# The Politics of International Development

Fall 2024

Professor Cleo O'Brien-Udry

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 3:30-4:50pm

Location: 241 - Armory

Office hours: Tuesdays, Thursdays 2pm-3pm in DKH 309

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## Introduction

The goal of the class is to critically engage with international development practices. Students will practice skills relevant to working in the field, including project evaluation, policy writing, and critical analysis. Engaging in the political discussions of how and if development works, as well as the political consequences of development, is a central part of the course. The class focuses on foreign aid as a tool of development. Additional topics include foreign direct investment, military support, remittances, trade, and venture capital.

The course will be taught as a seminar. Students will be expected to: contribute substantively and thoughtfully to class discussions [25% of course grade]; write at two short policy memos, one of which will be revised for the final project [60%], and; prepare and deliver one ten-minute oral presentation [15%]

## Course objectives

* Create policy recommendations for donors and recipients consistent with evidence from academic papers and local reports.
* Engage with the political causes and consequences of different international development interventions.
* Critically analyze the incentives of actors in international development.

## Course requirements

1. Class participation (25%)
	* Attendance is required. Please email me at least one day beforehand if you need to miss class. You do not need to inform me of why, but after one unexcused absence this will be reflected in your final grade.
	* Contributing productively to class is the core of this portion of your grade. Please come to class having read and engaged with the material.
	* If you are unable or have particular barriers to participating in class, please let me know as soon as possible so I can find alternative means of engagement!
	* Please email me or use the office hours link to schedule a 15 min meeting in the first two weeks of class.
	* Be nice!
2. Two short papers (60%)
	* Two short papers (5 pages, single spaced, 12pt Times font, 1 in margins) will be due in the sixth and eleventh week of class.
		+ Monkey Cage/[Good Authority](https://goodauthority.org/) style summary of a contemporary international development topic or dilemma, including policy implications or recommendations.
	* Edit one of the memos into a polished policy memo. The final memo will be due on week 13.
		+ Resources:
			- <https://mitcommlab.mit.edu/broad/commkit/policy-memo/>
			- <https://harris.uchicago.edu/files/how_to_write_a_policy_memo_that_matters_0.pdf>
			- [https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Academic%20Dean's%20Office/communications\_program/workshop-materials/Slides\_How%20to%20Write%20a%20Policy%20Memo%202\_14\_22.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/Academic%20Dean%27s%20Office/communications_program/workshop-materials/Slides_How%20to%20Write%20a%20Policy%20Memo%202_14_22.pdf)
		+ Grades for the final memo will take into account students’ incorporation of peer and professor feedback.
3. Oral presentation (15%)
	* The last week of class will be reserved for oral presentations. Each student will give a 10 minute presentation based on a topic we have covered in class.
	* The presentation can be an adaptation of the memo or an original topic. Time will be kept strictly.

## Class structure

Tuesdays will be fully discussion-based–please be sure to have read the required texts! Thursdays will take the form of a workshop. Each week we will develop skills related to working in and on international development, including policy memos, data exploration, project design and evaluation, and critical analysis.

## Class and University Policies

### Accommodating tiny children

Tiny children are great. If you are breastfeeding or simply can’t find child care, feel free to bring your baby to class. We’ll make it work.

### Accommodation for students with disabilities

The University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign encourages the full participation of students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are encouraged to discuss special accommodations that may be needed for successful participation in this course. Specifically, the University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Office of Student Disabilities Service. Students must register with the Student Disabilities Services (SDS) to be granted special accommodations for any on-going conditions. For more information on the services that you are entitled to, please refer to the following guide.

### Religious Accommodation

The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please notify me in advance if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. For more information, please refer to UIUC’s Policy on Religious Holidays.

### Policy on Academic Misconduct

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. As outlined in the Student Handbook, “cheating" and “plagiarism" will result in severe disciplinary action on the part of the instructor. Either offense will be grounds for receiving a failing grade (zeropoints) on the assignment and possibly an “F" for the course, depending on the severity of the offense.

### Policy on the use of Generative AI tools

The beta release of ChatGPT in November 2022 is a historical milestone. It is quite likely that using Generative AI tools are going to become an important skill for careers in the not distant future. In the meantime though, it is going to take a while for society (academia included) to figure out when using these tools is and isn’t acceptable. There are at least three reasons why:

1. Work created by AI tools may not be considered original work and instead, considered automated plagiarism. AI-generated text is derived from previously created texts from sources that the models were trained on (but do not cite).
2. AI models have built-in biases—they are trained on limited underlying sources; they reproduce, rather than challenge, errors in the sources.
	* **This is particularly important for our course as much of the text of the internet upon which ChatGPT is trained is generated by the Global North, not the Global South.**
3. AI tools have limitations—they lack critical thinking to evaluate and reflect on criteria; they lack abductive reasoning to make judgments with incomplete information at hand.

