

INST 4853.001 Global Development: Main Issues and Challenges

Instructor: Dr. Dariga Abilova

Class meets on TuTh 1:00PM - 2:20PM in BLB 040

Office Hours: Wed 2:00PM – 4:00PM or by appointment

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Course Description, Structure, and Objectives

This course is a capstone project credit course, which will cover most pressing global economic issues and challenges and attempt to equip you with practical skills. We will start by learning about the roots of vast economic disparities in the world and then consider various development strategies undertaken by state actors to pursue economic growth. We will then conclude by analyzing various development strategies and attempt to understand what awaits the global economy in the future. After this course, you will learn how various development initiatives work and also design a development project proposal yourself.

Required Materials

1. Burgis, T. (2015). *The Looting Machine: Warlords, tycoons, smugglers and the systematic theft of Africa's wealth*. London: William Collins.
2. Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). *Why nations fail: The origins of power, prosperity, and poverty*. (also available as audiobook on Spotify)
3. Additional reading materials and media that will be posted on Canvas

Recommended book: Collier, P. (2008). *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. Oxford University Press, USA.

This course has digital components! To fully participate in this class, you will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. The University is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, I will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Please immediately report any technical problems that are preventing you from accessing the course and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number.

How to Succeed in this Course

You should be prepared for a much bigger reading load and more challenging assignments in this capstone course. If you complete all readings before class, participate in the class and submit all assignments on time, *you will succeed in this class*. The goal of this class is to empower you with new knowledge and experience to do things you can't yet do. That means every week we will have challenges you don't yet know how to clear. The schedule and policies in this syllabus are all designed with the purpose of giving you the tools you need to succeed and motivating you to use them to pass each challenge. Every assignment is designed for your focused

practice and palpable improvement. Every deadline is in place to support your pacing. Every grading policy is there to encourage and reward you for working up to your own high standards.

If you are struggling for any reason please send me an email, talk to me after class, text me on MS Teams or come by my office whether or not we have an appointment. I want to hear what you're experiencing with the course, and we will work together to fix it. Depending on your struggle, there might be immediate help from UNT's Office of Disability Accommodation (info and link below) and/or a medical note from a counselor or therapist that will authorize me to accommodate your needs. If your struggle doesn't match either of these, we will work to find another solution.

I am generally strict about enforcing everything in this syllabus because that strictness usually helps my students achieve their goals and they thank me later for the tough love. If for any reason you fall off the train and feel unable to catch up, talk to me right away and we'll get you back on board.

Academic Integrity:

We will have written assignments in the class. I am a big believer that each one of you is more than capable of coming up with your own thoughts and arguments. And if you happen to agree with someone else's – that is fine, too, but **you always need to give credits to the creators**. Stealing someone else's hard work or failing to give proper credits to respective authors will never help to pass the assignments and goes against the university's policy on academic integrity.

Academic integrity emanates from a culture that embraces the core values of trust and honesty necessary for full learning to occur. As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas promotes the integrity of the learning process by establishing and enforcing academic standards. Academic dishonesty breaches the mutual trust necessary in an academic environment and undermines all scholarship. The Student Standards of Academic Integrity are based on educational principles and procedures that protect the rights of all participants in the educational process and validate the legitimacy of degrees awarded by the University. ([UNT Policy 06.003 \[EXT LINK\]](#))

Acts academic dishonesty include **cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, forgery, sabotage of other's works, self-plagiarism, team plagiarism and patch-writing plagiarism** ([UNT Policy 06.003 \[EXT LINK\]](#)). Any attempt to engage in academic dishonesty will result in receiving zero for the assigned items and may get reported to the Dean of Students.

You can (and you should) use spellchecking tools like Grammarly to review your original writing. However, the use of AI tools to produce content for you **will result in an automatic zero for the assignment**. In other words, you must write all your assignments yourself and you should **ONLY** use AI for editing, proof-reading and checking for misspellings.

If you would like assistance with expressing your ideas in writing, or just want to refresh your knowledge about proper citation mechanisms (so that you can give proper credits to authors), consider visiting the UNT's Writing Studio. Also, check [these very helpful handouts on the Writing Center's website \[EXT LINK\]](#), which will assist you with organizing and citing your academic papers.

Recording in Class:

This course will encourage open and robust discussions on issues and ideas without fear that any statements made will be used for inappropriate or retaliatory purposes. To ensure the comfort and protection of everyone in our classroom, recording of any kind is prohibited in this space (this includes audio recordings, live-streaming, photographs of course materials, etc.) unless a student has an approved accommodation from the Office of Disability Access (ODA). In such cases, all students in the course will be notified whenever recording will be taking place.

