INTRODUCTION
The study of the politics of development is more than an academic exercise. Following World War II, the narrative and policy discourse of “development” largely replaced 19th century ideas of “progress,” at least as far as the poor countries of the newly anointed “Third World” were concerned. Increasing the “Gross National Product” – the overall output of goods and services as valued by the market – was the standard proxy for progress and improved well-being. This solved a number of problems, both intellectual and practical. Intellectually, it avoided trying to define progress in terms of some aggregation of utility or happiness. Practically, by equating accumulation with universal increases in well-being, it ratified the hegemony of the existing structure of economic power. Nonetheless, it was still an uncomfortable syllogism.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the “Washington Consensus” (often referred to as neoliberalism) was widely viewed as the dominant paradigm, although its hegemony was challenged by a series of major financial crises among its putative “stars” (Mexico in 1994, Asian Crisis in 1997-98, Argentina in early 2000s) as well as sustained rapid growth in China -- which did not pursue a Washington Consensus development strategy. The creation of the MDGs seemed to indicate a new framework..identify targets, and then allow countries to find their own ways of achieving them. The 2008 financial crisis then posed a new challenge to deregulation of finance and neoliberalism in the heart of the countries at the core of the global economy.

These developments gave rise to ruminations on a “Post-Washington Consensus” which continue to the present. There have been various efforts to articulate a new consensus..Seoul, Beijing, etc., but none have reached the level of consistency, uniformity, and dominance that the WC did.

Until the terrorist attacks of 9/11, globalization had seemed to be displacing development as an overarching framework at least among powerful policy elites, but at least since 9/11 the notion of globalization as an inevitable historical force, and the virtues of weakening nation-states, have been dealt a blow. This process has only deepened since the financial crisis that began in 2008. Globalization has been exposed as a political project – as opposed to a technical or “natural” tendency of economic and technological change. The parallel development of the Davos Forum and the World Social Forum (and later, the various “Occupy” movements and networks) have created two different poles on the debate over globalization and development in the broader
business and activist communities. The financial crises of the 1990s and 2008 through the present challenged many of the orthodoxies relating to development, and in particular to the finance-driven Anglo-American model of development.

In the present context much debate over development has focused on Africa, the “bottom billion”, failed states, and on the Millennium Development Goals, and now the debate is over what, if anything, will replace those goals. But too much of the development debate focuses on aid as opposed to the myriad of other issues that influence and shape “development” in countries, whether recipients of aid or not. A number of policies (“free” trade and investment agreements, stronger intellectual property regimes), institutions (markets, property rights) programs (microfinance, especially microcredit), new technologies ($100 laptops, mobile phones) or others have been variously promoted as panaceas and magic keys to the challenge of “development” -- although more often by the development industry than by their most informed and reflective practitioners. These programs all have their place, but none of them are, or can be, the magic solution for development, for the simple reason that no such magic solution exists.

The development debate needs to be enlivened. Alternative propositions must be grounded in analysis of past dynamics of socioeconomic and political change, but they must also reflect the ways in which the current global political economy creates obstacles and opportunities different from those encountered in the past. This course tries to explore possibilities for the kind of redefinition of the politics of development that “anti-development” theorists feel is impossible and neoliberal triumphantists feel is not only unnecessary but hazardous to global well-being.

A central theme to this discussion is the relationship between what is sometime referred to as “global justice” and the more conventional issues associated with “development” such as growth, equity, vulnerability, and empowerment. A related issue is that of the “politics of development” and “political development”; namely, what are the dynamics and exercise of power (manifest by interests, institutions, and ideas) in the name of a development project, and how do social and economic transformation shape the evolution of political institutions and processes, in particular, democracy.

**Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Craft and defend a definition of “development” or some other goal/objective (eg, well-being, prosperity, human development, sustainable development, global justice, etc.) as a goal of policies aimed at reducing global poverty and an ethical stance for a public service practitioner towards that definition
2. Describe the major competing approaches that aim to explain why some countries/individuals within countries are wealthier and/or have better human development outcomes than others
3. Discuss the role of politics in these processes and identify ways in which the politics and policy of development incorporates concerns about equity, efficiency, and effectiveness in the allocation of opportunities, resources, and rights
4. Explain the role of power in the political process and how interests, institutions, ideas, and individuals interact to create and transform power relations in the context of the politics of development
5. Identify the major lessons learned from successful interventions and the challenges to scaling up effective interventions

Outline of Class: Classes will initially involve roughly 60-80 minutes of lecture, followed by 30-40 minutes of discussion. Finally, 10-15 minutes of concluding remarks will pull together some of the key points, highlight ongoing areas of empirical and theoretical debate, and frame the readings for the subsequent class. Lectures will NOT summarize what is in the readings. Class participation will constitute a significant percentage of the final grade. Over the course of the semester we may alter the proportion of lecture and discussion time. My lectures are typically interactive and I have the right to call on anyone during class. If for some reason you have not been able to do the readings or do not feel able to respond to being called on in a specific class, please let me know. It is understandable that on a rare occasion this will be the case. If it becomes a regular event, it will severely affect your participation grade.

Syllabus: The syllabus is large in order to provide students with a semi-annotated bibliography of key materials and resources in the field. This may be helpful if you are interested in a particular topic and would like to explore it in more depth, as an initial starting point for papers, or simply as a reference for things you should get around to reading in your career.

GRADES

There is no curve in this course. Everyone may receive an A or everyone may receive an F. This course will abide by the Wagner School’s general policy guidelines on incomplete grades, academic honesty, and plagiarism. It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with these policies. All students are expected to pursue and meet the highest standards of academic excellence and integrity.

Incomplete Grades: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies/incompletes)

Academic Honesty: [http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies](http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/policies)

Course Requirements:

1. **Class Participation:** (20%) The course depends on active and ongoing participation by all class participants. This will occur in three ways:

   a. **Weekly Participation** (10%): Participation begins with effective reading and listening. Class participants are expected to read and discuss the readings on a weekly basis. That means coming prepared to engage the class, with questions and/or comments with respect to the reading. You will be expected to have completed all the required readings before class to the point where you can be called on to critique or discuss any reading.

   Before approaching each reading think about what the key questions are for the week and about how the questions from this week relate to what you know from previous weeks. Then skim over the reading to get a sense of the themes it covers, and, before reading further, jot down what questions you hope the reading will be able to answer for you. Next, read the introduction and conclusion. This (usually) gives you a sense of the big picture of the piece. Ask yourself: Are the claims in the text surprising? Do you believe them? Can you think of examples that do not seem consistent with the logic of
the argument? Is the reading answering the questions you hoped it would answer? If not, is it answering more or less interesting questions than you had thought of? Next ask yourself: What types of evidence or arguments would you need to see in order to be convinced of the results? Now read through the whole text, checking as you go through how the arguments used support the claims of the author. It is rare to find a piece of writing that you agree with entirely. So, as you come across issues that you are not convinced by, write them down and bring them along to class for discussion. Also note when you are pleasantly (or unpleasantly) surprised or when the author produced a convincing argument that you had not thought of.

In class itself, the key to quality participation is listening. Asking good questions is the second key element. What did you mean by that? How do you/we know? What’s the evidence for that claim? This is not a license for snarkiness, but for reflective, thoughtful, dialogic engagement with the ideas of others in the class. Don’t be shy. Share your thoughts and reactions in ways that promote critical engagement with them. Quality and quantity of participation can be, but are not necessarily, closely correlated.

b. Précis/Response Papers: (10%) Each week 2-3 people will take responsibility for preparing response papers to one or more of the readings. This includes writing a 3-5 page précis of the reading that a) lays out the main argument(s), b) indicates what you found provocative and/or mundane, and c) poses 3-4 questions for class discussion. These handouts will be distributed via email to the rest of the class by Sunday at 8 PM (using the course website). Everyone will prepare one précis over the course of the semester. Everyone who prepares a précis for the week should be prepared to provide a brief (2-3 minute) outline of the readings and their reactions to them as a contribution to discussion.

c. There will also be a set of classroom exercises and small group exercises and students will expected to be active, engaged participants in these exercises.

2. Op-Ed (15%) One op-ed (700-750 words) on an important current issue relating to development [for guidance see the resource under the “Writing Materials” section of the NYU Classes site]. This is due February 20 via NYU Classes. PLEASE PUT YOUR NAME AND WAGNER MAILBOX # (IF YOU HAVE ONE) ON THE OP-ED. PLEASE LABEL YOUR ATTACHED FILE: “Yournamedevelopmentoped.”

