Political Science 444  
The Political Economy of Development  
Course Syllabus  

TTH 1:35-2:50 p.m., 2002 JKB  
Fall Semester 2011  

PROFESSOR: DANIEL L. NIELSON  
790 SWKT, 801-422-3417  
Office Hours: M 2-3 p.m., T 4:15-5:15 p.m., by appointment, and whenever I’m in my office.

Course Rationale  
What is development? Should it be achieved? How is it accomplished? These three questions will orient and guide the course as we explore together the descriptive, normative and positive dimensions of development.

More than most courses you have taken, you as students will be guiding and directing the focus of the course. As such, I will treat the course more like a graduate seminar than is typical for an undergraduate course. Success in this course will take the effort of all.

Course Objectives  
Students who complete this course successfully should:

• Learn how to answer pressing but unanswered questions in international development.
• Understand the most important concepts within the subfield of development as discussed by leading authorities;
• Become up-to-date on the theoretical advances in the subfield;
• Learn a good deal about all substantive areas of development (economic adjustment, social welfare, political reform);
• Become an “expert” in a single major aspect of development;
• Connect development theory routinely to real-world examples;
• Develop ability to work collaboratively with peers;
• Become able to organize and help develop a major research project in a professional format;
• Improve ability to write clear and engaging prose.

Approach  
The initial portion of the course is aimed at framing the debates that will orient this class. What is development? Should it be pursued? We will spend time constructing a definitional and normative framework for our discussions.

The second portion of the course seeks to deepen class members’ theoretical understanding of development. We will cover all of the main theories of development as they fit into broad political economy paradigms, including Marxism, liberalism, mercantilism, constructivism and rational choice.
theory. The emphasis on theory seeks to encourage systematic thinking — promoting the study of patterns in international and domestic interactions affecting development, and giving structure to thoughts about the complex world of development.

The remaining portion of the course turns to practical topics in development. These issues include economic adjustment, health, education, social safety nets, sustainable development, and political reform. We may also pursue topics suggested by you as students during the course. In addition to providing practical background for these topics, readings and lectures will examine competing explanations — corresponding to the approaches discussed in the theoretical portion of the course — for important events and trends in development.

**Learning Styles**

I appreciate that not all people learn in the same way. Some people enjoy sitting through 75-minute uninterrupted lectures and can comprehend all that is said. Others find the same experience to be slow torture of the medieval variety. Some students learn primarily through reading, others through seeing demonstrations, and still others only when they teach the concept to someone else or comment on it in a discussion. Many students appreciate video clips and graphic displays as ways of breaking up traditional learning periods.

While I cannot accommodate all learning styles all of the time, and some styles — particularly discussions — will be emphasized more than others, I will make an attempt to vary my teaching method to encompass different approaches. I request your tolerance when I use an approach that is not your preferred method, asking that you realize that I am trying to reach the optimal number of students through these varied techniques.

**Prerequisite: PLSC 200**

All students in PLSC 444 should have already passed PL SC 200: Political Inquiry. Concurrent enrollment is not allowed. On most days we will be reading professional development articles that use advanced statistical analysis, which you will need to be able to interpret. Without at least the minimal background provided by PLSC 200 in statistics, the course readings would be unintelligible and very frustrating for you. Thus, if you have not yet taken PLSC 200, I will drop you from the course.

**Assignments and Grading:**

Evaluations will consider the following elements (with weights included):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive final essay exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group research project &amp; presentation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings emails</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm essay exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comparative theoretical essay</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer evaluations of essays and projects</td>
<td>6%</td>
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**Exams**

Exams will be strictly long essay questions in a take-home format. The midterm will be available as noted in the syllabus, to be completed over the course of a few days. **The final will be given during finals week.** Essay questions will ask you to apply primary and secondary concepts from the readings and lectures to the cases covered in class. Potential essay questions, from which all of the actual essay
questions on the examination will be drawn, will be handed out prior to the exams. Questions on the final will be drawn from the entire semester, but will be weighted toward the latter half of the course material.

**Testing Period**

Exams must be taken on the dates indicated. Failure to take an exam will result in a score of “0” being calculated in the final grade. By department policy, no final exams may be administered earlier than the specified date. The only exceptions to this policy are serious personal illness or a death of an immediate family member. In these events, past abuse and dishonesty by other students unfortunately have made it necessary to require that you provide external verification (doctor’s note or obituary). You must make me aware of such extenuating circumstances prior to the time of the exam. Airline reservations — even if the fares are very cheap — do not constitute a valid exception.

