



PS167D Spring 2017

Political Institutions and Economic Development

<https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/17S-POLSCI167D-1>

Tu/Th 2:00–3:15 Public Affairs 2400

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Office hours: Tuesday 5:45–7:45

Course Description: Why are some countries rich and others poor? What prevents the less developed nations of the world from following in the footsteps of their wealthier neighbors and catching up to the same level of development? There are strong theoretical reasons for thinking that poor countries should and perhaps will experience rapid economic growth such that their levels of development converge with those of the rich. What are the impediments to convergence? Do government policies, or perhaps government institutions and practices, contribute to keeping countries impoverished? This course examines some aspects of the wealth and poverty of nations, with particular attention to how government actions, policy, and political institutions affect economic development.

This course empowers students to actively examine these and related issues through hands-on analysis of real data from countries around the world. It will be conducted as a “flipped” course. Instead of lectures, the instructor will meet with students in the computer laboratory for active data analysis. Using data sets provided by the instructor, students will use statistical tools to analyze data to respond to some important questions about political institutions, economic growth, and development. Students will access the lecture modules on their own time. Lectures will be delivered in the form of voice-over slides that present the main ideas.

All data analysis for the course will be carried out using R. R Studio is a statistical package that is freely available that is built to use R. Prior familiarity with R Studio is helpful but not essential. Sections with the Teaching Assistant provide the opportunity for you to refresh your knowledge of statistics and to learn to work in R Studio.

Course Prerequisites: You will only be able to do the work assigned in this course if you have taken at least one course in statistics (e.g. PS6, Stat10, or the equivalent at any college or university). The course could have been offered at a community college, but please note that you will be expected to be familiar with linear regression.

It will also be helpful if you have taken an introductory course in comparative politics, although this is not essential.

Course Objectives: At the completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Converse knowledgeably about how politics affects economic development;
2. Understand the basic economic determinants of economic development;
3. Use statistical tools to analyze data about economic development;
4. Write code in R Studio performing basic statistical analyses of data;
5. Write a document in R Markdown that integrates code and analysis;
6. Generate graphics using ggplot2, the state-of-the-art software;
7. Have improved statistical numeracy;
8. Write an essay that appropriately integrates quantitative information into the analysis.

Course Format: You meet twice a week with the instructor in the computer laboratory. Students will actively participate in these sessions by working with data along with the instructor. Some of the work will be done in small groups. There will also be many short data analytic exercises to complete in class using R Studio on the computers in the lab. On-going, real-time, anonymous feed-back to the instructor will be requested frequently using computerized polls.

Lectures: The lecture material is available as .pdf modules that you may view on your own time. Each module is short in length (generally, five to seven minutes). The modules you are expected to view each week are posted on the course website, organized by week.

Section Meetings: Section meetings with the Teaching Assistant are to provide statistics refresher material, to work on skill-building in statistics and in R Studio, and to work on homework assignments. The sections are held in Social Science Computing classrooms that are equipped with computers.

Readings: The course uses a single textbook, David N. Weil's *Economic Growth* (3rd ed.), which is available for purchase in the university bookstore (or online). An inexpensive version of the book is available to rent from the bookstore or from amazon.com. It is important that you use the 3rd edition of the book, but you are free to obtain either the hard copy volume, the electronic version, or a student edition. You may purchase copies to share, but please make sure you will have the textbook available to do the reading on time. Multiple copies of the text are on two-hour reserve in the undergraduate library if you wish to read there.

Although the reading assignments from *Economic Growth* may appear short, you might find that they take longer than expected because some of the material is relatively technical. Please allow adequate time. Students should feel free to write down and bring to class any questions have regarding specific sections in the textbook. You are responsible for mastering the ideas in the assigned chapters, and will be quizzed on them at various intervals during the quarter.

Students should complete readings on schedule each week. The readings provide theoretical foundations for the material covered in the lectures that you will view on line. Lectures will not repeat the material but will instead place them in a larger context and will guide students to use them to think about “the big questions,” as well as to focus on manageable analytic problems. In addition, the readings will be used to structure the data analysis you do in class and in the homework assignments.

There is one film that we will view for the course, which will be *Living in Emergency: Stories of*

Doctors without Borders (93 minutes), a documentary about the medical and other consequences of civil conflict in sub-Saharan Africa. The film will be viewed in class on the dates indicated on the syllabus.

Written Requirements: During the quarter, students are required to hand in four homework assignments and also to sit an in-class midterm. The final is a take-home examination, which is due when indicated on the syllabus. All assignments for the course involve data analysis. The datasets that you will use will be made available on the course website. Homework assignments grow progressively more complex and demanding during the quarter. The final paper is similar in format to the homework assignments but requires greater thought, deeper analysis of data, and more writing. Doing the work well requires that you have completed and display knowledge of the assigned reading.

Students are encouraged to collaborate in the data analytic and computer work necessary for homework assignments and on the final paper. However, *all written work must be your own*.

Please submit your homework on time. Late assignments will be penalized with a drop of half a grade for every 24 hours or portion thereof. Homework is due as indicated on the syllabus below.

In addition to the homework, midterm, and final examination, there will be five or more very short pop quizzes administered in lecture, section, or while reading the weekly slides at various points during the quarter. Quizzes will be administered electronically, on the Moodle course site.

In-class Midterm: There will be a midterm examination relatively early in the quarter. It will ask you to demonstrate facility with R, R Studio, and R Markdown by asking very simple data analysis questions.

Statistical Software: You will use a statistical package called R. R Studio is a free package that will be available on the computers in the SSC lab and that you can also download onto your own laptops. You are required to use this software, as well as R Markdown, an accompanying package that permits integration of data analysis and write up of results.