3. Midterm Exam (25%): This will be distributed on March 6 and is due by midnight on March 23. More to come on this.

4. Policy Analysis Exercise (40%) including Statement of Focus (due February 16), Stakeholder Analysis (due March 14), NetMap (April 10) and Strategy Memo (due May 12). See the PAE folder on NYU Classes for more details. This counts for 40% of your grade (5% for stakeholder analysis, 5% for NetMap, and 30% for strategy memo).
**Late Policy.** Extensions will be granted only in case of emergency. This is out of respect to those who have abided by deadlines, despite equally hectic schedules. Papers handed in late without extensions will be penalized one-third of a grade per day.

**Grading Breakdown:** Class participation (20%, includes general participation and précis), Op-ed (15%), Midterm(25%), Policy Analysis Exercise (40%).

**Prerequisites:** “Introduction to Public Policy” (P11.1022) or “History and Theory of Urban Planning”(P11.2600) or equivalent, Microeconomics, and “Institutions, Governance, and Development” (P11.2214). [Lacking these, permission of the Instructor is required]. A prior course in the politics/sociology/economics/management of development would be helpful but is not required.

**Required Books (available at the Professional Bookstore):**

**Additional readings will be made available either online or in class.**
OVERVIEW OF SEMESTER

WEEK 1  January 30  INTRO: WHY A POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT?

WEEK 2  February 6  THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

WEEK 3  February 13  POLITICS, POWER, AND LEARNING
February 16  Statement of Focus Due

WEEK 4  February 20  HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY
Op-ed Due

WEEK 5  February 27  CULTURE

WEEK 6  March 6  STATE-BUILDING
Midterm Distributed

WEEK 7  March 13  POLITICS OF EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES:
COMMODITY CHAINS, INDUSTRIALIZATION
AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATES
March 14  Stakeholder Analysis Due

March 20  SPRING RECESS – No Class
Midterm Due by midnight on Sunday, March 23

WEEK 8  March 27  ENGENDERING DEVELOPMENT: SEX, GENDER,
POLITICS, AND DEVELOPMENT

WEEK 9  April 3  DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

WEEK 10  April 10  NETMAP EXERCISE for Strategy Memo

WEEK 11  April 17  EMPOWERMENT: SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND
RIGHTS-BASED APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT

WEEK 12  April 24  POLITICS OF SANITATION

WEEK 13  May 1  VULNERABILITY, RESILIENCE, AND THE
POLITICS OF MANAGING RISK AND RESOURCES

WEEK 14  May 8  INEQUALITY, REDISTRIBUTION, AND
AGRARIAN REFORM

May 12  Strategy Memo Due
I: INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION: WHY A POLITICS OF DEVELOPMENT?

7. Ross Coggins, “The Development Set” [NYU Classes]
9. Ivan Illich, “To Hell with Good Intentions” [NYU Classes]

Recommended:

a. Global Ethics Corner, Am I My Brother’s Keeper?
   https://www.carnegiecouncil.org/studio/multimedia/20091211b/index.html
b. If you have time and want to see Peter Singer discuss his book, The Life You Can Save:
c. Binyavanga Wainaina, “How to Write about Africa,” Granta 92: The View from Africa,
   http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1
d. Scott Baldauf, “Five myths about Africa,” Christian Science Monitor, August 6, 2011,
f. Pranab Bardhan, “Who Represents the Poor?” Boston Review, July 19, 2011,
   http://www.bostonreview.net/pranab-bardhan-who-represents-the-poor
g. Kent Annan, “Poverty Tourism Can Make Us So Thankful,” The Huffington Post,
   January 3, 2011,
   http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kent-annan/poverty-tourism-can-make-_b_803872.html

Discussion Questions:

• What ethical issues frame the development debate?
• How do we conceive our roles as development policy analysts, practitioners, and/or citizens in the context of deep inequalities of income, power, and privilege?

