COURSE OVERVIEW

Economic development refers fundamentally to the use, generation, and distribution of resources (including human and physical capital) for public benefit. Violent conflict entails the use, destruction, and re-distribution of those same resources for some exclusive benefit. Economic development and violent conflict are thus linked in an ontological sense. Moreover, economic development is increasingly seen as a foundational requirement for peace. As the world economy has globalized and stark wealth disparities within and between countries have emerged over the past half century, violence has become less analytically tractable using the traditional distinction between “wartime” and “garden variety” types. On the one hand, wars have devolved from discrete, time-bounded, “abnormal” crises of the Westphalian era, into myriad widespread, protracted, and low-intensity intrastate and regional conflicts, in which the usual notions of “crisis” and “peace” are often intermeshed. On the other hand, “petty” violence has grown into a monster, eroding the capacities of state governments, building transnational networks, and inflicting very “war-like” casualties on society. Gangs, militias, drug trafficking organizations and other non-state armed actors may control territory, challenge state authority, and participate in clashes with governments or one another in which death tolls rise to war-like levels.

Together, we will explore these phenomena through the optic of economic development. In this course, we will examine (1) the main economic theories of development and conflict (paying particular attention to the ways in which the two may be linked), (2) the great debates in conflict economics, and (3) the spatial dimensions of violent conflict. The course will attempt to build a logical and intuitive appreciation of concepts covered by employing both deductive (theoretical) and inductive (empirically-grounded theory-building) exercises. We will learn the material through visual media, such as graphs, maps and photos; analytic argumentation; basic math (don’t freak out – it’s nothing too hard, and there are no tests!); empirical case studies of conflict cities and countries; and class discussions. By the end of the course, you should have a basic understanding of economic theories of conflict, the spatial levels at/between which conflictual economic relationships may develop, and what policy remedies have been proposed to address them.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Analyze the historical origins of, and contemporary justifications for the international development industry, and how the underlying ideas of societal progress have been linked philosophically and practically to violent conflict;

2. Identify the range of practical strategies applied by development actors to bring about economic growth, redistribution, good governance, poverty alleviation in developing and post-conflict countries since WWII;

3. Evaluate those actors and factors – whether political, historic, military, socio-economic, governance, organizational or institutional – in a particular context that have served to generate, shape or constrain the range of options for development initiatives and interventions that are available;

4. Grapple with the major debates about how economic development processes may generate or diffuse social, political, or economic contests;

5. Evaluate the polyvalent scalar hierarchy of possible development interventions, developing a critical intuition of how phenomena at the community, municipal, regional, national, and international levels may interact in particular development projects, with the objective of determining optimal points of entry;

6. Synthesize the various strands of development theory with personal and professional experiences to begin to formulate an informed and grounded basis for future practical engagement in the field.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Please Note: This syllabus is a road map, not a final contract. The instructor reserves the right to alter requirements and/or course content throughout the semester.

All required readings, and most of the recommended readings, will be uploaded to the Blackboard website. There you will also find folders labeled “Learning Tools” for many of the weeks, where I will post helpful diagrams, web links, and presentations made in class.

We will meet once per week, covering two new topics each week (with a break between topics). The structure of each session will differ depending on the material being presented and the preferences of the class. A typical session’s length of 2 h 50 m will be broken into the following components:

- Lecture, Q&A (50 minutes or less);
- Discussion (25 minutes or more);
- Break (5 minutes)
- Student presentations (1.5 hours)

The following components will make up your final grade:
- **Plagiarism Tutorial & Quiz.** You are required to complete the online SDSU plagiarism tutorial and quiz, save the final results page as a text or html file, and upload it to Blackboard (or copy and paste the results page to the submission box) on or before 15 September at 5:00pm. Everything you need to complete the assignment is available on Blackboard in the Assignments section.

- **Class Participation.** Discussion-heavy classes depend for their effectiveness on the active engagement of all participants. That’s you. Please come prepared to discuss the reading, to wrestle with the ideas out loud (< 80 db, please), and to use the richness of your own experience to gauge how convincing/useful the ideas are.

- **Recommended Reading Presentation.** Each week’s readings are divided into “required” and “recommended” readings. “Required” readings are required. “Recommended” readings are recommended, but probably aren’t going to get read. For that reason, you will be asked to sign up for one recommended reading presentation over the course of the semester. You will have 10 minutes to present the basic argument, as well as its assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses. There will then be a 5 minute Q&A session. Guidelines are available on Blackboard.

- **Conflict Briefing.** There will be one short (7 pp. maximum) policy briefing document on a relevant conflict of your choosing. It should be consistently cited (the page limit is exclusive of the list of references). You will be you are expected to engage the course readings, where appropriate. The topic should be chosen in conversation with me. Guidelines are available on Blackboard.

- **Individual Policy Memo.** The policy memo (7 pp. maximum, no references) will be on a resource conflict of your choice. Guidelines are available on Blackboard.

