



HARVARD Kennedy School

DPI-411 A&B: POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY FOR DEVELOPMENT

Fall 2023

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Visiting Professor

Harvard Kennedy School

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DPI-411A: M/W 12:00-1:15 L230

DPI-411B: M/W 1:30-2:45 L230

Discussion section: F 3:00-4:15 (R306)

Office hours: M 3:30-5pm and by appointment (L116)

Teaching Fellow (TF)/Course Assistants (CA): TBD

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the normative questions that are of great importance to political and economic development. The questions and problems we examine include well-being, social justice, equality, democracy, and gender. The course also looks at questions of global justice, sustainable development, climate justice, migration and borders, and degrowth. The course attempts to include non-Western and indigenous perspectives on questions such as well-being and the good life, the universality of democracy, and feminism.

The course is required of, and open only to, candidates for the MPA in International Development degree at the Harvard Kennedy School.

COURSE LEARNING GOALS

The goals of this course are for you to become familiar with the most important normative problems and debates bearing on the practice of economic development. The skills you will be developing in this class are close reading, the rigorous analysis of arguments, the formulation of your own defensible arguments and positions, careful and persuasive writing, and peer review.

COURSE WEBSITE (CANVAS)

All course readings and assignments will be available on the course Canvas website, <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/125673> for Section A (12:00) and <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/125674> for Section B (1:30). All written submissions are to be posted there.

COURSE FORMAT

The course is taught in two sections of approximately 45 students each and meets twice a week. For most of the semester, the rhythm of the course is that we will begin a topic on Monday and conclude on that week or (especially in cases of one-class weeks because of holidays) the following Wednesday. The main class sections will mostly be conducted through open discussion and questioning, structured around discussion questions that I will send you in advance of the class. You will have weekly short writing assignments that you will discuss and

get feedback on within your small, three-person groups, which I will be forming the first week of class. Beginning with the second week of the course, teams are to meet to discuss that week's topic. You are responsible for arranging team meeting times. Friday discussion sections will be led by your course assistants.

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

Grading:

- Class participation: 1/3
- Weekly short writing assignments: 1/3
- Final exam: 1/3

Class Participation

Attendance in all classes is mandatory. You are expected to be prepared to discuss the day's readings and examples and to make thoughtful contributions to the learning of your classmates. Lateness and absence will be noted. Any absences require advanced notice with a good reason.

NOTE: I prefer class discussions to be technology-free to the extent possible. Almost all of your readings will be posted on Canvas, and many prefer to take notes on their laptop, but any use of technology for other purposes is strongly discouraged. There is absolutely no use of cell phones during class time, and if I see a phone I will ask you to kindly put it away.

Class discussions are meant to be rigorous and challenging, but also to encourage and build up students' confidence and sense of belonging. This class seeks to foster and encourage diversity of perspectives and the equality of everyone's voice and participation.

Written Assignments

Beginning the second week of the course, your team of three classmates is to meet at least once a week to discuss the upcoming readings and written assignments. Individually written answers should be approximately 500 words in total length and submitted to the Canvas page by the deadline I give you each week.

The written assignments count for one third of your course grade. Late or missing submissions will be penalized. You may skip two written assignments without penalty.

Final Take-home Examination

The final take-home and open-book examination for this course will be available online by 9:00 pm, Friday, December 1, and is due online by **9:00 pm, Friday, December 8**. The exam will comprise several essay questions whose answers should be 2,000 to 2,500 words in total length. The final exam counts for one third of your course grade. Late submissions will be heavily penalized.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are here to develop your own skills and abilities, and to be evaluated on the basis of your own work. You are required to familiarize yourself with HKS's Academic Code here:

<https://www.hks.harvard.edu/educational-programs/academic-calendars-policies/student-handbook/general-regulations-and-1>

Students must observe Kennedy School and Harvard University rules regarding the citation of sources. Any sentences or paragraphs taken verbatim from the writing of (or interviews with) any other person or persons, or from your own writing that has been published elsewhere, must be placed in quotation marks and their source must be clearly identified. Changing the wording of a sentence or passage slightly does not evade the requirement for citation. Indeed, whenever you are drawing an important argument or insight from someone else, even if you reword it into your own words, a reference to the source is required.

Including material from others in the assignments without appropriate quotation marks and citations is regarded, as a matter of School and University policy, as a serious violation of academic and professional standards and can lead to a failing grade in the course, failure to graduate, and even expulsion from the University.

HKS Policy on Student Use of Generative AI for Coursework

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) will likely influence the way you work in your future careers. We encourage you to spend some of your time at HKS learning to use this powerful new tool to work more productively and learn more effectively.

For your academic work at HKS, generative AI can help you learn but it can also hinder your development. You could use this technology to complete class assignments while doing little work yourself, but doing so would rob you of the learning experiences you came to HKS for. Working through the course assignments will help you develop your thinking and skills, a key goal of an HKS education. At its best, generative AI can be like an instructor with unlimited time to work with you one-on-one. This virtual instructor should be used to help you learn but not to do the work for you.