**Group Work**

Almost all current research in pedagogy indicates that students’ work in small groups enhances both their mastery of the concepts taught and their enjoyment of the course. Plus, group endeavors better simulate the work environments most of you will face in your careers. Thus, the class will be divided into groups of three (or two in some cases), and much of the grade in the course (30%) will be determined by your work as groups. You will be assigned into groups and can then choose which area of the international development to master in order to write your group research project and brief your classmates. As long as you receive my approval, you may select any topic relevant to international development. Or you may choose your topic areas from the following list:

- Trade liberalization
- Stabilization
- Financial reform
- Central bank independence
- Privatization
- Education
- Health
- Sustainable Develop./Environment
- Natural Resource Curse
- Social Safety Nets
- Multilateral Finance
- Microcredit
- Conflict and Development
- Civil Service Reform
- Rule of Law
- Civil Rights Reform
- Electoral and Constitutional Reform
- Distribution of Wealth

If you select a topic outside this list, it will need to have the proper breadth of scope and salience.

**Free Riding**

The dilemma with groups is a classic one in politics: the problem of free riding. Thus, for each group project you will be given a group grade, and your individual share of the group grade will be determined by your fellow group members’ evaluation of your contribution to the group endeavor. Thus, a group that receives a group grade of “B” on an assignment may still have an individual (or two) that receives an “A.” I strongly encourage you to be completely fair in your evaluation of your peers. Do not reward sloth! And do not punish hard work because of jealousy or personality conflicts. I will be asking for your individual evaluation of the other members of your group when appropriate.

**Penalties for Failure in Groups**

If through these evaluations it is determined that individuals are not pulling their weight in their group, those individuals may be dropped from the group and will be required to complete all of the course material on their own, including quizzes, project and presentation. Also, if it is clear that a group has grown dysfunctional, the group may be disbanded and all individuals will be required to complete the assignments on their own.
**Essay**

The conceptual essay should be 7-10 pages in length. It should identify a research puzzle or problem and explore the relevant literature that has addressed the topic area in the past. As you discuss the relevant literature, you should identify holes or gaps in the existing research that you might eventually fill with your final paper.

The audience for the essay is the instructor and your study group. The essay assignment is intended to be broadly conceptual, without empirical content. That is, you may not include extended examples of more than a few sentences, and you may not use any other type of quantitative or qualitative evidence to support your argument. You will need to make your case on logic alone. I strongly recommend that you read additional theoretical material beyond the course readings (which, in addition to your own research, I can suggest in office hours or by appointment) to enrich your essay. The Social Science Citation Index and Google Scholar are excellent ways to identify seminal works in a given literature and to trace the current threads of research that was inspired by those seminal ideas. Innovation and fresh ideas in your theoretical analysis will be rewarded.

The point of this essay is to lay the foundation for and then build a compelling causal argument. As you learned in PLSC 200, you will need to identify a relevant research question in development, such as “how might shocks in foreign aid flows cause civil conflict?” or “do public goods policies for economic stability and social welfare cause electoral reform?” (to select two topics from some of my recent work). The question should explicitly reference a searchable dependent variable and the independent variable that causes it to change. The cause and the effect must both be variables – that is, they must be able to take on different values at different times or across different places or units. The independent and dependent variable must be connected by causal logic: detailed reasoning that explains why the cause leads to the effect under study. You must include detailed causal mechanisms. You will also need to define both the independent and dependent variables conceptually in a way that can later be operationalized and measured reliably.

Essays that cover the same ground as most of the other essays in the class must distinguish themselves through unique insight to be considered excellent. As a first-cut evaluation of your work, the conceptual essay will give me a chance to suggest areas of strength and weakness to which you can respond in your final group project. Thus, you should have your final group project topic in mind as you craft this essay because the final paper will be based upon this first piece of writing. The final portion of the essay should be dedicated to developing hypotheses that you can test in the group project. The hypotheses must be clearly articulated and testable.

The essay will be graded on an individual basis, but you should have the group project in mind as you compose it. You will likely be combining and synthesizing parts of each group member’s conceptual essays, though you will of course need to revise and synthesize appropriately. Recycling is encouraged, but mere repackaging is not. More coordination up front should make the final project easier to build toward.