For the time being, in this class, you must meet with me about using AI tools in your work and carefully explain why and how these tools were used. In addition, you must adhere to the following rules:

1. You must clearly identify the use of AI-based tools in your work. Any work that utilizes AI-based tools must be clearly marked as such, including the specific tool(s)used. For example, if you use ChatGPT-3, you must cite "ChatGPT-3. (YYYY, Month DD of query). “Text of your query." Generated using OpenAI. https://chat.openai.com.”
2. You must be transparent in how you used the AI-based tool, including what work is your original contribution. An AI detector such as GPTZero (<https://gptzero.me/>) may be used to detect AI-driven work.
3. You must ensure your use of AI-based tools does not violate any copyright or intellectual property laws.
4. You must not use AI-based tools to cheat on assessments.
5. You must not use AI-based tools to plagiarize without citation.

Violations of this policy will be dealt with in accordance with UPenn’s academic integrity policy. If you are found in violation of this policy, you may face penalties such as a reduction in grade, failure of the assignment, or even failure of the course. Finally, it’s your responsibility to be aware of the academic integrity policy and take the necessary steps to ensure that your use of AI-based tools is in compliance with this policy. If you have questions, please speak with me first, as we navigate together how best to responsibly use these tools.

| W | Date | Topic | Tuesday(Discussion) | Thursday(Workshop) | Assignments (due Th) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 8/27 - 8/29 | What is international development | Class expectations | Discussion | Meet w/ professor |
| 2 | 9/3 - 9/5 | Development philosophies |  | NO CLASS |  |
| 3 | 9/10 - 9/12 | Geopolitics |  | How to write a policy memo |  |
| 4 | 9/17 - 9/19 | Measuring aid |  | Data workshop | First memo outline  |
| 5 | 9/24 - 9/26 | Public opinion |  | Reading graphs; opinion research |  |
| 6 | 10/1 - 10/3 | Development bureaucracies |  |  | First memo  |
| 7 | 10/8 - 10/10 | Domestic politics |  |  |  |
| 8 | 10/15 - 10/17 | Refugees |  |  |  |
| 9 | 10/22 - 10/24 | Conflict |  |  | Second memo outline  |
| 10 | 10/29 - 10/31 | Venture capital for international development | GUEST LECTURE  | GUEST LECTURE  |  |
| 11 | 11/5 - 11/7 | Aid for trade |  | Effective altruism | Second memo  |
| 12 | 11/12 - 11/14 | Migration and remittances |  | Workshop memos |  |
| 13 | 11/19 - 11/21 | Culture clashes |  | Norm changes | Final memo  |
| 14 | 12/3 - 12/5 | Oral presentations |

## Week 1: 8/27 - 8/29

What is international development

**Required readings:**

1. Easterly, William. "The cartel of good intentions." Foreign Policy. (2002): 40-49. [link](https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/11/the-cartel-of-good-intentions/)
2. Escobar, Arturo. *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World.* Princeton University Press, 2011, pp. 21–55. Ch 2: The Problematization of Poverty: The Tale of Three Worlds and Development.

Workshop: None

## Week 2: 9/3 - 9/5

Development philosophies

**Required readings:**

1. Sen, Amartya. "Development as freedom (1999)." *The globalization and development reader: Perspectives on development and global change* 525 (2014). Ch 2: The Ends and Means of Development.
2. Ferguson, James. The Anti-politics Machine: “Development,” Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
3. Oruka, Henry Odera. "The philosophy of foreign aid: A question of the right to a human minimum." *Praxis International* 8.4 (1988): 465-475

Workshop: None

Week 3: 9/10 - 9/12

Geopolitics

**Required readings:**

1. Radelet, Steven. "Bush and foreign aid." *Foreign Affairs*(2003): 104-117.
2. Dreher, Axel, et al. *Banking on Beijing: The aims and impacts of China's overseas development program*. Cambridge University Press, 2022.
3. Clark, Richard, and Lindsay R. Dolan. "Pleasing the principal: US influence in World Bank policymaking." *American Journal of Political Science* 65.1 (2021): 36-51.
4. Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. "The colonial origins of comparative development: An empirical investigation." *American economic review* 91.5 (2001): 1369-1401.

