

PSCI 4732: Critical Thinking in Development

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Office: Ketchum 111
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:00pm; or by appointment.

Course Description

Afghanistan today teeters on the brink of famine, financial crisis, and political upheaval all at once. The withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghan soil resulted in the immediate collapse of a government modeled in the image of Western democracies. The failure to foster a stable democracy in Afghanistan, after nearly 20 years of effort, raises questions about the application of 20th-century policies to help develop nations and people of the 21st century. This course will introduce students to major political and economic theories in the study of development. As a class, we will analyze the efficacy of the nation-building policies attempted in Afghanistan and discuss alternative policies as attempted in other parts of the world. Students will demonstrate their grasp of international development theories and their usefulness in real-world applications through weekly response papers and written in-class examinations.

Course Structure and Requirements

This syllabus represents a general plan for the course, you will find an outline of the course material beginning on page four (4) of this syllabus. I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus and to the course outline as necessary. Students will be given advance notification of any changes to the course plan in class and via email. Students are responsible for the contents outlined within this syllabus and any changes made thereafter.

Classes will center on weekly themes designed to spark discussion and debate within the classroom. Students are expected to attend class, having read all the required readings, ready to engage in discussion and to ask questions as necessary in order to feel comfortable with the material. The readings posted in the course outline (page 4) are to be completed for the day they are assigned. Students are urged to complete the readings in the order they appear on the syllabus. Some reading assignments are followed by the pages or chapters that students are required to read; if this is absent, students should read the entire thing.

Office Hours and Email Protocol

My office hours will be held on Tuesdays from 10:00 am to Noon or by appointment. These times should remain consistent for the duration of the course, if there are any changes to this information, I will send an email notification. I am best reached by email and I respond to emails within 24 hours Monday through Friday. I recommend you do not attempt to email me with time-sensitive questions on Friday as I do not guarantee I will get to them over the weekend.

Required Books

Poor Economics, Abhijit Banerjee, and Esther Duflo (2011)

Capitalism, Alone, Branko Milanovic (2019)

Democracy for Realists, Christopher Achen, and Larry Bartels (2016)

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the following criteria:

Response Papers: 30%

Midterm Exam: 20%

Final Exam: 30%

Participation: 20%

Response Papers - 30%

There will be a total of fifteen (15) response papers throughout the course, one due each week. I will offer unique prompts for students to engage with for each response paper. Each response paper should be between 1 to 2 pages long and will be graded based upon the student's ability to coherently argue in favor or in opposition to the prompt presented. When appropriate, students are encouraged to analyze the arguments presented in the week's readings, as well as those from prior weeks.

Midterm Exam - 20%

The midterm will be held on **Friday, February 18**. The midterm will be held in-class (unless directed otherwise) and you will need a bluebook (or two) to complete the exam. The midterm exam will consist of a single essay question. Students are expected to develop a structured argument that includes references to course readings from previous weeks. You are allowed to bring an index card with bullet-pointed notes for the exam.

Final Exam - 30%

The final exam will be held on **TBD**. The final exam is comprehensive, which means it will cover material from the entire semester. Like the midterm exam, your final exam will be held in-class (unless directed otherwise), and you will need a bluebook (or two) to complete the exam. The final exam will consist of a single essay question. Students are expected to develop a structured argument that includes references to course readings from previous weeks. You are allowed to bring an index card with bullet-pointed notes for the exam.

Participation - 20%

Your participation grade will be evaluated on your preparation, effort, and involvement in class discussion. Specifically, your grade is based on your discussion of course material across any of the following: classroom discussion, attendance at office hours, or directly with me via email. Questions about lectures or about readings are considered in your participation grade, so ask questions! You will maximize your ability to get a good participation grade if you demonstrate to me that you are engaged in the class. I will provide weekly updates to your participation grade on canvas, so that you may track your progress.

Letter Grade Scale

A : > 93 ; A- : 93 – 90

B+ : 90 – 87 ; B : 87 – 83 ; B- : 83 – 80

C+ : 80 – 77 ; C : 77 – 73 ; C- : 73 – 70

D+ : 70 – 67 ; D : 67 – 63 ; D- : 63 – 60

F : < 60

Course Outline

Lecture	Content	Assignment Due
Introduction		
Week 1 - Introductory Case: Afghanistan		
Jan. 10	Course Introduction	
Jan. 12	Afghanistan - A Brief History	Read: Zaeef 2010 Ch.1 (canvas)
Jan. 14	Where Do We Start?	Read: Zaeef 2010 Ch.6 & 7 (canvas) Response Paper #1 Due
Development - What's Needed?		
Week 2 - Health		
Jan. 17	NO CLASS	
Jan. 19	Development and Health	Read: Banerjee & Duflo Ch.1, 2, & 3
Jan. 21	Discussing Health	Response Paper #2 Due
Week 3 - Safety		
Jan. 24	Safety and Stability	Read: Huntington 1968 (canvas); Barber 2009 (canvas)
Jan. 26	Discussing Safety	
Jan. 28	Wrapping up Safety	Response Paper #3 Due
Week 4 - Economic Opportunities		
Jan. 31	Climbing on Broken Ladders	Read: Banerjee & Duflo Ch.6; Portes & Schauffler 1993 (canvas) <i>Optional Reading: Banerjee & Duflo Ch.5, 7, & 8</i>
Feb. 2	Discussing Economic Opportunities	
Feb. 4	Wrapping up Economic Opportunities	Response Paper #4 Due
Week 5 - Political Effectiveness		
Feb. 7	Defining Political Effectiveness	
Feb. 9	Affecting Effectiveness	Read: Olson 1993 (canvas); Lake & Baum 2001 (canvas)
Feb. 11	Discussing Political Effectiveness	Response Paper #5 Due
Week 6 - Nation Building in Afghanistan		
Feb. 14	Reluctant Nation-Builders	Read: Keane 2016 Ch.4 & 9 (canvas)
Feb. 16	Discussing the Effort in Afghanistan	Response Paper #6 Due
Midterm Exam: Friday, February 18		