To summarize, there are eight criteria for the essay:

- It should not be empirical (no extended examples of more than a sentence or two), but broadly conceptual;
- It should review the literature on a topic of the author’s interest that is also relevant to development studies;
- It should identify holes or gaps in the literature;
- It should suggest a research question related to this unexplained or under-explored phenomenon in development;
- It should propose a causal argument that might fill the identified gap;
• It should conceptually define the dependent and independent variables relevant to the research question;
• It should detail the causal logic – including the development of compelling mechanisms – that link the independent to the dependent variable.
• It should conclude with testable hypotheses derived from the causal argument.

**Late Assignments**

Assignments should be submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Projects submitted 5 minutes after class has begun will be penalized 5 percent. Projects submitted later that day after class has ended will be penalized 10 percent. Projects submitted after the due date will be penalized an additional 3 percent for each added day they are late.

**Group Research Paper**

**Objective**

With this assignment I intend that you learn to complete an in-depth, professional-style research paper on a specialized topic dealing with the politics of development. Completed successfully, the report should resemble professional political economy research on development, such as that found in the *American Political Science Review*, the *American Journal of Political Science*, *International Organization*, *World Development*, or the *World Bank Research Observer*.

**Audience**

The target audience is made up of political economists without a background in development. The paper may invoke political science language but should refrain from specialized development jargon that is unexplained.

**Length and Style**

Length should be 30-50 pages. The project should be a research paper that develops and tests core hypotheses in the field of development. It should include extensive citations, formatted consistently, in line with *Turabian* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*. The report should be attractive and easy to read.

**Prospectus/Proposal**

Roughly one month before the project is due, each group will need to complete a one-page justification for the project. The proposal must include a (1) research question (asking about relationships among variables), (2) hypotheses, (3) conceptual and operational definitions, (3) empirical research strategy, articulating a plan for collecting data in an unbiased fashion, and indicating possible sources for the research material, and (5) possible limitations of the project. The prospectus grade will be included in the final analysis of the project.

**Faculty Consultations**

Representatives from each group must meet with me at least one week before the prospectus is due. You are responsible for scheduling this appointment. In this consultation we can discuss research and writing strategies and anticipate potential problems.

**Grading Criteria**

Grading of the report will be based on the following criteria: (1) clarity, plausibility, and novelty of theory/hypotheses; (2) analytical rigor; (3) depth of research effort; (4) quality of writing — engaging, interesting, stylistically sound; (5) soundness of methodology; and (6) quality of data analysis. An earlier
draft of the project is due for peer review roughly three weeks before the final project is due. It will also be considered as part of the final grade. Grading weights for the project are as follows: prospectus = 10%, earlier draft = 25%, presentation = 15%, final draft = 50%.

**Group Presentation**

Near the end of the semester, each group will present their project to the class at large. The class will serve as critics and questioners of the approach and the recommendations of the groups. The presentations should be professional, engaging and lively — and will be so graded. Evaluations will also be based on group preparation, flow of presentation, understanding of the issue, and application of IPE theory to the issue area. Handouts, overheads, slides and other presentation enhancements are encouraged. These presentations should not exceed 8 min. in duration, including questions. Ability to hit the time mark will be included in my evaluation of the presentations.

**Plagiarism**

A note on plagiarism. Plagiarism is intellectual theft. It will not be tolerated in this class. Full citations must be included for every source you utilize, including those you paraphrase even loosely. Quotation marks must be used for directly quoted strings of three or more words. Citations must be included if you paraphrase another author, even loosely. Please consult style manuals (Turabian, Chicago, APSR, etc.) for answers to specific citation questions.

**Peer Review**

You will write three one-page peer reviews during the semester. Two will be of conceptual essays within your group, a third will be of another group’s report. Peer reviews should:
1. Restate the main point of the paper succinctly to make sure that it is understood.
2. Analyze and critique the paper’s argument. (Points of analysis could include the paper’s scope, quality of research question, clarity of ideas and expression, depth of inquiry, appropriateness to target audience, etc.)
3. Praise the paper’s strengths.
4. Check the sources carefully.
5. Correct style errors.
6. Make recommendations for improvement. Authors should be able to use these reviews to make significant progress in their work.

