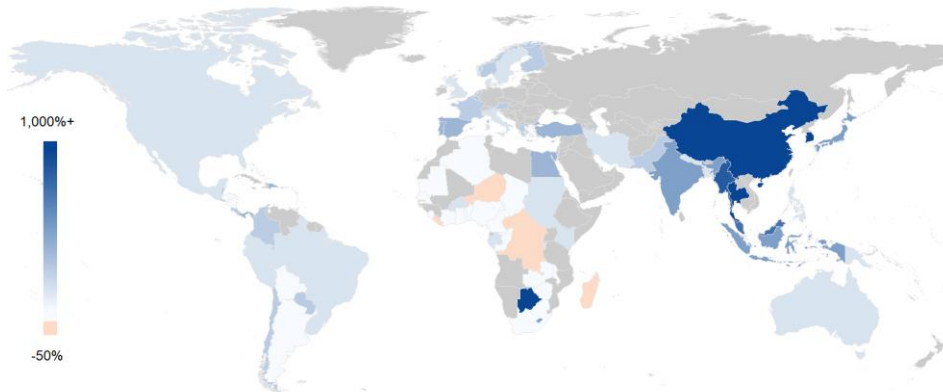


# Politics in Less Developed Countries

Economic growth since 1960,  
measured by change in GDP per capita



Why are some countries rich and others poor? Economic growth affects the welfare of billions of people around the world. Rising income allows people to feed their families, to send their children to school, and to buy medicine when they are sick. In the words of Amartya Sen, development empowers people “to lead the kind of lives they value.”

Yet tragically, the world has not equally shared the benefits of economic growth. Not only has the gap between rich and poor countries persisted to the present, but a new divide has opened among poor countries. While a few countries, illustrated in the map above, have developed rapidly since 1960, the majority of poor countries have fallen even further behind.

This course analyzes some of the political factors that accelerated – or hindered – economic development in less developed countries. Specifically, the course considers the effects of colonialism, globalization, industrial policy, crisis, natural resources and state capacity on economic growth in the developing world, with specific reference to Argentina, Botswana, Chile, Korea, Thailand, and Zambia.

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

- compare patterns of economic growth between regions, countries, and cities.
- describe policies that have been associated with economic development.
- evaluate competing explanations for variation in economic growth in less developed countries.
- explain why they value development.

**Course #**  
POLI 140

**Quarter**  
Winter 2020

**Time + Place**  
T/Th 12:10 – 1:50pm  
Kenna 105

**Instructor**  
Ryan Tans

**Office**  
Vari 236

**Office Hours**  
Wed. 10am – 12pm  
Thurs. 2 – 4pm  
and by appointment

**Email**  
[rtans@scu.edu](mailto:rtans@scu.edu)

**Commented [R1]:** I organize the course around this classic puzzle, illustrated in the figure above. I use puzzles across all of my courses to generate narrative tension, to draw connections to current events, and to develop assessment tools. In this course, the puzzle ties the course together over time, as the class resolves it in increasingly specific contexts: first, by comparing colonial powers to former colonies, then by comparing across world regions, and finally by comparing specific countries within each region. At the end of the course, students should be able to answer this question for any given country, which is exactly what they are asked to do in the writing sequence (see below).

**Commented [R2]:** The gap between rich and poor countries has disturbing implications for global justice, and I lean into those issues here in the syllabus and throughout the course.

**Commented [R3]:** I write the first page of the syllabus as an invitation to learn. It raises the questions the course will address, hints at the answers it will provide, and displays essential course information in an accessible format.

**Commented [R4]:** I write learning outcomes that are student-centered, observable, and specific. This set of outcomes spans several levels of Bloom’s taxonomy. Specifically, these objectives ask students to *understand* policies, to *analyze* patterns, and to *evaluate* explanations, as well as to link course material to their own values. These learning outcomes are consistent with principles that I learned this summer when I completed a program called Creating Optimal Online Learning, which combined curriculum from the Association of College and University Educators and Santa Clara faculty workshops.

