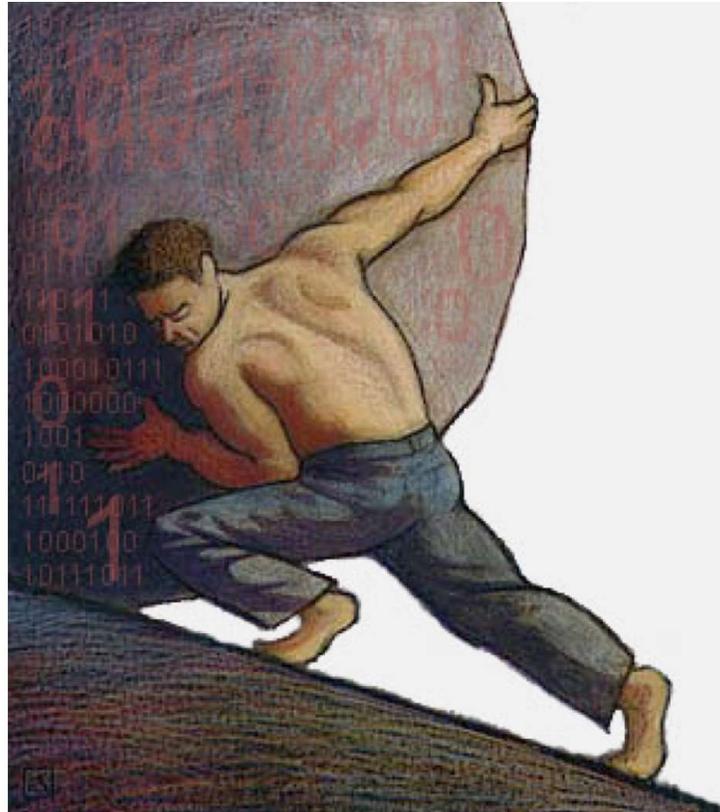


**UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO  
FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENT  
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT, ENTERPRISE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**The Political Economy of Development**

**INDEV 200 FALL 2019**



Man is born free, but everywhere in chains

- Jean Jacques Rousseau

The purpose is not just to understand the world, but to change it

- Karl Marx

While America is going to the Moon, Africans are still trying to reach the village

- Julius K. Nyerere

## Introduction:

If you are a student of development, then, you are a political economist – what kind of political economist, however, is another question altogether. How is it that you came to be a political economist? Well, if you believe in ‘development’ it logically follows that you believe in change: changing from an undesirable condition to an improved condition is commonly thought of as ‘development’. If you believe in change, then you believe in agency; that is, having the human capability to alter the condition in which you find yourself, possibly for the better. But planned change rarely turns out as initially conceived. No matter how you manipulate your plans, the outcome often times is ‘more of the same’ – as the saying goes, *plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose!* Now you have run up against structure, some sort of seemingly immutable force that thwarts your every effort. Is there nothing you can do to change this situation?

As a student of development, you are most interested in access and allocating resources (natural, financial, technical, human) in such a way that it improves the livelihoods of individuals that are grouped together in some sort of collective. The scale often differs: family, community, state, region, the world. You might also be concerned with preserving the environment for future generations, and achieving some sort of broad-based equality across the collective. Effecting change in such a situation require a combination of **social acceptance** and **economic capacity**. Your approach may emphasize one or the other, but without the buy-in of key social actors your plan will fail no matter how well-equipped you are financially, technologically, or in terms of the resource base; conversely, without the ability to marshal key resources, all the buy-in in the world cannot lead to successful implementation of your plan.

In other words, **development outcomes are a consequence of political economy** – the relationship between socio-political and socio-economic variables. When plans fail, you try again. You change the balance by altering the focus. In effect, you are theorizing about the relationship between and among your key variables: you are constructing a theory of political economy! Perhaps you feel that with a little better information, people will accept the planned development intervention. Or perhaps you feel that without a fundamental alteration in the political structure of a society, or with the current unequal allocation of resources, there can be no broad-based positive change. In the former, you are emphasizing agency; in the latter, structure. What’s a development practitioner to do?!

In this course you will be introduced to political economy’s (i) **key concepts**; and (ii) different **theoretical approaches** in historical and contemporary context. You will also gain an overview of (iii) the **main actors and issues** in international development as they have evolved over time. You will also learn to see these actors and issues through (iv) the **analytical lens of political economy**. We do this not just to give you an overall description of the world of international development, but to assist you in understanding why things are the way they are, why different actors have tried to change the situation in particular ways, and what perhaps still remains to be done.

**Objectives:**

At the end of this course, students will have (a) a solid understanding of political economy; (b) a good general knowledge of the main issues in the political economy of international development; (c) a good general knowledge of the key actors, forces and factors in international development; (d) a capacity to differentiate the development challenges facing people, groups, communities and states in different parts of the world; (e ) some idea of the various options available for dealing with particular development challenges; and (f) an improved skill set for informing better policy making be it for a state, a civil society organization or a private sector company.

