POLI 423E / 516D: The Comparative Political Economy of Development
Winter Session Term 1
M, 9:00-12:00 in BUCH C403

Professor Yang-Yang Zhou (she/her)
Email: yangyang.zhou@ubc.ca
Office Hours: Fridays, 11:00-12:00
Location: 323 CK Choi Building, 1855 West Mall

1. Course Overview

This course provides a graduate level introduction to the comparative study of development. Why do some regions of the Global South seem to be better at “development” than others? While Asia is often viewed as developing rapidly, sub-Saharan Africa is often treated as a failure, and Latin America is commonly perceived as a mixed case.

The first part of this course begins with a brief overview of how development is conceptualized and measured. We then consider and discuss existing explanations of developmental success and failure such as the influence of historical legacies, the role of the modern state and political institutions, markets and globalization, structural adjustment, and democracy versus authoritarianism. The second part of this course explores contemporary development initiatives such as democratic governance, information campaigns, and other channels for citizen participation.

We will draw on insights from a variety of social science disciplines in addition to political science such as sociology, economics, and social psychology. Since we will cover a range of topics, each of which could become its own course, you will have the opportunity to delve in more detail the topics and regions that interest you for the final research paper and present your research to the class. To that end, we will also analyze and practice the elements of conducting effective social science research.

2. Learning Objectives

- Explain the conceptualizations, drivers, and deterrents of development,
- Critically evaluate initiatives and policies considering these political factors, using a causal inference framework,
- Compose referee reports,
- Conduct a replication or original research project,
- Prepare for a career in development research and/or academia.
3. Readings and Resources

There are no books required for this course. All required readings will be available online via our class Canvas site or through the library. **Please note that graduate students (516D) must read the recommended readings as well.**

Development-Related Research Resources:

- Center for Qualitative and Multi-Method Inquiry, the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. [Qualitative Data Repository](#).
- United Nations Statistics Division. [Household Sample Surveys in Developing and Transition Countries](#).
- Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL) and Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA). [Research Resources](#).
- Evidence in Governance and Politics (EGAP). [Methods Guides](#).
- DeclareDesign. [Tool for Declaring and Diagnosing Research Designs](#).
- National Science Foundation. [Frequently Asked Questions and Vignettes. Interpreting the Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects for Behavioral and Social Science Research](#).
- Berkeley Research Development Office. [Grant Writing Resources](#).

4. Course Format

This seminar is **reading intensive**. It will meet once per week for the duration of the semester, and the format will be discussion-based. Students will sign up to lead the discussion. Each of the topics is paired with required readings that should be completed BEFORE class. Come prepared to discuss, critique, or defend any reading.

Attendance is required. If you have to miss class, please email me in advance. If you anticipate missing several classes, please refer to Arts Advising for an academic concession.

You must use [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com) to submit your memos and final assignment.

ClassID: **22219198** Enrollment Key: **POLI423E516D**

5. Grading Criteria

1. **Class Participation (10%)**: As a seminar, this course depends on the active participation of its members. I expect each member of the class to not only attend, but make thoughtful contributions to each week. Useful comments will draw on and assess arguments and concepts from the readings, and will also try to engage with other students contributions. Even a good question asking for clarification of an issue can help move the discussion forward and
constitutes high-quality participation. Quality is more important than quantity, though I expect each member of the class to come prepared to justify and defend your responses to the readings.

2. **Discussion Lead (2 x 10%)**: Active participation will also be facilitated in part by students signing up to lead the class discussion for two chosen weeks. For the week that you are discussion leader, you should coordinate with the other leaders to prepare summaries and discussion questions that engage your fellow students in the cross-cutting themes of that week’s readings, and how they fit into the broader themes of the course.

3. **Referee Reports (2 x 15%)**: You will be expected to write two referee reports on two of the readings on the syllabus. These reports should be written before we discuss these papers in class. These should be 4-5 pages, double spaced. They should summarize in a paragraph the core contention of the paper and then critique key aspects of the results, indicating what revisions are required to improve it. These reports can easily form the basis of your seminar paper. Please see the **How to Write a Referee Report** in Guides for more details. The first report is due **Monday, October 7**. The second report is due **Monday, November 18**.

