



Global Studies (GLST) 695

Political Economy of Development - People, Processes, and Policies

(Revision 2)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision

Delivery mode:

[Individualized study online](#) or [Individualized study](#). Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits:

3

Area of study:

Arts

Prerequisites:

None

Precluded:

None

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#)

Notes:

Students in Group Study courses are advised that this syllabus may vary in key details in each instance of the course. Always refer to the Brightspace site for the most up-to-date details on texts, assignment structure, and grading.

Overview

In a constantly evolving global context how does the political economy approach broaden the focus of development programs and policies? The political economy approach is guided by the questions of who owns what, who gets what and how, what do they do with it, and what do they do to each other. Applying this approach to issues of development in the context of historical structures and institutional relationships is very useful since it helps to expand our understanding of "development" in this crisis-ridden era, while also providing the tools to change material conditions. This course thus uses the conceptual lens of political economy to provide a broad overview of the historical evolution of the dynamic and contested concept of development, its theoretical study, and its application in the domestic and international policy spheres.

Through a set of interrelated readings, commentaries, and interactive assignments, the course is designed to help the student achieve a more sophisticated understanding of the theories and practices of development; contrast the non-reductive multi-disciplinary focus of this course to the mainstream approach of development economics through a focused literature review; and develop original thoughts and ideas based upon available evidence and scholarship.

Outline

The course consists of the following six units:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Development Studies: Theory and Practice
- Unit 2: A Long View of Economic History: Putting “Development” (and the Lack of It) Into Perspective
- Unit 3: Development as a Domestic Policy Objective: The Role of the State
- Unit 4: International Development and Financial Flows: Development Aid and Remittances
- Unit 5: Development and Economic Globalization: The Enforcers and The Resisters
- Unit 6: Challenges of “Development” in the Twenty-First century: Inequality, Capitalism, and Climate Change

Learning outcomes

Upon finishing this course, students should have the ability to:

- Define the complex and evolving concepts of “development” and “international development.”
- Describe and explain the major theories of development in the postwar period.
- Discuss historical continuities and divergences in the theory and practice of development.
- Identify development issues and strategies in the contemporary era in various parts of the world.
- Examine the role of the state on issues of development in the contemporary era.
- Illustrate how development policies and processes are influenced by domestic and international trends.
- Synthesize how the concepts of development and international development are responding to shifting global economic geography, as well as to the massive transfer of resources from the state to private economic entities.

- Critically reassess development theory and practices in the era of economic globalization and global climate change.
- Analyze examples of alternative development thought and practices.
- Apply a non-reductive multidisciplinary focus on local and global development processes and perspectives.

Evaluation

Your final grade in this course will be based on the marks you achieve on two essay assignments.

Activity	Weight
Essay 1	40%
Essay 2	60%
Total	100%

To obtain credit for GLST 695, you must achieve a grade of at least 60% on both essay assignments. Students who do not receive a passing grade may request a rewrite within the contract period.

Materials

All course materials are entirely online and include course information, a study guide, a digital reading room (DRR), and links to articles and videos.

Important links

- › [Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies](#) 
- › [Focus Areas](#) 
- › [Courses](#) 

[> Fees and Funding](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 2, July 19, 2024

Updated March 10, 2025

View **previous revision** 
