

Grades will be based on in-class participation (10%), a series of one-page notes (30%), a midterm assignment (20%), and a final assignment (30%).

In-class participation (10% of total grade) reflects the quality of engagement in classroom discussions over the entire term. All students benefit from high levels of quality participation, so everyone is expected to read the assigned texts prior to class, reflect on their meaning, attend class, and contribute to the discussion. Remember that your comments should be addressed not just to your instructor but also to your classmates, who are your peers and colleagues. Regular attendance is expected, and attendance issues will negatively impact your grade. Please let the instructor know if you will miss class and the valid reason why.

One-page notes (30%) consist of short (one-page, single-spaced) response papers and personal reflections that draw from the readings assigned for each class. These notes create an opportunity for students to reflect on the readings (and other materials) so everyone can attend class ready to engage in meaningful discussion. Each note should take less than an hour to write. The syllabus indicates 11 notes, but students are required to complete only eight of them (feel free to pick and choose). The notes are due immediately before the corresponding class.

The midterm assignment (20%) consists of a longer (1,000-1250 word) document in which students draw from readings and discussions to (1) identify a country’s existing capabilities, (2) examine the prospects of improvement in a particular domain discussed in the course (e.g., income inequality, multidimensional poverty, fulfillment of particular SDGs, economic and social upgrading in a particular GVC in which the country is inserted, improvement of labor standards, designing an industrial policy, building developmental state capacity); and (3) propose a concrete, measurable goal
to be achieved within a specific and reasonable time frame. In essence, it is the outline of a strategy, but missing the tactics (the tactics will be discussed in the second half of the course).

The final assignment (40%) consists of a development strategy (building on the midterm), research paper or personal reflection on any of the topics discussed in class. The assignment should have 2,200-2,500 words, exclusive of references, as well as a complete bibliography at the end. If you plan to go the research paper or personal reflection route, please submit by the first class following the break a paragraph describing your topic/research question, and a working bibliography of outside sources you plan to use.

Turning in assignments: Further instructions will be given, but this will be via the Assignment tab on the Brightspace course page.

Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is a vital component of Wagner and NYU. Each student is required to sign and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. Plagiarism of any form will not be tolerated since all students have signed an Academic Oath and are bound by the academic code of the school. Every student is expected to maintain academic integrity and is expected to report violations to me. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, please ask.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU
Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website at www.nyu.edu/cs and click on the Reasonable Accommodations and How to Register tab or call or e-mail CSD at (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Policy on Religious Holidays
University policy states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students do not need to ask the instructor for permission, but they may choose to notify faculty in advance of such an absence. Whenever feasible, exams and assignment due dates will not be scheduled on religious holidays.

Brightspace Course page: This is where you will submit assignments (“assignments” link) and, in general, locate required course readings (unless a URL is made available and readings are not behind a paywall). It’s also a tool we’ll use for discussion.

Assignment Due Dates:

Weekly notes (must do 8 of 11): Jan. 23 * 30; Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27; Mar. 5 & 19; Apr. 2, 9, 16

Mid-Term assignment: March 12

Final paper: May 1
Course Schedule (*except where indicated as “further,” all readings are required)

PART 1 - CONCEPTS AND DEBATES

January 23:  **Putting Poverty Alleviation and Growth into Context**


**One-page note (due—as with all notes—at time of class on Brightspace):** Write a one-page note articulating your opinion on Lant Pritchett’s arguments about why the SDGs represent a step up from the MDGs and in defense of “team development.”

Jan. 30:  **Capabilities: Human, Collective, and Productive**


Begin exploring interactive data resource for further use across semester: The “Explore Data” tab on United Nations, *Sustainable Development Report 2023* with country rankings, profiles, cross-country comparator tools of fulfillment progress by SDG, dashboards, etc. (https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/map)

**One-page note:** Assess Andreoni, Chang, and Estevez’s critique of the human capability approach originated by Sen and their reformulated conceptions of the central development tasks and goals for today.

February 6:  **Toward a 21st Century Developmental State?**


One-page note: The 21st century development state is an ideal-typical formulation most closely typified by several countries in East Asia in the last quarter century or so of the 20th century. For Evans and Heller, how is the DS model different now from this earlier (one might so “classical” DS?

