Why do some nations develop while others languish? This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to examining the role governments play in development and economic outcomes. Knee-jerk ideologues from all parts of the political spectrum make competing arguments, most of which are overly simplistic and ignore good social science. Some argue that state involvement in the economy hinders economic activity and development, while others argue for greater state involvement. Such arguments are often poorly informed by systematic rigorous research. We will look at some of the competing arguments about governments in failed and successful states and compare those arguments to the empirical world, or data. In so doing we will see that how governments affect development and economic outcomes in society is neither straightforward nor consistent with any of the simplistic ideological screeds that often dominate public discourse.

**Requirements:**
- Participation: Approximately 30%
- 9 weekly papers: Approximately 30%
- Policy/action memo: Approximately 40%

**Readings:** The required texts to purchase are listed immediately below. The other required readings you can access via the course Blackboard site. Those are denoted by an *. You are responsible for the reading at the start of each section.


**Participation:** I will lead the seminar, but I expect vigorous class participation—note the portion of your grade from participation. Good discussion is not regurgitation of the reading, but using the reading as a base to raise questions, evaluate the arguments and the evidence in the reading, probe new angles, and go off on related topics.
The best learning and research is collegial and interactive. I urge you to participate in class, ask questions and engage your peers in discussion. You will likely discover that your best teachers in class are your colleagues. A good discussion involves give and take among the members of the seminar. As you think about the readings a good strategy is to break a reading down into its important substantive issues, primary theoretical argument, plausible alternative theoretical explanations, and the empirical strategies employed by the investigator. Be sure to consider possible ways to improve and build on the research presented as we are engaged in a cumulative endeavor as social scientists.

**Weekly papers and questions:** I am assuming that everyone will have done the reading for each class and we will not have to regurgitate the content, rather we can build on the reading in our discussions. You will get to set the agenda for our discussions in class. To help guide our discussions, I ask you to submit a one-page paper that addresses the reading for nine weeks of the course. This one-page should be divided into three sections:

- **First,** you should raise a question that the reading provoked and you think would be interesting for the class to discuss.
- **Second,** you should note a counterintuitive finding, something you did not expect to find.
- **Third,** you should provide a criticism of some aspect of the reading.

Please do not simply regurgitate the reading. I would like to see some critical thought. The paper is due **before** we discuss the reading. The weeks are up to you, but do not rear load your papers as you may discover you do not have enough weeks left to fulfill this requirement. I will randomly draw on your questions, counterintuitive findings, and critiques for class discussion. Be prepared to guide some discussion on the topics you raise in your paper.

**Policy/action memo:** You are expected to produce a 10-15 page policy memo or action plan that involves state action to produce a social outcome. This could be purely a state activity or a mix of state and private activities and cooperation. Think of yourself as a social entrepreneur trying to create and promote strategies to improve social welfare outcomes. Your action memo is an opportunity to “pitch” a strategy to a NGO, IGO, or some governmental actor for implementation. Throughout the semester I will ask you to discuss your topics and the progress you are making on putting together an action plan. Here is some structure for that action plan:

1. Select an issue area where a state affects a development outcome either negatively or positively. The problem could be in the area of public health, environment, human capital, physical and financial capital accumulation, economic infrastructure, agriculture, gender relations, political and civil
liberties, technology transfer, or a host of other areas related to development. You can select a small problem or a systemic problem, although a small problem is generally more manageable.

2. Next describe the problem and its consequences for development in a community.

3. Then dissect the problem into its causal parts focusing on the role of the state in either creating or mitigating the problem. I recommend focusing on the micro activities of states that affect the delivery of services in your area of focus such as regulation, professionalism, competence or incompetence, corruption, bureaucratic red tape, social transfers or other aspects of state-society relations.

4. Once you have dissected the problem into its causal parts, think about ways to manipulate those causal parts to positively affect the development outcome. Then develop an action plan that attempts to manipulate key causal relationships in order to promote, manage or circumvent state actions, policies, and structures that either hinder or aid development. Remember there are usually societal actors, very often political elites, who are engaging in activities that intentionally affect developmental outcomes, sometimes perversely. For some problems you may have to find a way to work around such actors, to neutralize their activities and capabilities. For other problems you may find yourself trying to unleash the energies and activities of societal actors who intend to improve social outcomes.

5. Think about the resource constraints and other types of constraints hindering implementation and describe a strategy to work within those constraints.

Health and Bias Considerations

The University is committed to offering reasonable academic accommodations to students who are victims of sexual assault. Students are eligible for accommodation regardless of whether they seek criminal or disciplinary action. Depending on the specific nature of the allegation, such measures may include but are not limited to: implementation of a no-contact order, course/classroom assignment changes, and other academic support services and accommodations. If you need to request such accommodations, please direct your request to Kim Webb (kim_webb@wustl.edu), Director of the Office of Sexual Assault and Community Health Services. Ms. Webb is a confidential resource; however, requests for accommodations will be shared with the appropriate University administration and faculty. The University will maintain as confidential any accommodations or protective measures provided to a student so long as it does not impair the ability to provide such measures.

The University has a process through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. See: brss.wustl.edu
Mental Health Services’ professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth

**Reading Assignments**

**Context, change, progress, and shortcomings**

**Freedom, democracy and development, part 1**
William Easterly, *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor*, Part 1, Chapters 1-7

William Easterly, *The Tyranny of Experts: Economists, Dictators and the Forgotten Rights of the Poor*, Part 2, Chapters 8-14

**State obstruction and failure**
Robert Bates, *When Things Fall Apart: State Failure in Late-Century Africa*
*Douglas North, John Wallis and Barry Weingast, Violence and Social Orders*, Chapters 1 & 2

**Fragile Democracies, inflated expectations**
Paul Collier, *Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*

**Institutions**
Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, *Why Nations Fail*, Chapters 1& 2, 3 & 5, 11 & 12, 14 & 15

*North, Wallis and Weingast, Violence and Social Orders*, Chapters 4-6

**Freedom, democracy and development, part 2**

**Social spending and development**
*Peter Lindert, Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth Since the Eighteenth Century, vol. 1, 2004, Chapters 1, 2, 7, 9-12

**The regulatory and research state**
David Mowery and Nathan Rosenberg, *Paths of Innovation: Technological Changes in 20th-Century America*

**The state and inequality**
Jacob Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer-And Turned Its Back on The Middle Class*

Freedom, democracy and development, part 3