The three guidelines below are designed to help you use generative AI to get the most out of your HKS experience.

1. It is generally acceptable to use generative AI for finding information and for solidifying your knowledge of the course content. For instance, it is fine to use AI-powered web search and to have “conversations” with tools like ChatGPT to help you explore ideas, refine your thinking, identify examples, and better understand the course material. However, unless otherwise specified, it is a violation of the HKS Academic Code to incorporate into your coursework text produced predominantly by generative AI — similar to copying from a book or article. For example, it would be inappropriate to simply rewrite a draft generated by AI.
2. Generative AI can produce false or misleading information. You are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of any work you submit.
3. Given the range of learning goals at HKS, individual instructors may create course-specific policies that differ from these general guidelines. If you have any doubt about whether a specific use of generative AI is permitted for an assignment or course, you should discuss it with your instructor prior to using it.

It's hard to codify how best to use generative AI to help you learn. These tools are changing rapidly, and we anticipate this policy will evolve alongside advancements in AI, with feedback from students and instructors.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Harvard University values inclusive excellence and providing equal educational opportunities for all students. Our goal is to remove barriers for disabled students related to inaccessible elements of instruction or design in this course. If reasonable accommodations are necessary to provide access, please contact the local disability coordinator, Melissa Wojciechowski St. John (melissa_wojciechowski@hks.harvard.edu). She is the [Senior Director of Student Services](#) in the HKS Office of Student Services. Accommodations do not alter fundamental requirements of the course and are not retroactive. Students should request accommodations as early as possible, since they may take time to implement. Students should notify Melissa at any time during the semester if adjustments to their communicated accommodation plan are needed.

Student Support Services

Recommended text (approved by the Senior Associate Director of Student Support Services):

Any students experiencing difficulties around an academic, personal, or mental health issue are encouraged to connect with [Jimmy Kane, Senior Associate Director of Student Support Services](#). Jimmy's role is to support students and connect them to resources/individuals so they can continue being successful. He will also provide outreach and support to students when someone in the HKS community has expressed a concern for them.

If students are experiencing any distress and would like to connect with a counselor over the phone, in the evenings, late at night or on the weekends, students are strongly urged to call 617-495-2042 to speak with a [CAMHS Cares Counselor](#).

Readings and Course Schedule

[Note: readings and assignments are *subject to change* with advance notice.]

Week 1: Introduction

Friday September 1

Readings:

- Ivan Illich, "Needs" (pp. 95-108) and Serge Latouche, "Standard of Living" (pp. 279-292) from Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary*
- Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Intro, Chs. 1-2, 4 (pp. 3-53, 87-110)

Week 2: Theories of Happiness and Well-Being

Monday Sept 4 NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)

Wednesday September 6

Readings:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, §§1-5, 9-11, 14-17, 63-68

Week 3: Theories of Happiness and Well-Being

Monday September 11

Readings:

Amartya Sen, "Utilitarianism and Welfarism," *The Journal of Philosophy* 76.9 (1979): 463-489.

Wednesday September 13

Readings:

- Martha C. Nussbaum, "Human functioning and social justice: In defense of Aristotelian essentialism," *Political Theory* 20.2 (1992): 202-246.
- Richard J. Arneson, "Human flourishing versus desire satisfaction," *Social Philosophy and Policy* 16.1 (1999): 113-142.

Week 4: Is the Capability Approach Universal?: Indigenous and non-Western Perspectives

Monday September 18

Readings:

- Roger Merino, "An alternative to 'alternative development'?: *Buen vivir* and human development in Andean countries," *Oxford Development Studies* 44.3 (2016): 271-286.
- Alberto Acosta and Mateo Martínez Abarca, "Buen Vivir: An alternative perspective from the peoples of the global south to the crisis of capitalist modernity," *The climate crisis: South African and global democratic eco-socialist alternatives* (2018): 131-147.

Wednesday Sept 20

Readings:

- Krushil Watane, "Valuing nature: Māori philosophy and the capability approach," *Oxford Development Studies* 44.3 (2016): 287-296.
- Christina Binder & Constanze Binder, "A capability perspective on indigenous autonomy," *Oxford Development Studies* 44.3 (2016): 297-314.
- M. Murphy, "Self-Determination as a Collective Capability: The Case of Indigenous Peoples," *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 15(4): 320–334
- Mandy Yap & Eunice Yu, "Operationalising the capability approach: developing culturally relevant indicators of indigenous wellbeing – an Australian example," *Oxford Development Studies* 44.3 (2016): 315-331.

Week 5: Development and Social Justice

Monday September 25

Readings:

John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Ch. III (§§20-30) and Ch. V (§§41-50)

Stuart White, "Social Minimum," *SEP*

Wednesday Sept 27

Readings:

Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Ch. 3, "Freedom and the Foundations of Justice," Ch. 5, "Markets, State and Social Opportunity" and Ch. 11, "Social Choice and Individual Behavior"

Week 6: What is Equality?