Grade Distribution:

- Class and Section Participation 10%
- Each (of Four) Homework Assignments 10% (for a total of 40%)
- Mid-term Examination 15%
- Final examination 25%
- Pop Quizzes total 10% (each quiz will be weighted by the maximum number of points possible)

Letter Grade Distribution:

≥ 93.00	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 92.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	≤ 59.99	F

Course Policies:

- **General**

- Students should come to the Tuesday class meeting each week **already having viewed** the assigned modules.
- Students should come to the Tuesday class meeting each week **already having read** the assigned material.

- **Sections**

- If you wish to switch the section you attend, please speak to the TA **in advance**. Due to classroom size, section changes may not be possible.

- **Homework**

- Homework assignments will be handed out on Thursdays.
- Homework assignments will be submitted via Turnitin.
- Homework assignments submitted with a timestamp more than 10 minutes later than the time due will have the grade reduced by half a grade for every 24 hours or portion thereof. For instance, if your homework is handed in 15 minutes late and it earned a B+, you will receive a B.
- Late final examinations will not be accepted.
- Homework assignments will be blind graded. To permit this, do not put your name or any identifying information anywhere on your homework. Turnitin will identify you to the instructor after grading has been completed.
- All homework must be written in R Markdown, and should integrate code and analysis. Examples will be provided prior to the first homework assignment.
- Students are free to discuss how to use R Studio and Markdown with each other. However, you are expected to answer the homework questions independently. **Offering and accepting** answers from others is an act of **plagiarism**, which is a serious offense and **all involved parties will be reported to the Dean of Students**. Discussion of R Studio and of coding problems is encouraged, but you must write your answers to questions on your own.

- **Midterm**

- There will be an in-class midterm on the date indicated on the syllabus. No make up exams will be permitted except in cases of documented medical emergencies.

- **Quizzes**

- During the quarter, a number of very short pop quizzes (or alternate low-stakes learning evaluations) will be given during lecture, section, or while you read the lecture modules.
- Quizzes will ask you to show that you are mastering skills and that you have viewed the modules and done the assigned reading.
- No make up quizzes will be given. Quizzes that accompany lecture modules will be available during the week the module is assigned. They will close at 5:00pm on the Friday at the end of the week, after which time they will no longer be available.

- **Attendance and Absences**

- Attendance is expected. You are allowed **1** unexcused absence in class and **1** unexcused absence in section during the quarter without penalty. Any further absences will result in grade deductions.
- Students who are running a fever or are otherwise ill are asked **not to attend class** in order to control the spread of illness. It is especially important to be mindful of public health during flu season. We will work with you to help you keep up in the event of excused absence(-s) due to illness. If you have to miss a class or a section due to illness, please email the TA *before the start of the section or lecture*.
- Excused absences may require medical documentation.
- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for the absence. It is also the absentee's responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

Revised Executive Order Restricting Travel: If you are affected by the revised executive order restricting travel to the United States by individuals from six countries, or if your education is negatively affected in other ways by changes in government policy, please feel free to consult with the instructor to discuss appropriate accommodations. Some helpful information is available at <https://westandwithourstudents.org/>.

UCLA Student Guide to Academic Integrity: As a student and member of the University community, you are here to get an education and are, therefore, expected to demonstrate integrity in all of your academic endeavors. You are evaluated on your own merits, so be proud of your accomplishments, and protect academic integrity at UCLA.

Please carefully review the university guidelines regarding academic dishonesty at <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/Portals/16/Documents/StudentGuide.pdf>. Suspicion of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students for evaluation and appropriate action.

SYLLABUS

Dates	Content
Apr 4/6	<p>Week One: The Social Scientific Method Reading: Daryl Collins et al., <i>Portfolios of the Poor: How The World's Poor Live on \$2 a Day</i> (selections posted on course website). On-line lectures: Week 1 modules</p>
Apr 11/13	<p>Week Two: Rich and Poor Nations in the World Today Reading: Weil, chs. 1–2 On-line lectures: Week 2 modules Homework 1 assigned on Thursday</p>
Apr 18/20	<p>Week Three: Growth of the West Reading: Weil, chs. 3–4 On-line lectures: Week 3 modules Homework 1 due Thursday</p>
Apr 25/27	<p>Week Four: Africa — The Importance of Culture Reading: Weil, ch. 14 On-line lectures: Week 4 modules Midterm exam in class on Tuesday Movie shown in class (and section) Thursday</p>
May 2/4	<p>Week Five: Inequality Between and Within Nations Reading: Weil, ch. 13 On-line lectures: Week 5 modules Homework 2 assigned Thursday</p>
May 9/11	<p>Week Six: Technical Review of the Solow Growth Model and Regression Reading: re-read Weil, ch. 3 On-line lectures: Week 6 modules Homework 2 due on Thursday; Homework 3 assigned on Thursday</p>
May 16/18	<p>Week Seven: Growth in Asia — The Importance of Good Policies Reading: Weil, chs. 11–12 On-line lectures: Week 7 modules Homework 3 due on Thursday</p>
May 23/25	<p>Week Eight: The Environment and Natural Resources Reading: Weil, chs. 15–16 On-line lectures: Week 8 modules Homework 4 assigned on Thursday</p>
May 30/ Jun 1	<p>Week Nine: Corruption, Rent-Seeking, and Kleptocracy Reading: none On-line lectures: Week 9 modules Homework 4 due Thursday; take-home final examinations distributed</p>
Jun 6/8	<p>Week Ten: Democracy and Development Reading: Weil, ch. 17 On-line lectures: Week 10 modules</p>

**FINAL EXAMINATIONS DUE NO LATER THAN THURSDAY
 JUNE 15 AT 5:00PM VIA TURNITIN**