For further reading:
Some of the issues are grounded in Paolo Freire’s classic Pedagogy of the Oppressed and various works on the theology of liberation, by Gustavo Guttierez, Leonardo Boff, Karl Gaspar, Edicio
dela Torre, among others. For a discussion of one attempt to apply this framework to Northerners, see Alice Frazer Evans, Robert A. Evans and William Bean Kennedy, *Pedagogies for the Non-Poor*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books (1987). For a more philosophical discussion, see the Symposium on World Poverty and Human Rights in *Ethics and International Affairs* 19:1 (2005), which can be found at http://www.carnegiecouncil.org/publications/journal/19_1/symposium/5109.html, Peter Singer *One World*, Peter Unger *Living High and Letting Die*, and work by Thomas Pogge. Also see work by Iris Marion Young, Matthias Risse, Des Gaspar, Jon Mandle, among others for work on global justice and its relationship to development.

**WEEK 2: THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

*Be sure to read the resources on Op-eds in the “Writing Materials” folder on NYU Classes before class.*

2. Angus Deaton, *The Great Escape*, Introduction, Chapter 1, Chapter 3
5. Nancy Birdsall, Ten Wishes for 2014 [NYU Classes]
6. Alex Evans and David Steven, “What Happens Now? The post-2015 agenda after the high-level panel,” *NYU Center on International Cooperation*, June 2013 [NYU Classes]

**Recommended:**

a. Nancy Birdsall, “Reframing the Development Project for the Twenty-First Century,” *Center for Global Development* [NYU Classes]


**Discussion Questions:**

- Is there anything worth rescuing in the concept of development? How do we know?
Is development about outcomes or processes? What are the costs or benefits in focusing on one or the other? What indicators would we use? Is there a difference in the politics of development if we focus on either outcomes or processes? Or on the importance of both?

What is the scale at which “development” is an important phenomenon? Individuals? Communities? Countries? Regions? The global economy? Humanity? What are the political implications of choosing to privilege one of these over the other?

What about the agents of development? Are they different than the objects of ethical concern in development?

For further reading:

Edward Saïd’s Orientalism (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) was one of the earliest influential critiques of Western discourse on the Third World. See also: The Post-Development Reader.


WEEK 3: POLITICS, POWER, AND LEARNING
(Listen to the whole thing if you’d like, but the assignment is Act One on the “Malawi Journals Project”)
4. Duncan Green, From Poverty to Power, Part 2 and Annex
8. Dennis Whittle, “How Feedback Loops Can Improve Aid (and Maybe Governance),” Center for Global Development, August 2013 [NYU Classes]

**Recommended:**
- b. 2011 Failure Report, Engineers without Borders, [Link](http://legacy.ewb.ca/en/whoweare/accountable/failure.html)

**WEEK 4: HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

**Discussion:**
Development outcomes may be shaped by long-term structural factors as well as by more short-term policies. If politics is the art of the possible, then understanding the constraints and opportunities created by long-term structural factors gives us insight into how large the realm of that possible is. What are the implications for development politics and policy at the national and global levels? What are the ethical implications if people are born in countries whose economies may not do well because of the disadvantages of geography and the legacy of colonial boundaries and institutions, even if they have good leaders and work hard?

2. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty, Chapter 9, pp. 245-273 [NYU Classes]
4. Stanley L. Engerman and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, Economic Development in the Americas since 1500: Endowments and Institutions, Chapter 2: “Factor Endowments and Institutions (with Stephen Haber), pp. 31-56 [NYU Classes]
5. John Vidal, “Ethiopia dam project is devastating the lives of remote indigenous groups,” The Guardian, February 6, 2013 [NYU Classes]
6. “When the Water Ends: Africa’s Climate Conflicts,” Yale Environment 360, October 26, 2010 [NYU Classes]

Recommended:


For further reading:

WEEK 5: CULTURE
We explore the issue of culture with respect to the practice of female genital mutilation and the efforts of grassroots groups in sub-Saharan Africa to eradicate the practice, as well as that of corruption.
2. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty, Chapter 1, pp. 7-44 [NYU Classes]

**Recommended:**

- Selections from the biography of Molly Melching [NYU Classes]
- Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, “The True Clash of Civilizations,” Foreign Policy, March/April 2003, pp. 67-74 [NYU Classes]

**For further reading:**

**WEEK 6: STATE BUILDING**

We explore the processes of state-building by looking first at the European experience, where the first nation-states (not the first states) were forged after years of conflict. Then we look at the export of these types of states elsewhere and explore the issues associated with building effective political institutions. Should all countries seek to establish nation-states, or should we enable the creation of other types of states?