**Readings Emails**

I borrowed this idea from Prof. Wade Jacoby. For each reading in the course, each of you is required to submit a short email of two paragraphs (500 words or less). I must receive the email before midnight of the day before we meet in class to discuss the relevant reading. The first paragraph must restate the main argument of the reading – identifying both independent and dependent variables – and summarize the author’s data – analyzing how well it supports the author’s argument. It must also briefly suggest the strengths and the potential weaknesses of the article.

One summary/evaluation paragraph is due for every reading we cover in class, and one paragraph connecting the assigned reading(s) to an outside reading you have selected (see below) is also due for each class period. So, if there are two assigned readings for the day, you will need to submit three paragraphs. If there are three assigned readings, four paragraphs, etc. Please send your email response for a given day in a single email – even if there are multiple readings.

The final paragraph of the email needs to connect the assigned reading(s) to a new article or paper published or written since 2001 – and not included on the course syllabus – that you have discovered using appropriate research methods. I recommend the Social Science Citation Index or Google Scholar, with special attention to articles receiving citations by other scholars and published in leading journals.
For a list of leading journals ranked by reputation and citations, see Garand and Giles, 2007, “Ranking Political Science Journals,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 40; No. 4, pages 741-752.

In this second paragraph you can reflect on how the new article or paper answers an unanswered question in the assigned reading, corrects a conceptual or empirical error, solves a puzzle created by the assigned reading, suggests an alternative or critique, or otherwise improves on what is known about the topic. You can reflect on anything interesting about the new article, provided you connect it to the assigned reading. This should give you a chance to briefly extend your critique of the assigned reading.

At the top of the email, please include a full citation of the article or paper using appropriate *Turabian* style. Part of the grade for your emails will reflect the quality, novelty, and relevance of the article you choose and the insights you have in connecting it to the assigned reading. You do not need to select a new article for every assigned reading, although you should feel welcome to do so. One new article per class session/email will suffice. But you do need to connect each assigned reading to the one new article you chose.

Finding new articles frequently will help you learn how to answer unanswered questions and get up-to-date on the latest research. Hence, this assignment will help you become better researchers. Hint: you may find it helpful to find articles, if any are available, that cite the assigned readings. When you discuss the readings, make sure to identify the author’s core argument (independent and dependent variables and causal logic) and to identify strengths and potential weaknesses in the approach.

**Important Note:** I often receive more than 100 emails in a given day, and I will need you to help me sort yours out of the mix. In the email’s subject line, please type “PLSC 444:” followed by the last name(s) of the author(s) so that I can better keep track of your emails. If you do not do this, I may inadvertently fail to give you credit for your email. Do not put anything else in the subject line. That way, if you need to email me regarding something else, I won’t mistake it for an assignment email.

I will provide feedback on how you are doing on the emails at a few points in the semester, but a far better way to have them evaluated is to print them, bring them to class, and use them as the basis for our discussions. We will schedule sessions early in the semester for you to come to my office to receive feedback on the emails. In addition to enriching our discussions, they are a great way for me to prepare for class – they help me see which points came across well and which did not and need emphasis. Finally, they are also a chance to explore ideas without the pressure of expanding them into full papers, though it is likely that great papers may well get their start as smart emails.

You should submit emails for each reading assignment every day that we have a reading assignment, though each student can skip three emails without penalty. You should feel free to discuss the readings together before composing the emails. Collaboration and discussion is encouraged. However, you will be graded on your *independence* of thought in your analysis, so copying each other’s work will be penalized severely. Chiefly, I am looking for signs of intelligent life.

**Readings**

There are five textbooks for this course:


The readings for this course are listed in the readings schedule below. I will make non-textbook readings available on Blackboard, under the fair use provision of U.S. copyright law.

In addition to the required readings, you are also required to accompany international development reporting in *The New York Times*. *The Wall Street Journal, The Financial Times,* and *The Economist* are also excellent sources for current international development reporting, though they are not required. Many of our class discussions will draw on current international events. You will be at an extreme disadvantage if you are not following these news events. Periodicals such as these will also prove to be excellent source materials for your group report. Subscriptions to the *New York Times* are available to BYU students at a substantial discount. If interested, consult the NYT booth on campus, usually in the bookstore.