Feb. 13: Social Investment, Redistribution, and Predistribution


Task (to build your country knowledge and shape future assignments—nothing to write or turn in now): Pick a country of interest from the set of countries covered by analysis of fiscal and social policy and their distributive impacts from the Commitment to Equity Institute (CEQ Institute) based at Tulane University. See what the most recent publication or working paper from the project has to so about trends in that country: https://commitmenttoequity.org/

One-page note: Explain and critique the influential distinction between redistribution and predistribution first made by Hacker.

Feb. 20: Inequality


• Also read one of the world-regional issue briefs by the Lab (Mo for East Asia, Robilliard for Africa, or Flores for Latin America): https://wid.world/methodology/#library-wid-world-issue-briefs


One-page note: Return to your chosen country. Based on the available data on income inequality from World Inequality Lab (or what you may find on the CEQ site navigating from the “Data Center” tab), sketch the basic trajectory and magnitude of inequality (e.g., it’s rising/falling/stable, it’s high/low/average with respect to “peers” in its region or at similar levels of development based on World Bank income per capita categories i.e., “upper middle,” “lower middle,” “low” which you can find here: https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-world-bank-group-country-classifications-income-level-fy24).

Feb. 27. Upgrading within Global Value Chains


Task: Glance at what the principal export categories (“export basket”) of your focus country are, how complex they are considered to be, and what the country’s export growth dynamics are, all according to this tool: Growth Lab, Atlas of Economic Complexity (https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/)

One-page note: Should we see an improvement in living standards and working conditions as an automatic component of businesses in a particular country or location moving up a particular global value chain?

Mar. 5: Labor Standards and Inequality


Task: Take a look at the trends in real minimum wages, collective bargaining coverage, and union membership (density) for your focus country in the OECD/AIAS database.

One-page note: Present in brief and critique the case for why robust unions and labor market institutions can help combat inequality in the global South (or why, conversely, their absence/weakness can exacerbate inequality).

March 12: Development, Democracy, and Rights (*Mid-Term Assignment due by class time*)


*There is no note assignment for this week

March 19: Spring Break-No Class
PART 2—POLICY DILEMMAS AND OPTIONS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

March 26: Tackling Inequality (and Building Collective Capabilities?)

Oxfam and Development Finance International (2022), *The Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index 2022*:

- Read: Jo Walker, et. al. (2022), “Executive Summary,” 4-16
- Read: Ch. 2 (“Public Services”), 3 (“Tax Policy”), and 4 (“Labor Rights and Wages”)
- Peruse: The rankings in the Annex and any in-text discussion for your country(ies) and region(s) of interest (full report is here: https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/the-commitment-to-reducing-inequality-index-2022-621419/)


One-page note: Blanchard and Rodrik overview the policy tools to combat inequality in the global North. How different or similar are they to those available to the South as discussed in the OXFAM/DFI Commitment to Reducing Inequality Index?

Apr. 2: Upgrading Strategies I: Spatial Challenges and Opportunities

Read one of the following from the country or regional case-study reports produced by the Duke Global Value Chains Initiative regarding upgrading prospects, trends, and policy recommendations (please stick to those published from 2016 to present):

- Costa Rica (https://www.globalvaluechains.org/cggcproject/comex-costa-rica/)
- Pakistan (https://www.globalvaluechains.org/cggcproject/asia/) OR
- Philippines (https://www.globalvaluechains.org/search-our-work/?fwp_cggc_search=philippines)


One-page note: Assess Abamu’s arguments about reducing reliance on GVCs through backward linkages.

Apr. 9: Upgrading Strategies II: Shifting Production Structures and Technologies


One-page note: What is the balance of threats and opportunities for developing countries seen by this week’s authors posed by technological change and digital technologies in particular?
Apr. 16: Labor Regulation and Reform


Last one-page note: Make the case in brief for why a developing country with which you are familiar (e.g., your focus country) should adopt or raise the purchasing power of its minimum wage OR create/strengthen institutions of labor-management collective bargaining.

Apr. 23: (Re)Building the Public Sector: Governance and Regulation


Apr. 30: Make Development Sustainable?


**Wed. May 1:** Final papers are due by 10PM