**This course fulfills the Social Science Requirement in the Core Curriculum**

Goals: Scientific Inquiry, Complexity, Critical Thinking, Mathematical & Quantitative Reasoning  
Objectives: Students who have completed Social Science will—

- 1.1 Be able to apply deductive and inductive reasoning to analyze social science topics. (Scientific Inquiry, Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning) (*exams*)
- 1.2 Evaluate evidence used to validate theories, hypotheses, or predictions. (Scientific Inquiry, Critical Thinking, Complexity) (*exams, discussion, case study*)
- 1.3 Appreciate that theories and data analysis often admit multiple interpretations and will be able to evaluate the relative merits of alternative perspectives. (Critical Thinking, Complexity) (*exams, discussion, case study*)

**This course fulfills the Cultures and Ideas 3 Requirement in the Core Curriculum**

- 3.1 Demonstrate an understanding of Asian, African, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, and/or Latin American cultures in their global and/or diasporic contexts. (Global Cultures, Diversity) (*discussion, case study, map quiz*)
- 3.2 Identify, analyze and evaluate the challenges and complexities in an interdependent world using methods appropriate to the discipline. (Critical Thinking, Global Cultures, Complexity) (*exams, case study*)
- 3.3 Reflect on their assumptions and ideas about geographically or culturally unfamiliar cultures and the connections to their own culture and society. (Perspective, Critical Thinking) (*exams, discussion, case study*)

**This course is also a part of the Democracy Pathway.** Be aware that if you plan to use this course as part of your pathway you need to save a piece of work to submit online.

**Required text:**

There is no required text for this course. All readings are available on Camino.

**Course requirements:**

- 1. Attendance (5% of final grade)

I will take attendance at the beginning of every class. Please notify me in advance if you will miss class because of religious observance, participation in university-sponsored events, or other university-approved reasons for absence. I will calculate this grade as the percentage of classes that you attended, excluding excused absences. I will overlook one unexcused absence.

- 2. Participation (5%)

This class offers frequent opportunities for participation. For example, books and articles important to the field of political economy of development will feature prominently throughout the class. I request that you complete these readings before class and arrive prepared to discuss them. As much as possible, I will provide a list of questions for these assignments to guide your reading. In addition, I make various requests of the class throughout the quarter, such as to submit paper copies of assignments, and I award participation credit to students who comply. I also award

**Commented [R5]:** This upper-division course fulfills a major requirement in political science as well as two different core curriculum requirements that apply to all undergraduates. As a result, the course has generated strong demand among both majors and non-majors. I find that students of all persuasions sincerely engage with the empirical puzzles and normative concerns of the course. I credit student interest to SCU's increasingly diverse and international student body, as well as to the University's commitment to social justice and global citizenship in the Jesuit tradition of academic excellence and educated solidarity.

**Commented [R6]:** I assign seminal texts rather than textbooks in upper-division courses, because I prefer that students engage with the original authors of key ideas. At the same time, I recognize that such readings can challenge students of any level. Therefore, I provide focus questions to help students parse the most important readings. In addition, eschewing textbooks makes the course more accessible in two ways. First, it reduces student costs and second, it introduces students to a greater diversity of perspectives.

**Commented [R7]:** Besides creating accountability, taking attendance helps me to learn students' names and to anticipate which students might be struggling.

**Commented [R8]:** During winter quarter 2020, this class met for 100 minutes at a time. Generally speaking, I would dedicate approximately one-third of class time to small group activities in which students would execute well-defined tasks such as conceptualizing key terms like development and globalization, comparing and contrasting readings, analyzing material interests of political actors, and brainstorming explanations. I would devote the remaining time to interactive lectures that drew heavily on data visualizations (such as the map on the first page of the syllabus) and short videos (such as a promotional video for Hyundai Heavy Industries).

participation credit to students who consult with me outside of class, via email or during office hours. Conversely, students can forfeit participation credit for reasons such as chronic tardiness or abuse of electronic devices.

The participation grade of all students begins at a common baseline (between 70% and 85%, depending on opportunities to participate). To calculate the participation grade, I add or subtract a student's participation credit to the baseline.

3. Reading quizzes (5%)

Each week, a reading quiz will ask you to answer one of the week's reading questions (which I will have previously circulated—see point 2, above). Quizzes will take place on the day the reading assignment appears on the syllabus. The quizzes will earn a score of 1 if I am convinced that you did the reading, and a zero otherwise. At the end of the quarter, I will sum the scores and divide by the total number of quizzes. You may make up any quiz for any reason by submitting responses to the full set of reading questions. More details on make-up policy are available on the course website.