ADA accommodation statement:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the [Office of Disability Access \[EXT LINK\]](#). You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

Word on Communication:

For this course, I will check my email at least once per day Monday-Friday during regular business hours 9 AM – 5 PM, so please remember that you will not necessarily receive an instant reply from me, but I will try to answer your email within next 48 hours. Make sure that you use your UNT email when contacting me. When emailing me, please identify yourself by giving me your entire name, the class you are in, and your specific question. Try to be very specific with your questions, **as the more specific you are, the better I will be able to answer your question!**

Respectful Learning Environment

I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. Please work with me to create a classroom culture of open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. All discussions should be respectful and civil. Although disagreements and debates are inevitable, personal attacks are unacceptable. Likewise, when others critique your points, don't take them personally but think about what about your and others' arguments could be presented in a more persuasive manner. Remember, you can disagree without becoming disagreeable and in addressing disagreements you will help your own and the class's learning. In return for your thoughtful engagement with the material and each other, I will work to provide a learning environment that allows you to take intellectual and emotional risks. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know. We are all learning together.

Every student in this class should have the right to learn and engage within an environment of respect and courtesy from others. We will discuss our classroom's habits of engagement and I also encourage you to review UNT's Student [Code of Conduct \[EXT LINK\]](#) so that we can all start with the same baseline civility understanding.

Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004):

UNT prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

Grading

A	B	C	D	F
90-99%	80-90%	70-80%	60-70%	0-60%

Grades are never rounded up. For example, if you have earned 89.99%, your grade is B+.

Late work is not accepted unless there is a valid documented reason for missing the original deadline. Also, if you have an important life event, or an emergency, or any other situation that is preventing you from submitting the work on time – please let me know as soon as possible. I reserve the right to reject last minute requests for deadline extensions without any proper documentation.

In the interest of academic fairness, all students are graded on same criteria for each assignment. Personal desires or needs to maintain a particular GPA for scholarships, athletics, or other reasons cannot be considered in grading the submitted material.

If you believe that the grade assigned should be reviewed again, I am more than happy to take another look. However, a granted grade review will require a full re-grade of the entire work and may discover that certain portions were graded too leniently.

Assignments

Attendance and participation – 15%

This course is an interactive seminar course, where you are expected to actively participate and contribute to class discussions. I know that speaking in the class sometimes causes anxiety, so I will do my best to maintain a focused environment by moderating the discussion and asking prompting questions. Each week, you have 1-3 required readings or book chapters on a specific topic. You should read them all and think about the author's main arguments before class and come prepared to discuss them. Strive to attend every class session to earn full credit for participation grade as each class attendance will amount to 0.5 percentage points out of possible 15. Classes canceled by the instructor will be credited towards attendance for all students. UNT will also notify through [Eagle Alert \[EXT LINK\]](#) of any emergencies or if there is a campus closing that will impact a class in accordance with the Emergency Notifications. Please try to arrive before class begins to find a seat, prepare your materials, and connect with your peers. The beginning of class is especially critical—just like the beginning of a movie or book. Being late to class is sometimes inevitable. **If you are late, know that you are welcome to join the class, but please do so without distracting others.**

Policy Evaluation Brief – 15%

You will write a short policy brief about an economic policy of your choice that was already implemented in any country of your choice (I encourage you to think locally and explore community policies implemented in Denton/DFW, but it is ultimately up to your interests). Your policy brief should include a short summary of the economic issue that prompted the urgency and the implementation of that policy, as well as your evaluation of the policy's effectiveness (i.e. pros and cons). You must also include the discussion of the potential future complications, political and/or social, of the implemented policy along with your recommendations for improvement of the issue. We will be having an in-class session on policy briefs so you will be guided through their typical organization and structure. Your policy brief should be written in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced and not exceed 10 pages total (usually policy briefs are 4-7 pages), including all references.

Written Project Proposal – 40%

You will write an original development project proposal to meet the course objectives. For this, you would need to pick a development problem and think about its possible solutions that could be proposed to investors, policymakers, state agencies, companies and non-profit organizations. Think of this assignment as your attempt to offer solution to one of the world's many pressing socio-economic issues. Your proposal must be addressed

to an actual development-focused body and have clear descriptions of the issue and proposed solution. The solution must include deadlines and proposed budget. Even though your budget and deadline are hypothetical, they should still be as realistic as possible. The entire proposal should be written in Times New Roman 12 pt., double-spaced and not exceed 15 pages total, including all references. Your written proposal should include:

1. The summary/abstract of your project
2. The statement of the problem, specifically, whose lives are most affected by it and all related evidence proving the existence of the problem (such as reports, testimonies, newspapers, press releases, media coverage).
3. The description of the proposed project, specifically its objectives and methods of execution, as well as the funding sources for the project
4. A section on the evaluation of the project's outcomes, which could be qualitative or quantitative, such as the interviews with the beneficiaries or economic estimates
5. The detailed budget for the project's execution
6. Any used external sources/references

In-Class Presentation of Your Project Proposal – 30%

During Weeks 15-16, you will be presenting your proposal in the class. This is an important exercise in summarizing your project to a broader audience. You can use any visual aids (PPT slide or flyer) for your presentation if you want, but it is not necessary. Your presentation should not be longer than 15 minutes and should contain the following information:

<u>The Content of the Proposal: (60%)</u>	goal of your proposal project (15%) the deadline (15%) the preliminary budget (15%) the intended audience (15%)
<u>The Target Sponsor/Actor/Agency: (20%)</u>	the relevance of the agency/sponsor/donors for the project (10%) and their capacity to finance/complete the project (10%)
<u>Evaluation of the Proposal's Effectiveness: (20%)</u>	expected outcomes after the project's implementation (10%) proposed methods to measure expected outcomes (10%)

Course Requirements/Schedule

** PLEASE NOTE: I reserve a right to make amendments to this schedule and should they become necessary – you will be notified well ahead of any deadlines.*

Week 1 (01/12 – 01/18)	Intro to the class: Poverty Traps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended Reading: Part 2 (Chapters 2-5) in Collier, P. (2008). <i>The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it.</i> <p>No class on Thursday January 18th - Professor is out of town for SPSA Conference</p>
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Week 2 (01/19 – 01/25)	Landscapes of Global Poverty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapters 1 – 3. <p>Last Day to Drop a Class Without a W is January 23, 2026</p>
Week 3 (01/26 – 02/01)	Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapters 4, 6 and 9.
Week 4 (02/02 – 02/08)	Institutions and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapters 7 and 8.
Week 5 (02/09 – 02/15)	Institutions and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapters 11 and 12.
Week 6 (02/16 – 02/22)	Developmental State: China and Singapore <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapter 5. Doner, R. F., Ritchie, B. K., & Slater, D. (2005). Systemic Vulnerability and the Origins of Developmental States: Northeast and Southeast Asia in Comparative Perspective. <i>International Organization</i>, 59(2), 327–361. Völgyi, K. (2019). A Successful Model of State Capitalism: Singapore. In M. Szanyi (Ed.), <i>Seeking the Best Master: State Ownership in the Varieties of Capitalism</i> (pp. 275–296). Central European University Press. Chan, K. (2023). The organizational roots of state capacity: Comparing railway bureaucracies in China and India. <i>Asian Survey</i>, 63(1), 31–61.
Week 7 (02/23 – 03/01)	Developmental State: Ethiopia and Rwanda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clapham, C. (2018). The Ethiopian developmental state. <i>Third World Quarterly</i>, 39(6), 1151–1165. Gaudreault, F., & Bodolica, V. (2024). Toward a developmental state in africa: On rwanda's developmentally-oriented leadership and capable public administration. <i>International Journal of Public Administration</i>, 47(5), 359-372.
Week 8 (03/02 – 03/08)	Policy Evaluation Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class workshop on writing policy briefs <p>POLICY BRIEF DUE: by Sunday March 8th 11:59 PM submitted on Canvas</p>
Week 9	Spring Break: 03/09 – 03/15
Week 10 (03/16 – 03/22)	Neoliberalism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chorev, N., & Babb, S. (2009). The Crisis of Neoliberalism and the Future of International Institutions: A Comparison of the IMF and the WTO. <i>Theory and Society</i>, 38(5), 459–484.
Week 11 (03/23 – 03/29)	Neocolonialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book: Burgis, T. (2015). Chapters 1 – 5.
Week 12 (03/30 – 04/05)	Neocolonialism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book: Burgis, T. (2015). Chapters 5 – 10.

Week 13 (04/06 – 04/12)	Sustainable Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapter 14. Dinis, M. A. P., Ruiz-de-Maya, S., Doni, F., Eustachio, J. H., Swart, J., & Paço, A. (2022). The economics of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: does sustainability make financial sense?. <i>Discover Sustainability</i>, 3(1), 1-8. Han, H. (2016). Singapore, a Garden City: Authoritarian Environmentalism in a Developmental State. <i>The Journal of Environment & Development</i>, 26(1), 3-24. <p>Last day to drop a class with W is April 10, 2026</p>
Week 14 (04/13 – 04/19)	A Glimpse into the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Chapter 15 <p>WRITTEN PROPOSAL DUE: by Sunday April 19th 11:59 PM submitted on Canvas</p>
Week 15 (04/20 – 04/26)	In-Class Presentations of Proposals
Week 16 (04/27 – 05/03)	In-Class Presentations of Proposals

Additional UNT Policies

Retention of Student Records:

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See [UNT Records Management and Retention Policy \[EXT LINK\]](#) for additional information.

Access to Information - Eagle Connect:

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit [Eagle Connect website \[EXT LINK\]](#).

Student Evaluation Administration Dates:

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13-15 of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey, they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website \[EXT LINK\]](#) or email spot@unt.edu.

Survivor Advocacy:

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

Use of Student Work:

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically Delivered Courses:

No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery. No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image.

Student Support Services:

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Counseling and Testing Services \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [UNT Care Team \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Individual Counseling \[EXT LINK\]](#)

Additional Student Support Services:

- [Registrar \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Financial Aid \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Student Legal Services \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Career Center \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [UNT Food Pantry \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Academic Resource Center \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Academic Success Center \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [UNT Libraries \[EXT LINK\]](#)
- [Writing Lab \[EXT LINK\]](#)