- **Group Policy Memo.** There will be one policy memo (7 pp., not counting references) to be written as a team of 4 members (+/-1, if necessary), to be assigned. You are you are expected to engage the course readings but no references are necessary. Guidelines are available on Blackboard.

- **Group Policy Presentation.** There will be one group presentation on the same topic as the Group Policy Memo (above). You will be expected to present as a team: 5 minutes per team member, plus 10 minutes for questions. Guidelines are available on Blackboard.
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There are no midterm or final exams. Grades will be calculated using the weighting percentages below:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>%age of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarism Tutorial</td>
<td>15 September</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Throughout</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommended Reading Presentation</td>
<td>Varies</td>
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<td>Conflict Briefing</td>
<td>17 October</td>
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<td>Individual Policy Memo</td>
<td>21 November</td>
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<td>Group Policy Memo</td>
<td>16 December</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Policy Presentation</td>
<td>9 December</td>
<td>15%</td>
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Please Note: Late assignments will be docked one full letter grade (e.g., an “A” becomes a “B”). They will continue to drop by one full letter grade for each additional week late.

**TIMELINE**

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<th>Section</th>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>9-Sep</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>16-Sep</td>
<td>Peace, Progress, and Economic Utopianism</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>23-Sep</td>
<td>Economic Theories of Development</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>30-Sep</td>
<td>Dependence &amp; Interdependence</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7-Oct</td>
<td>The Development of Development</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>14-Oct</td>
<td>Economic Theories of Conflict</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>21-Oct</td>
<td>Disparities &amp; Institutions</td>
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<td>Pt. 2: Great Debates</td>
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<td>28-Oct</td>
<td>The Conflict Trap</td>
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<td>4-Nov</td>
<td>Natural Resources in Conflict</td>
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<td>11-Nov</td>
<td>Interethic Interaction</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>18-Nov</td>
<td>Violence as Social Organizer</td>
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<td>Pt. 3: Violence in Space</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25-Nov</td>
<td>Violent Conflict in Town &amp; Country</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>2-Dec</td>
<td>Cities: The New Battlefields</td>
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<td>Pt. 4: The End</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9-Dec</td>
<td>Student Presentations</td>
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**COURSE MATERIALS**

Course materials will be made available online. Textbooks? We don’t need no stinking textbooks.
WEEKLY READINGS

Note: An asterisk preceding a recommended reading indicates that the reading is eligible for a recommended reading presentation.

PART I: Development & Conflict in Theory

Week 1. Introduction

Key Questions:
- How do you see the relationship between development – broadly and vaguely conceived for the time being – and violent conflict? Be prepared to share your thoughts, perhaps enriched and enlivened with a personal anecdote or two.

Required:

Recommended:

Week 2. Peace, Progress, and Economic Utopianism

Key Questions:
- What does “progress” mean (and to whom?)? How is it operationalized in economic terms?
- Is progress an objective or subjective notion? If subjective, how broadly can/should the notion be shared across cultures?
- Is a non-conflictual utopia possible? What would a conflictual one look like? Does money have a place in a utopia?
- How do the concepts of “work” and “freedom” interact in Hesiod’s conception of history? Rostow’s? Sen’s?

Required:

Recommended:
Development & Conflict


Week 3. Economic Theories of Development (the Nutshell Versions)

Key Questions:
- What is “competition” in economics, and why is it so great?
- What would a neoclassicist claim are possible reasons for underdevelopment?

Required:


Recommended:


Week 4.  Dependence & Interdependence

Key Questions:
- Why would free trade be thought to promote peace? Does it?
- Why would a country enter voluntarily into an unequal trading relationship?
- What are the reasons Dependency Theorists give for underdevelopment? How might they shape policy?
- Does Dependency Theory bear on international conflicts? Intra-national ones?
- Why might “indigenous” economic policy promote development?

Required:
- Hyperthetical Scenario: “Haiti’s Pigs.” (In class.)

Recommended:
Development & Conflict

Week 5. The Development of Development

Key Questions:

- Is development an end in itself, or a means to an end?
- Does the notion of human freedom fit into development and, if so, what do we define freedom?
- Is “Development” an altruistic project, or simply the colonial project by other (more duplicitous) means?
- Can we distinguish “Development, the Idea” from “Development, the Industry”?
- How has the idea of development evolved over the past 60 years?
- Do different economies operate in similar ways, and according to common rules?

Required Readings:

- Hyperthetical Scenario: “Aftermath of the ZCCM Privatization.” (In class.)

Recommended Readings:


Week 6·A. Conflict Economics

Key Questions:

- What fundamental dichotomous choice do rational agents face in conflict theory?
- How does the distribution of wealth affect this choice? Technology?

Required:

  http://www.juliansimon.com/writings/Articles/LEBATLAN.txt

Recommended:

Syllabus: PJS 570


**Week 6-B. Externalities, Total Welfare, and Transactions Costs**

*Key Questions:*
- What are externalities, and how do they help explain (mathematically) when individual and group welfare might be at odds?
- What are transactions costs, and why do they make institutions necessary to coordinate group welfare?
- What do transactions costs have to do with institutions?