**Commented [R9]:** I circulate focus questions (with accompanying page numbers) for key readings, and then quiz students by asking them to answer just one of the focus questions. In my experience, the quiz creates accountability, while the focus questions greatly increase student engagement with the readings. The end result is higher quality discussion in class and better student comprehension of the readings.

**Commented [R10]:** My make-up policy is no-questions-asked because my primary goal is to encourage students to read and reflect on the readings.

4. Case study (45%)

The primary assignment for this class is to write a case study that analyzes development in a particular country. At the end of the quarter, you will present your findings together with other students who studied the same or similar countries. The case study is broken up into smaller assignments, as follows:

a. Case study, country selection (3%, due Jan 16)

By the second week of the quarter, you should inform me, via Camino, of the country that you will study.

b. Case study, development scorecard (12.5%, due Jan 23)

The development scorecard provides a framework for analyzing the level of development in your chosen country.

c. Case study, explanatory essay (22.5%, due Feb 18)

In this essay, you will answer the question – why is country X rich or poor?

d. Case study, group presentation (7%, due Mar 5)

As a group of country experts, you will create a visual summary of your findings (such as a poster, slidedeck, or infographic) and present it to the class.

**Commented [R11]:** Across all my courses, I break down writing assignments into progressive sequences, as I have done here. Progressive writing assignments create multiple opportunities for feedback and revision, and help students succeed in several ways. They allow students to improve the quality of their work over the course of the quarter; they lower the stakes of any given assignment, and they help students manage their time.

**Commented [R12]:** The development scorecard poses thirteen specific questions to help students describe the level of development in their chosen country, encompassing questions about economic growth, human development, economic inequality, and economic activity. This structured format ensures that all students have first described a clear outcome before they turn to the task of explanation in the next assignment.

**Commented [R13]:** The group presentation allows students, in the spirit of the class, to make comparisons across countries, and it also enables the entire class to benefit from the collective expertise developed over the course of the quarter.

5. Exams (40%)

Two non-cumulative exams will cover all course material, including lectures, discussion, and assigned reading. I will administer exams during class; they will take the entire period. They will address both the themes of the course and the specifics of particular cases using a variety of question formats, but especially matching and short answer. Some questions will ask you to interpret prompts, such as figures that visualize data or diagrams that visualize relationships. Study guides will be provided for each exam.

**Commented [R14]:** Exams provide useful information to students. They communicate what content is most important to the instructor, and they generate fairly precise feedback about how well students have comprehended that content. This information is most useful to students early in the quarter, so I incorporate multiple exams in all of my courses.

### Course policies:

#### Electronic devices

Laptop computers are powerful tools for learning if used appropriately. However, I reserve the right to ask students to put them away if I believe that they are distracting students from classroom activities. Smart phones, by contrast, have less functionality for typing and research, and more potential for distraction. Please leave them at home.

#### Late assignments

Students, like faculty, juggle many responsibilities, which is why it's so important to meet your deadlines! Nevertheless, I am willing to negotiate extensions, but you must approach me before the assignment is due, not after. Otherwise, late work will incur penalties worth one-sixth of a letter grade per day (e.g. the grade is reduced from a B+ to a B after two days).

#### Academic integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of – and commitment to – a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

*I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.*

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see [www.scu.edu/academic-integrity/](http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity/).

#### Office of Accessible Education (formerly Disabilities Resources)

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact the Office of Accessible Education, Benson 1, as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. The full university policy is available at [www.scu.edu/oaee](http://www.scu.edu/oaee).

#### Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students

Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medical needs related to childbirth. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments, or by requesting accommodations through Office of Accessible Education.

#### Discrimination and sexual misconduct (Title IX)

Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's [Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) or contact [Belinda Guthrie](#). Reports may be submitted online through the [Office of Student Life](#) or anonymously through [EthicsPoint](#)

#### In-class recordings

The University has a new policy prohibiting in-class recordings “without the knowledge and consent of all recorded parties,” except in cases of approved disability accommodations. The full policy is in the [Student Conduct Code](#) (p. 13).