Course Outline

Lecture	Content	Assignment Due
Capitalism as the Solution?		
Week 7 - History as a Guide		
Feb. 21	Post-WWII Europe	Read: DeLong & Eichengreen 1991 (canvas)
Feb. 23	Development as Industrialization	Read: Gereffi 2014 (canvas)
Feb. 25	Discussing 20th Century Development	Response Paper #7 Due
Week 8 - Capitalism and Development Part 1: Open for Business		
Feb. 28	Greed is Good	Sachs & Warner 1995; Milanovic Ch.1
Mar. 2	Discussing Capitalism Part 1	Response Paper #8 Due
Mar. 4	Kuznets' Parade!	
Week 9 - Capitalism and Development Part 2: Opening the Floodgates		
Mar. 7	Everything on Sale	Milanovic Ch.2, 3 & 4
Mar. 9	Discussing Capitalism Part 2	
Mar. 11	Piketty's Rain	Response Paper #9 Due
Is Democracy Enough?		
Week 10 - Introducing Democracy		
Mar. 14	Prisoner's Dilemma	Response Paper #10 Due
Mar. 16	This Class has Prerequisites?	Read: Putnam 1993 Ch.5; Inglehart 1997 Ch.6 (canvas)
Mar. 18	Discussing Democratic Citizens	Read: Weingast 1997 (canvas)
Week 11 - Democracy: The Great Equalizer		
Mar. 28	Democracy and Inequality Part 1	Read: McGann 2016 (canvas)
Mar. 30	Breaking Down the Assumptions	
Apr. 1	NO CLASS	Read: Ross 2006 (canvas); Iversen & Soskice 2006 (canvas) Response Paper #11 Due
Week 12 - Chasing a Ghost?		
Apr. 4	Does Democracy Exist?	Read: Achen & Bartels Ch.1, 2, 3 & 6
Apr. 6	Democracy and Inequality	
Apr. 8	Democracy and Development	Response Paper #12 Due

Course Outline

Lecture	Content	Assignment Due
Week 13 - Group Politics		
Apr. 11	Who We Are, Not What We Want	Read: Achen & Bartels Ch.8 & 11
Apr. 13	Applications to Development	Read: Posner 2004 (canvas)
Apr. 15	Discussing Group Politics	Response Paper #13 Due
Week 14 - Divided Societies		
Apr. 18	Ethnic Divisions	Read: Michalopoulos & Papaioannou 2016 (canvas)
Apr. 20	The Urban-Rural Divide	Cattaneo et al. 2021 (canvas)
Apr. 22	Discussing Divided Societies	Response Paper #14 Due
Week 15 - So Now What?		
Apr. 25	Anyone?...Bueller?	Read: Lijphart 1999 Ch.15 (canvas)
Apr. 27	Parting Thoughts	Response Paper #15 Due
Final Exam: TBD		

University Policies

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member. Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the [Honor Code Office website](#).

Classroom Behavior

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Accommodation for Disabilities

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the [Disability Services website](#). Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see [Temporary Medical Conditions](#) on the Disability Services website.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](#) for full details.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, [anonymous reporting](#), and the campus resources can be found on the [OIEC website](#).

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

Requirements for COVID-19

If you are coming to the CU Boulder campus for any reason, please be aware of the following policies.

In Case of Illness

If you are unable to complete work while quarantining or sick, please alert your faculty member as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made for you to complete the course.

If you are able to complete work while quarantining or sick, stay in touch with faculty in case this situation changes. Because of FERPA student privacy laws, you may, but are not required to, state the nature of your illness when notifying faculty.

If Coming to Campus

As a matter of public health and safety due to the pandemic, all members of the CU Boulder community and all visitors to campus must follow university, department and building requirements, and public health orders in place to reduce the risk of spreading infectious disease. Required safety measures at CU Boulder relevant to the classroom setting include:

- maintain 6-foot distancing when possible,
- wear a face covering in public indoor spaces and outdoors while on campus consistent with state and county health orders,
- clean local work area,
- practice hand hygiene,
- follow public health orders,
- if sick and you live off campus, do not come onto campus (unless instructed by a CU Healthcare professional), or if you live on-campus, please alert [CU Boulder Medical Services](#).

Students who fail to adhere to these requirements will be asked to leave class, and students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to [Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). For more information, see the policies on [COVID-19 Health and Safety](#) and [classroom behavior](#) and the [Student Code of Conduct](#). If you require accommodation because a disability prevents you from fulfilling these safety measures, please see the “Accommodation for Disabilities” statement on this syllabus.

Before returning to campus, all students must complete the [COVID-19 Student Health and Expectations Course](#). Before coming on to campus each day, all students are required to complete a [Daily Health Form](#).

Students who have tested positive for COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had close contact with someone who has tested positive for or had symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home and complete the [Health Questionnaire and Illness Reporting Form](#) remotely.