4. Alex de Waal, “Fixing the Political Marketplace: How can we make peace without functioning state institutions?” *Christen Michelsen Lecture*, October 15, 2009 [NYU Classes]

**Recommended:**


**For further reading:**

Tilly’s other work is exceptional, such as “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in *Bringing the State Back In* (Peter Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge UP, pp. 169-189. Also see “Violence, Terror, and Politics as Usual,” *Boston Review*, Summer 2002, [http://new.bostonreview.net/BR27.3/tilly.html](http://new.bostonreview.net/BR27.3/tilly.html).


WEEK 7: POLITICS OF EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES: COMMODITY CHAINS, INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENTAL STATES


1. Duncan Green, From Poverty to Power, Part 3 (pp. 107-196)
5. Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty, Chapter 3, pp. 70-95 [NYU Classes]

Recommended:

Classroom Exercise: The Banana Game

For further reading:
Development,” University of California Berkeley, 

WEEK 8: ENGENDERING DEVELOPMENT: SEX, GENDER, POLITICS, AND DEVELOPMENT
Whereas the previous week explored the national dynamics of access to and control over natural resource revenue, this week explores the community-level dynamics associated with unequal patterns of control over land and water resources along gender lines.
For your reference: Women in Parliaments, Inter-parliamentary Union [no précis]
World and regional data: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm
National data: http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

1. Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris, “The True Clash of Civilizations,” Foreign Policy, March/April 2003 [NYU Classes]

For further reading:

**WEEK 9: DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT: ELECTIONS and CITIZENSHIP**

There is a long-standing argument that there is a tradeoff between development and democracy, at least at low levels of per capita income and in the early stages of industrialization. We will examine efforts to answer that question and also explore issues associated with understanding the effects of regime type on growth, human development, and equality.

3. Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, Chapter 6, “The Importance of Democracy,” pp. 146-159 [NYU Classes]
5. John Harriss, “Political Participation, Representation and the Urban Poor: Findings from Research in Delhi,” Economic and Political Weekly, XL(11), March 12, 2005, pp. 1041-1054 [NYU Classes]
For further reading:


WEEK 10: EMPOWERMENT AND Rights-Based Approaches to Development

Rights-based approaches to development have been increasingly promoted as the solution to move beyond development as a series of handouts and to address the need to create accountable political and economic institutions as the foundations of development while expanding the respect for and promotion of internationally recognized human rights standards.

Discussion Questions:

- What are the key elements of rights-based approach(es)?
- What evidence do we have that rights-based approaches are effective at achieving their objectives?
- What are the tradeoffs associated with a rights-based approach? Do they effectively incorporate concerns for justice with concerns for economic growth?

6. “The Right to be Human: The Dilemmas of Rights-Based Programming at CARE-Bangladesh,” *CARE Teaching Resources* [NYU Classes]

Recommended:


For further reading:


**WEEK 11: NETMAP Exercise**

**WEEK 12: POLITICS OF SANITATION**

Recommended:

WEEK 13: VULNERABILITY AND THE POLITICS OF MANAGING RISK AND RESOURCES
5. Robin Broad and John Cavanagh, “Reframing Development in the Age of Vulnerability: from case studies of the Philippines and Trinidad to new measures of rootedness,” *Third World Quarterly*, 32(6), 2011, pp. 1127-1145 [NYU Classes]
   • Peter Singer, “No, if the West Makes Sacrifices”
   • Bjorn Lomborg, “Yes, if We Listen to Green Extremists”

Recommended:

WEEK 14: INEQUALITY, REDISTRIBUTION AND AGRARIAN REFORM
While the distribution of calories is much more equal than the distribution of land, inequalities in the ownership of land and other productive assets is both influenced by political power and influences politics.

Discussion Questions:
  • Is it possible to pursue a redistributive policy under democracy that results in a real transfer of productive resources?
  • What are the examples of effective redistributive programs and what are the coalitional and institutional conditions that make such efforts more likely?

1. Wendy Wolford, “Participatory democracy by default: land reform, social movements and the


4. Ronald J. Herring, “Beyond the Political Impossibility Theorem of Agrarian Reform” [NYU Classes]

For more reading:

FINAL PAPERS DUE Thursday, May 15 by midnight via NYUClasses