**Commented [R15]:** My syllabus includes these course policies, adapted from language suggested by the university, for two reasons. First, it reminds students of their rights and responsibilities as members of a learning community. They have a right to a safe, respectful, and accommodating learning environment, and a responsibility to complete their work with academic integrity. Second, these statements, and accompanying links, offer a resource for students who might need additional academic support.

**Commented [R16]:** While I recognize that computers can distract students, I have opted to tolerate them in the classroom for several reasons. First, some students need them as a matter of accommodation, and I don't want to single out those students for using computers. Second, I value computers as learning tools, and on occasion I design activities that make use of computers. Third, students have consistently indicated in my surveys that they prefer to have the option to use them. Therefore, I take students at their word that, on balance, computers make them more comfortable in the classroom and help them to learn.

**Commented [R17]:** I view deadlines as a means of helping students complete their coursework. Therefore, I impose penalties large enough to encourage students to keep up with the class, but small enough to avoid discouraging students from submitting late work. Likewise, I signal a willingness to negotiate deadlines because my goal is to encourage students to complete their assignments, not to penalize them for working at their own pace.

**Course schedule**  
(subject to change)

**PART ONE: Global explanations**

*Week 1: Course introduction*

Tuesday, January 7

**Introduction to development**

- “The Road to Riches,” 1999. *The Economist*, December 23.
- Rohini Pande, Vestal McIntyre and Lucy Page. 2019. “A New Home for Extreme Poverty: Middle-Income Countries,” *The New York Times*, January 28.

Thursday, January 9

**Development strategies**

- Dani Rodrik. 2007. “Fifty Years of Growth (and Lack Thereof): An Interpretation,” in *One Economics, Many Recipes*. Princeton University Press (pp. 13-21, 35-44).

*Week 2: Why is the developed world rich and the developing world poor?*

Tuesday, January 14

**Dependency theory**

- Andre Gunder Frank. 1970. “The Development of Underdevelopment,” in Robert Rhodes, ed., *Imperialism and Underdevelopment*. Monthly Review Press.

Thursday, January 16

**Case study, country selection due**

**Legacies of colonialism**

- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2001. “The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation,” *American Economic Review* 91(5) (pp. 1369-1378, 1380-1383, 1395-1396).

*Week 3: Globalization, source of wealth or poverty?*

Tuesday, January 21

**The globalization debate**

- Naomi Klein. 2002. “Making—and Breaking—the Rules: Mr. Prime Minister, we are not anti-globalization, we are the true internationalists,” in *Fences and Windows*. Picador.
- *The Economist*. 2001. “A different manifesto,” September 29.
- [OPTIONAL] Herbert, Bob. 1996. “Nike’s Pyramid Scheme,” *The New York Times*, June 10.

Thursday, January 23

**Global value chains**

- Raphael Kaplinsky. 2005. *Globalization, Poverty and Inequality*. Polity Press. (Ch. 4, pp. 86-88; 96-111; Ch. 5, pp. 136-145; Ch. 8, pp. 235-249)

**Commented [R18]:** I strive to include perspectives from the developing world in all my courses, but most especially in this course, which is focused on the developing world. Scholars on this syllabus who were born in developing countries include Acemoglu and Rodrik (Turkey), Banerjee and Pande (India), Corrales (born to Cuban exiles in Puerto Rico), Edwards (Chile), and Kaplinsky (South Africa).

**Commented [R19]:** I assign approximately 50 pages of reading per week, because I prefer that students read fewer pages with more attention. In addition, I want every page of assigned reading to advance the course. Therefore, I scrupulously assign page numbers to avoid “wasted” pages.

**Commented [R20]:** I frequently use press reports and other popular publications to introduce new topics. These types of sources tend to be short and accessible, and they link course topics to current events. And sometimes, as in this case, they are part of the historical record on the topic.

Week 4: The middle-income trap

Tuesday, January 28

**Case study, development scorecard due**

**The middle-income trap**

- Richard Doner and Ben Ross Schneider. 2016. "The Middle-income Trap: More Politics Than Economics." *World Politics* 68(4).

Thursday, January 30

**Exam #1**

**PART TWO: Specific comparisons**

Week 5: Development in Latin America

Tuesday, February 4

**Latin America's arrested development**

- Michael Reid. 2007. "The Latin American Conundrum," in *Forgotten Continent: The Battle for Latin America's Soul*. Yale University Press.
- [OPTIONAL] Michael Reid. 2007. "The Loneliness of Latin America," in *Forgotten Continent: The Battle for Latin America's Soul*. Yale University Press.