4. **Seminar Paper**: (40%) Original Research/Replication Paper or Proposal. A major objective of this course is for you to become not only a critical consumer of knowledge, but a producer. Thus, the seminar paper will require original research. You can choose between three options:
   (1) Original research paper using existing public data / data you have already collected,
   (2) Replication and extension paper using data from a published paper that you are critiquing, and extending their arguments and analyses, OR
   (3) research proposal that includes a research design, and a plan for original data collection. This paper should be approximately 20 pages, double spaced. You can make a case for working in pairs, given that research is increasingly co-authored, but please come talk to me first. You must submit a 3 page outline (ungraded) with the research question, theory, short literature review, description of research design and data, and plan moving forward due **Monday, October 21**: this will be shared with the class. We will have a “research lab” session on **Monday, October 28** in which we all provide constructive feedback for each other. Final paper is due midnight **Sunday, December 15**.

6. **Course Policies**

**Lateness Policy** Assignments handed in after the deadline will lose 2 points on a 100-point scale for each day, including weekend days. The first day’s penalty will be incurred by papers that come in on the right day but after the time at which they are due.

**Academic Accommodations.** All individual academic accommodations must be requested through Arts Advising [http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising](http://students.arts.ubc.ca/advising). Nevertheless, your success in this class is important to me. We all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know.
as soon as possible. Together we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

**Access and Diversity.** The university accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Access and Diversity Unit. Students must register with the Disability Resource Centre to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions. For more information, please refer to the following guide: [http://students.ubc.ca/about/access](http://students.ubc.ca/about/access).

**Religious Accommodation.** The university accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. However, you must notify me in the first week of class if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. For more information, please refer to the UBC Policy on Religious Holidays.

**Children in the Classroom.** UBC does not have an official policy, but in this class we will work together to create a welcoming environment for all students, including those with children. Nursing babies and those not old enough to attend daycare are welcome in class as necessary. For older babies and children, sometimes unforeseen disruptions in childcare will place parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home. In these cases, you are welcome to bring your child to class to cover unexpected gaps in childcare, but please remember that this policy is only intended for childcare emergencies and is not meant to be a long term solution.

**Office Hours.** *I would like to see everyone come to my office hours at least once before the end of September* and again after you receive comments for your paper outlines so that you can get more feedback. For our first meeting, we can discuss your expectations for the course, your progress, research interests, and career goals.

**Academic Integrity.** Students in this course are expected to comply with UBC’s policy on academic integrity. At the most basic level, this means submitting only original work done by you and acknowledging all sources of information or ideas. We will use [https://www.turnitin.com/](https://www.turnitin.com/) to avoid plagiarism. You should do all readings, attend all seminars, and grapple with the material independently. But you are also encouraged to discuss these materials with other colleagues in and outside of the course.

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<th>7. Course Schedule and Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Week 1: Conceptualizing and Measuring Development</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Sept. 9</strong></td>
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<td>• <strong>Required Readings:</strong></td>
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<td>– Collier, Paul (2008). <em>The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done about it.</em> Chapter 1 (pp. 3 - 13).</td>
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Week 2: Major Theories of Economic Development

- Required Readings:

- Recommended Readings:

Week 3: Historical Legacies

- Required Readings:

- Recommended Readings:

Week 4: States and Markets

- Required Readings:


**Recommended Readings:**


**Week 5: Geography and Natural Resources**

**Oct. 7**

- Collier, Paul (2008). The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done about it. Chapters 3 and 4.

**Recommended Readings:**


**Monday, Oct 14: Thanksgiving – No Class**

**Week 6: Ethnic Politics and Conflict**

**Oct. 21**

- Collier, Paul (2008). The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What can be Done about it. Chapter 2.


• Recommended Readings:

• 3 page outline for Seminar Paper due.

Week 7: Research Lab Oct. 28
• Required Readings:
  – Everyone’s research outlines. Be prepared to offer constructive comments.
  • You will have 2 minutes to introduce your project, then 8 minutes to receive comments and suggestions.

Week 8: Information Campaigns, Accountability, and Efficacy Nov. 4
• Required Readings:

• Recommended Readings:
Week 9: Impact Evaluation through Field Experiments  

• Required Readings:
  
  
  
  
• Recommended Readings:
  
  
  

Week 10: Democratic Choice!  

• During Mid-course evaluations, we will have a class vote on a topic intersected with development this last week should focus on. Options include: Gender, Environment, Indigenous Movements, Trade, Migration, Microcredit and Savings, Mobile Technology
  
• Readings tbd

8. Acknowledgement

UBCs Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.