Monday October 2

Readings:

- John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, §§12-13, 77, 80-82, 84-85

- Amartya Sen, “Equality of What?” Tanner Lecture

Wednesday October 4

Readings:

- Gerald A. Cohen, “On the currency of egalitarian justice,” *Ethics* 99.4 (1989): 906-944.
- Richard J. Arneson, “Equality and equal opportunity for welfare,” *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 56.1 (1989): 77-93.

Week 7: What is Equality?

Monday October 9: NO CLASS (INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ DAY)

Wednesday October 11

Readings:

- Elizabeth Anderson, “What is the Point of Equality?” *Ethics*, Vol. 109, No. 2 (January 1999), pp. 287-337.

Week 8: Development and Gender

Monday October 16

Readings:

- Sen, *Development as Freedom*, Ch. 8, “Women’s Agency and Social Change”
- Martha Nussbaum, “Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings,” from *Women, Culture, and Development*

Wednesday October 18

Readings:

Four essays from Part IV of *Women, Culture, and Development*:

- Xiaorong Li, “Gender inequality in China and cultural relativism”: 407-426.
- Margarita M. Valdés, “Inequality in Capabilities Between Men and Women in Mexico”: 426.
- Roop Rekha Verma, “Femininity, equality, and personhood”: 433-443.
- Nkiru Nzegzvu, “Recovering Igbo traditions: A case for indigenous women’s organizations in development”: 444.

Week 9: Is Democracy Universal? Islamic and Confucian Perspectives

Monday October 23

Readings:

- Rached Ghannouchi, *Public Freedoms in the Islamic State* (selections)
- Rached Ghannouchi with Andrew F. March, *On Muslim Democracy* (selections)

Wednesday October 25

Readings:

- Bai Tongdong, “A Confucian Improvement of Democracy,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 29.1 (2012): 12-39.
- Daniel A. Bell, “Meritocracy is a good thing,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 29.4 (2012): 9-18.

- Sor-hoon Tan, “Democracy in Confucianism,” *Philosophy Compass* 7.5 (2012): 293-303
- Joseph Chan, *Confucian Perfectionism: A Political Philosophy for Modern Times*, Ch. 4, “Mixing Confucianism and Democracy”: 81-110.

Week 10: The Idea of Sustainable Development

Monday October 30

Readings:

- “Our Common Future” (Brundtland Report), selections
- Wilfred Beckerman, “Economic growth and the environment: Whose growth? Whose environment?” *World development* 20.4 (1992): 481-496.
- Wilfred Beckerman, “‘Sustainable development’: is it a useful concept?” *Environmental values* 3.3 (1994): 191-209.

Wednesday November 1

Readings:

- Wolfgang Sachs, “Environment” from Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *The Development Dictionary*
- John Dryzek, Ch. 7, “Greener Growth: Sustainable Development,” from *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses*

Week 11: Global Justice

Monday November 6

Readings:

- Peter Singer, “Famine, Affluence, and Morality,” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 1.3 (1972): 229-243.
- Onora O’Neill, “Lifeboat Earth,” *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 4.3 (1975): 273-292.

Wednesday November 8

Readings:

- Kok-Chor Tan, “Conceptions of Cosmopolitan Justice: A Survey,” Ch. 3, *Justice without Borders: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and Patriotism*
- Thomas Pogge, “An Egalitarian Law of Peoples,” “Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty,” and/or “Allowing the Poor to Share the Earth”

Week 12: Climate Justice

Monday November 13

Readings:

Henry Shue, *Climate Justice: Vulnerability and Protection* (selections)

Wednesday November 15

- Darrel Moellendorf, “Climate change justice,” *Philosophy Compass* 10.3 (2015): 173-186.
- Simon Caney, “Cosmopolitan justice, responsibility, and global climate change,” *Leiden journal of international law* 18.4 (2005): 747-775.
- David Miller ‘Global Justice and Climate Change: How Should Responsibilities Be Distributed?’ *The Tanner Lectures*

Week 13: Migration and Borders

Monday November 20

Readings:

- Shelley Wilcox, “The Open Borders Debate on Immigration,” *Philosophy Compass* 4.5 (2009): 813-821.
- Joseph Carens, “Aliens and Citizens: The Case for Open Borders,” *The Review of Politics* 49.2 (1987): 251-273.
- Daria Davitti, “Biopolitical borders and the state of exception in the European migration ‘crisis’,” *European Journal of International Law* 29.4 (2018): 1173-1196.

Wednesday November 22: NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Week 14: Questioning Development? Degrowth and its Critics

Monday November 27

Readings:

“Planned Degrowth,” essays in *Monthly Review*, July-August 2023 (Volume 75, Number 3): <https://monthlyreview.org/product/mr-075-03-2023-07/>

Wednesday November 29

Readings:

Matt Huber, “The Problem with Degrowth,” *Jacobin* <https://jacobin.com/2023/07/degrowth-climate-change-economic-planning-production-austerity>

Wrap-up discussions