Thursday, February 6

**The case of Argentina**

- Javier Corrales. 2002. "The Politics of Argentina's Meltdown," *World Policy Review* 19(3).
- Georgios Theophanous. 2003. "Duhalde's dilemma," *Harvard International Review* 25(1).
- [OPTIONAL] Sophie Arie. 2002. "Children starve to death in the land of plenty; Rural poor are victims as Argentina's crisis worsens," *Daily Telegraph*, November 23.

Week 6: The resource curse

Tuesday, February 11

**The case of Chile**

- Sebastian Edwards. 2010. "Chile, Latin America's Brightest Star," in *Left Behind: Latin America and the False Promise of Populism*. University of Chicago Press.

Thursday, February 13

**The resource curse**

- Paul Collier. 2007. "The natural resource trap," in *The Bottom Billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. Oxford University Press.

**Commented [R21]:** Progressive writing assignments shift the burden of coursework earlier in the quarter for instructors as well as students. However, I find that the extra effort of providing feedback to students early in the term pays off with better papers and easier grading at the end of the term.

**Commented [R22]:** I divide the syllabus into two parts for two reasons. First, labeling different parts of the syllabus helps students to understand how topics and readings fit together over time. In this case, the course considers increasingly specific comparisons from week to week. As a part of this progression, students build a general framework to understand development during the first half of the course, which they apply to explain outcomes in specific countries during the second half of the course. Second, section headers highlight a particular theme for each exam, which helps students succeed because they can more accurately anticipate what will be asked of them.

**Commented [R23]:** Occasionally, I find articles that I want to share with students, but don't want to assign out of respect for my weekly limit of 50(ish) pages. I post such readings to the course website and mark them as optional for reasons as varied as the pieces themselves. Sometimes they offer a counter-point, sometimes they connect to a writing assignment, and sometimes, as in this case, they highlight the human consequences of course topics.

Week 7: Development in Africa

Tuesday, February 18

**Case study, explanatory essay due**

**The case of Zambia**

- D. Michael Shafer. 1994. "Zambia: The Mining Sector" in *Winners and Losers: How Sectors Shape the Developmental Prospects of States*. Cornell University Press (pp. 49-51, 66-93).

Thursday, February 20

**The case of Botswana**

- Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson. 2003. "An African Success Story: Botswana," in Dani Rodrik, ed., *In Search of Prosperity: Analytic Narratives on Economic Growth*. Princeton University Press (pp. 80-86, 92-107, 112-113).

**Commented [R24]:** In the future, I plan to replace this reading with a case study of Botswana by Amy Poteete. The primary reason for the change is that Poteete's article is a better fit for the course. An additional benefit of the change is that it increases the representation of women on the syllabus.

Week 8: Developmental states

Tuesday, February 25

**The developmental state**

- Richard Doner, Bryan Ritchie, and Dan Slater. 2005. "Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective." *International Organization* 59(2) (pp. 327-346, 349-352, 355-356).

Thursday, February 27

**The case of Thailand**

- Andrew Walker. 2012. *Thailand's Political Peasants: Power in the Modern Rural Economy*. University of Wisconsin Press. (Introduction, pp. 6-10, Ch. 2, all)

Week 9: Development in Asia

Tuesday, March 3

**The case of South Korea**

- Alice Amsden. 1989. *Asia's Next Giant: South Korea and Late Industrialization*. Oxford University Press. (Ch. 1, pp. 3-5, 8-23; Ch. 11, pp. 269-282, 286-288)

Thursday, March 5

**Case study, presentations**

Week 10: Looking to the future

Tuesday, March 10

**Future challenges and foreign aid**

- Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo. 2011. "Think Again, Again," in *Poor Economics: A radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty*. Public Affairs Press.
- Somini Sengupta and Weiyi Cai. 2019. "A Quarter of Humanity Faces Looming Water Crises," *The New York Times*, August 6.

**Commented [R25]:** Climate change is exacerbating inequality across countries and poses what is likely the gravest long-term threat to sustainable development. Therefore, I conclude the course with a reflection on the implications of climate change for continuing development in poor countries.

Thursday, March 12

**Exam #2**