**Expectations:**

The instructor and students will attend all classes. Everyone will come to class prepared by having read the required readings and all supplementary materials (if any) provided by the instructor. Students will participate meaningfully through regular structured group work, question and answer periods, and so on. Students will hand in assignments on time and will abide by the rules of the university regarding plagiarism and academic integrity. The instructor will assess all student work as objectively as possible and deliver feedback and grades to students as expeditiously as possible. Students will not multi-task during class.

**Pedagogy:**

The basic pedagogy of the course involves two weekly lectures devised around a set of required and recommended readings. There will also be the occasional use of films and internet sources. Guided discussion will be a regular part of this course and students are expected to be prepared to answer questions when asked.

It is expected that the student will equip her/him/themselves with a variety of forms of information: after all, knowledge is power! The internet is a powerful multimedia tool – and we will employ it to our advantage where feasible – but there remains no substitute for reading and discussing. An informed opinion lights years ahead of an opinion lightly formed. As there is no tutorial for this class, the course instructor will make every effort to add on a weekly or bi-weekly or monthly Q and A session provided there is the time, popular will and physical room for this.

**Readings:**

There is no textbook for this course. The readings consist of peer-reviewed journal articles selected specifically for each topic. The readings are not meant to be just a colorful background to the lectures. The lectures are shaped around the readings. For students to get the most out of this course, therefore, they must do their readings. All readings have been uploaded for the student onto the Learn platform.

Newspapers: In addition to the required readings, students are expected to read newspapers regularly in order to be able to discuss current events in lectures as they pertain to the topics. A

useful English language newspaper for those interested in development issues is The Guardian Weekly, available in the library or by subscription: [www.guardianweekly.com](http://www.guardianweekly.com). The Guardian's International Development site is: [www.guardianweekly.com/outlook](http://www.guardianweekly.com/outlook). Other good important sources of information on developing countries are the left-leaning New Internationalist (monthly) and right-leaning The Economist (weekly). The Globe and Mail (see [www.theglobeandmail.com](http://www.theglobeandmail.com)) also regularly carries longish articles on key development issues and students should make a habit of reading the paper, especially its Saturday edition. You can subscribe to daily briefings from The New York Times as well ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)).

**Evaluation:**

- Participation: 20%
- Policy Brief 1: 40%
  - Step 1: 5%
  - Step 2: 10%
  - Step 3: 25%
- Policy Brief 2: 40%
  - Step 1: 5%
  - Step 2: 10%
  - Step 3: 25%

**Overview of Topics (Note that all readings and related materials are updated on Learn):**

***Introductory Overview: Models and Tools of Political Economy***

Topic 1 (9/9): Overview & History of the global political economy of development

***Social Organization and Development***

Topic 2 (11/9): The State

Topic 3 (16-18/9): The development of underdevelopment: Central America and Sub Saharan Africa

Topic 4 (23/9): Dependent development: Latin America

Topic 5 (25/9): Guest Lecture: The Political Economy of HIV/AIDS in Botswana

Topic 6 (2-7/10): The developmental state: Asia

Topic 7 (9-21/10): Civil Society

Topic 8 (23-28/10): Private Sector

***Global Change: The New International Division of Labour (NIDL)***

Topic 9 (30/10; 4/11; 6/11): Global Change and Neoliberal Globalization

Topic 10 (11-13-18/11): Globalization and the Rise of China

Topic 11 (20-25-27/11 & 2/12): Globalization and the Future

## **POLICY BRIEF:**

Please refer to this web-link regarding how to prepare a Policy Brief:

<https://www.idrc.ca/sites/default/files/idrcpolicybrieftoolkit.pdf>

The Policy Brief is an individual assignment that will derive directly from your research as it relates to a chosen topic of study in INDEV 200. It is to be a total of 4 pages in length and should contain no more than 1500 words in total.

The Brief will be assembled in 3 steps:

### **Step 1:**

The first step is designed to help you identify a topic, initiate your research, and delve into it by identifying sources, reading them, thinking about them, and then telling us why you think they will help you in putting your Policy Brief together. To achieve this, you must do the following:

- Provide a title for your assignment
- Provide a thesis statement regarding the topic
- List 10 academic sources (i.e. books, peer-reviewed journal articles, government/IGO/NGO/company reports/documents) that you will use in preparing your essay; and
- Write a brief precis – i.e. 3 to 5 sentences – explaining the particular value of 3 of these 10 sources: why is it that these 3 are particularly useful for your assignment?

### **Step 2:**

Following feedback on Step 1 provided by the instructor, you will now write a 1000 word essay on the topic.

### **Step 3:**

Following feedback on Step 2 provided by the instructor, you will assemble your 1500 word policy brief along the lines of that recommended in the IDRC toolkit (see link above).