Workshop: How to write a policy memo

Week 4: 9/17 - 9/19

Measuring aid

**Required readings:**

1. Beath, Andrew, Fotini Christia, and Ruben Enikolopov. "Empowering women through development aid: Evidence from a field experiment in Afghanistan." *American Political Science Review* 107.3 (2013): 540-557. [link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/2926ACB97A940612C7796E1C70478E15/S0003055413000270a.pdf/empowering_women_through_development_aid_evidence_from_a_field_experiment_in_afghanistan.pdf)
2. Dissanayake, Ranil. “Lies, Damned Lies and Aid Statistics.” CGDev Blog. 20 April 2022. [link](https://www.cgdev.org/blog/lies-damned-lies-and-aid-statistics)
3. Dreher, Axel, et al. *Banking on Beijing: The aims and impacts of China's overseas development program.* Cambridge University Press, 2022. Ch 3. Counting and Comparing Apples and Dragon Fruits.
4. Jerven, Morten. *Poor numbers: how we are misled by African development statistics and what to do about it.* Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch 2.

Workshop: Explore aid data websites; present interesting findings/facts

Week 5: 9/24 - 9/26

Public opinion

**Required readings:**

1. Baker, Andy. “Race, paternalism, and foreign aid: Evidence from US public opinion.” American Political Science Review 109.1(2015): 93-109. [Link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/race-paternalism-and-foreign-aid-evidence-from-us-public-opinion/18A3EDDE55B102D6E7A7D5E2DCBE8ADA)
2. Rivera-Burgos, Viviana. "Language, Skin Tone, and Attitudes toward Puerto Rico in the Aftermath of Hurricane Maria." American Political Science Review 117.3 (2023): 789-804. [Link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/language-skin-tone-and-attitudes-toward-puerto-rico-in-the-aftermath-of-hurricane-maria/CF2BC7EDAD3F7EDA123499FEA9A203CF)
3. Talbot, Theodore and Matt Collin. “Using Aid for Cash Transfers: What Do 10,000 People in 28 Countries Think?” Center for Global Development. JUNE 14, 2016. [Link](https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-do-10000-people-28-countries-think-using-aid-cash-transfers)
4. Uji, Azusa, et al. "Public support for climate adaptation aid and migrants: a conjoint experiment in Japan." *Environmental Research Letters* 16.12 (2021): 124073. [Link](https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.1088/1748-9326/ac3b7b/pdf)

Workshop: How to read graphs; design public opinion survey

Week 6: 10/1 - 10/3

Development bureaucracies

**Required readings:**

1. Autesserre, Séverine. *Peaceland: Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. Ch 2: The Politics of Knowledge
2. Hor, Amoz JY. "The everyday emotional lives of aid workers: how humanitarian anxiety gets in the way of meaningful local participation." International Theory 14.2 (2022): 358-387. [link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-theory/article/abs/everyday-emotional-lives-of-aid-workers-how-humanitarian-anxiety-gets-in-the-way-of-meaningful-local-participation/B5F5A1D6568DEB1FC5F83B75766A7E15)
3. Blackman, Alexandra and Richard Clark. “UNRWA fears are a normal trade-off in international aid. Funding must resume now.” *The New Humanitarian*. 12 February 2024. [Link](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2024/02/14/unrwa-fears-normal-international-aid-funding-must-resume-now)
4. Oksamytna, Kseniya, and Sarah von Billerbeck. "Race and International Organizations." *International Studies Quarterly*68.2 (2024): sqae010.

Workshop:

Week 7: 10/8 - 10/10

Domestic politics

**Required readings:**

1. Baldwin, Kate, et al. "How political insiders lose out when international aid underperforms: Evidence from a participatory development experiment in Ghana." *World Development* 169 (2023): 106296. [link](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0305750X23001146)
2. Jablonski, Ryan S. "How aid targets votes: the impact of electoral incentives on foreign aid distribution." *World Politics* 66.2 (2014): 293-330. [link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/world-politics/article/abs/how-aid-targets-votes-the-impact-of-electoral-incentives-on-foreign-aid-distribution/2723DB9E70C70D5C85992DC67CAFF94F)
3. Dolan, Lindsay R. "Rethinking foreign aid and legitimacy: views from aid recipients in Kenya." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 55 (2020): 143-159.