**Plagiarism**

A note on plagiarism. Plagiarism is intellectual theft. It will not be tolerated in this class. Full citations must be included for every source you utilize, including those you paraphrase even loosely. Quotation marks must be used for *directly quoted strings of three or more words*. Citations must be included if you paraphrase another author—i.e. if you use another’s ideas, even if not the exact words, you must cite the source. Please consult style manuals (Turabian or Chicago) for answers to specific citation questions. Also, see [http://honorcode.byu.edu](http://honorcode.byu.edu) for specific examples of intentional, inadvertent plagiarism, and fabrication, falsification. Work for other courses will not be accepted for assignments in this course.

**Sexual Harassment**

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor; contact the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895 or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours), or [http://www.ethicspoint.com](http://www.ethicspoint.com); or contact the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847.

**People with Disabilities**

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere which reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities Office (378-2767). Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified documented disabilities. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the SSD office. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures. You should contact the Equal Employment Office at 378-5895, D-282 ASB.
**Proviso**

The guidelines above and the course schedule below are very likely to be followed, but I reserve the right to modify them as I see fit during the course of the term.

**Readings Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Topic/Assignment</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>8/30/11</td>
<td>Course Introduction</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs.</td>
<td>9/1/11</td>
<td>The Key Issues</td>
<td>Sachs, Ch. 1, &quot;A Global Family Portrait,&quot; 5-25.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Text: Easterly, Ch. 1, &quot;Planners vs. Searchers,&quot; 1-36.</td>
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<td>Collier 2007, Ch. 1, &quot;Falling Behind…&quot;</td>
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<td>Kenny, Ch. 1, “Abandoning Hope”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Text: Sachs, Chs. 3-4, &quot;Why Some Countries Fail to Thrive&quot; and &quot;Clinical Economics,&quot; 51-89.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues.</td>
<td>9/13/11</td>
<td>Modernization vs. Dependency</td>
<td>Text: Kenny, Ch. 3, “The Worse News.”</td>
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<td>Text: Easterly, Ch. 8, &quot;From Colonialism to Postmodern Imperialism,&quot; 269-310.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Text/Blackboard</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/28/11</td>
<td>Weds.</td>
<td>Conceptual Essay Due</td>
<td>At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copies to PL SC Dept. Secretaries and peer reviewers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/5/11</td>
<td>Weds.</td>
<td>Essay Peer Reviews Due</td>
<td>At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copy to PL SC Dept. Secretaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Text/References</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weds. 10/19</td>
<td>Takehome Midterm Exam Due</td>
<td>At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copy to PL SC Dept. Secretaries.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs. 10/20</td>
<td>Education &amp; Health I</td>
<td>Text: Kenny, Chs. 4-5, The Good News: The End of the Malthusian Trap&quot; and &quot;The Better News: The Great Convergence in the Quality of Life&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Weds. 10/26</td>
<td>Group Research Prospectus Due</td>
<td>At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copy to PL SC Dept. Secretaries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. 10/27</td>
<td>Natural Resources</td>
<td>Collier 2007, Ch. 3, &quot;The Natural Resource Trap&quot;</td>
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<td>Tues. 11/1</td>
<td>Civil &amp; Regional Conflict</td>
<td>Collier 2007, Ch. 2, &quot;The Conflict Trap,&quot; &amp; Ch. 4, &quot;Landlocked with Bad Neighbors&quot;</td>
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<td>Thurs. 11/3</td>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Text: Sen, Ch. 6, &quot;The Importance of Democracy,&quot; 146-159.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thurs. 11/10</td>
<td>Women's Rights</td>
<td>Sen, Ch. 8, &quot;Women's Agency and Social Change,&quot; 189-203.</td>
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| Tues. 11/15/11 | Corruption | Collier 2007, Ch. 5, "Bad Governance…"
| Weds. 11/16/11 | Draft of Research Paper Due | At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copy to PL SC Dept. Secretaries.
| Fri. 11/18/11  | Peer Reviews of Research Paper Due | 
| Tues. 11/22/11 | No Class Held | Friday Instruction Day
| Thurs. 11/24/11 | No Class Held | Thanksgiving
| Thurs. 12/1/11 | Project Presentations | 
| Tues. 12/6/11 | Project Presentations | 
| Weds. 12/7/11 | Final Draft of Research Paper Due | At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copy to PL SC Dept. Secretaries.
| Thurs. 12/8/11 | Course Summary & Conclusion | Take-Home Final Exam Issued
| Weds. 12/14/11 | Final Exam Due | At 4:30 p.m. by email to me and hard copy to PL SC Dept. Secretaries. |