*Required:*

**Week 7-A. Disparities across Space and Time**

*Key Questions:*
- What are increasing versus decreasing returns to scale?
- How do they affect economic stability?
- Why does New Growth Theory predict “lumpy” accumulations of wealth?
- Why isn’t knowledge subject to the Law of Variable Proportions?

*Required:*
Development & Conflict


**Recommended:**

**Week 7-B.  Development, Institutions and Instability**

**Key Questions:**
- What is an institution? (Hint: read North.)
- How do institutions promote development?
- How do institutions structure conflict?
- How do institutions promote stability?

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
Syllabus: PJS 570


PART II: Great Debates in Conflict Economics

Week 8·A. Greed & Grievance in Civil War

**Key Questions:**
- What are the “greed” and “grievance” mechanisms triggering civil war?
- What arguments are brought to bear on either side, and are they convincing? Is an “ethnically-driven” explanation incompatible with economic motivations?
- Are there really only two sides to the argument? What other mechanisms might there be?

**Required:**

**Recommended:**
Week 8-B. Determinants of Rebel Organization & Violent Behavior

**Key Questions:**
- Under what economic conditions are rebel groups hypothesized to be more predatory or more governance-oriented, and why?

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

Week 9-A. The Resource Curse

**Key Questions:**
- If economic growth is supposedly a product of productivity and natural resources, why do resource-rich countries tend to have slower growth?
- What are all the possible mechanisms for such a trend, and which do you find most convincing?

**Required:**
Syllabus: PJS 570

**Recommended:**

**Week 9-B. The Geography of Resource Conflicts**

**Key Questions:**
- In light of the “Resource Curse,” do resource scarcities or abundances cause conflict? Does geographic scale inform your answer?

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

**Week 10-A. Commerce & Contact**

**Key Questions:**
- Does contact between different groups cause more empathy (Contact Hypothesis) or merely represent more opportunities for conflicts to erupt (Conflict Hypothesis)?
- How do unequal exchange and repeated interactions affect the fulfillment of the Contact Hypothesis conditions?
- Do horizontal inequalities cause conflict? How?
- Can economic inequality, whether vertical or horizontal, adequately capture the nature of historical and cultural oppression?
Required:


Recommended:

- Allport, Gordon (1954). The Nature of Prejudice. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, Ch. 1. (Google books)

Week 10-B. The (Economic?) Origins of Ethnicity

Key Questions:

- Is ethnicity a biological, cultural, or economic phenomenon (or some combination)?
- How might the Contact Hypothesis and/or predator-symbiant evolution inform (or not) the creation and maintenance of ethnic identity?
Do the above-mentioned hypotheses bear on the formation of ranked versus unranked societies?

Required:

Recommended:
Key Questions:

- Why did the waging of war possibly catalyze the formation of modern states in Europe?
- If that is so, what elements were lacking in, say, Africa?
- What do these fiscal and demographic arguments have in common with the biological notion of “intensification”?

Required:


Recommended:


Key Questions:

- What are ‘break points’? ‘Sustain points’?
- How does violence affect individual political participation? A community’s potential for self-determination?
- What kind of portrait of the “post-conflict legacy” do the answers to these questions paint?

Required:

Stanford: Stanford University Center for Global Development. Available at:  

Recommended:


PART III: Violence in Space

Week 12-A. Rural Land & Livelihood Conflicts

**Key Questions:**

- What is the Malthusian Trap, and why would one ever develop?
- To what extent is conflict determined by environmental scarcity?
- To what extent does the rising global demand for food undermine land and livelihood security?

**Required:**


http://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/22/world/africa/22mali.html?_r=1&partner=rss&emc=rss&pagewanted=all

**Recommended:**


http://www.bepress.com/ldr/vol4/iss1/art4/.

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Week 12-B. Rural-Urban Linkages & Conflicts

Key Questions:

- Can markets emerge and function without state support?
- If so, what about them is different in the contexts of weak or absent governments?
- How do rural-urban economic linkages (both backward and forward) change conflict?
- Can these changes be expected to exacerbate or reduce the incentives for rural-based violence?

Required:


Recommended:


Week 13.  Cities: The New Battlefields

**Key Questions:**

- What was the classical model of urbanization, and how did it relate to the Lewis 2-sector model of economic development?
- How did Harris and Todaro adapt the model, and what are the policy implications of the adaptation?
- Is urban violence primarily created by, or imported to, the city?
- Is urban violence economically motivated, socially symbolic, or socially pragmatic?
- What specific policies are advocated by neo-liberalization?
- How does privatization relate to our previously topics of horizontal inequalities, externalities, and economies of scale in service provision?

**Required:**


**Recommended:**

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States Research Centre. London: London School of Economics. 


PART IV: The End

Week 14. Student Presentations