Week 8: 10/15 - 10/17

Refugees

**Required readings:**

1. Gabiam, Nell. "When “humanitarianism” becomes “development”: the politics of international aid in Syria's Palestinian refugee camps." *American anthropologist* 114.1 (2012): 95-107. [link](https://anthrosource.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1548-1433.2011.01399.x)
2. Baylouny, Anne Marie. 2020. When Blame Backfires: Syrian Refugees and Citizen Grievances in Jordan and Lebanon. Cornell University Press. Ch 1 and 5.
3. Lupieri, Sigrid. "When ‘brothers and sisters’ become ‘foreigners’: Syrian refugees and the politics of healthcare in Jordan." *Third World Quarterly* 41.6 (2020): 958-975. [link](https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01436597.2020.1723414)

Week 9: 10/22 - 10/24

Conflict

**Required readings:**

1. Gourevitch, Philip. "Alms dealers: can you provide humanitarian aid without facilitating conflicts?." *New Yorker* 11 (2010).
2. Dube, Oeindrila, and Suresh Naidu. "Bases, bullets, and ballots: The effect of US military aid on political conflict in Colombia." The Journal of Politics 77.1 (2015): 249-267. [link](https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/full/10.1086/679021)
3. Moore, Adam. Peacebuilding in practice: Local experience in two Bosnian towns. Cornell University Press, 2013. Ch 6.
4. McMahon, Patrice C. *The NGO game: Post-conflict peacebuilding in the Balkans and beyond*. Cornell University Press, 2017

Week 10: 10/29 - 10/31

Venture capital for international development

**Required readings:**

TBA

Week 11: 11/5 - 11/7

Aid, trade, and FDI

**Required readings:**

1. Kosack, Stephen, and Jennifer Tobin. "Funding self-sustaining development: The role of aid, FDI and government in economic success." *International organization* 60.1 (2006): 205-243. [link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/abs/funding-selfsustaining-development-the-role-of-aid-fdi-and-government-in-economic-success/9240AE66FE0D26EB82A36FE259525967)
2. Rudra, Nita, Meir Alkon, and Siddharth Joshi. "FDI, poverty, and the politics of potable water access." *Economics & Politics* 30.3 (2018): 366-393. [link](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ecpo.12112)
3. Pandya, Sonal S. "Why foreign investment still polarizes India." *Washington Post blogs* . (2014). [link](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/09/30/why-foreigninvestment-still-polarizes-india)

Week 12: 11/12 - 11/14

Migration and remittances

**Required readings:**

1. Bermeo, Sarah Blodgett. 2017. “Aid Allocation and Targeted Development in an Increasingly Connected World.” *International Organization*, 71:4 (Fall): 735-766. [Link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/aid-allocation-and-targeted-development-in-an-increasingly-connected-world/7478DF8E264AE5C876EDD96B86CB0E9D)
2. Tertytchnaya, Katerina, et al. "When the money stops: Fluctuations in financial remittances and incumbent approval in Central Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia." *American Political Science Review* 112.4 (2018): 758-774. [link](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/american-political-science-review/article/abs/when-the-money-stops-fluctuations-in-financial-remittances-and-incumbent-approval-in-central-eastern-europe-the-caucasus-and-central-asia/E2BD0764C2F25C5778B7F0F3E1CDD998)
3. Dinkelman, Taryn, Grace Kumchulesi, and Martine Mariotti. “International migration kickstarted structural transformation in Malawi.” *VoxDev*. 8 May 2024. [Link](https://voxdev.org/topic/migration-urbanisation/international-migration-kickstarted-structural-transformation-malawi)

Week 13: 11/19 - 11/21

Culture clashes

**Required readings:**

1. Carpenter, Charli. " Lost" Causes: Agenda Vetting in Global Issue Networks and the Shaping of Human Security. Cornell University Press, 2014. Ch 6: “His Body, His Choice”: Pitching Infant Male Circumcision to Health and Human Rights Gatekeepers
2. Cloward, Karisa. When norms collide: Local responses to activism against female genital mutilation and early marriage. Oxford University Press, 2016. Ch
3. Moreau, Julie, and Ashley Currier. "Queer dilemmas: LGBT activism and international funding." *Routledge handbook of queer development studies*. Routledge, 2018. 223-238.<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315529530-15/queer-dilemmas-julie-moreau-ashley-currier>
4. Dasandi, Niheer, and Lior Erez. "The flag and the stick: Aid suspensions, human rights, and the problem of the complicit public." World Development 168 (2023): 106264.<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0305750X23000827>

Week 14: 12/3 - 12/5

Oral presentations