

Power and “Development”

Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra

Harris School of Public Policy, Spring 2024

Section 1: TR 02:00 pm - 03:20 pm KELLER 0023

Section 2: TR 03:30 pm - 04:50 pm KELLER 0023

“Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of ‘nkali:’ How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.” **Ngozi Adichie, Chimamanda,** *The Danger of a Single Story.*

This course is intended as an introduction to current and future research on the role of *power* in “development.” One ambitious aim of the course is to make sense of the world of today beyond “us” vs. “them,” and through research attitudes and relationships that do not carry the framework of pitying, saving, or fixing as the starting point.

First, we will explore narratives of political economy of development, dominant until recently, which draw on explanations for what made Europe, and parts of North America, exceptional. Interestingly, these historical facts have contributed to represent European and North American institutions and culture as exceptional products of their own inventions, and the rest as “backward.” A turning point of this part will be an ethnography of the thought process of current development practitioners and scholars, and how that baggage influences their position vis-a-vis those they think they study or help, but also their very motivations.

Second, we will explore research by historians, anthropologists, and sociologists that challenged this narrative on the grounds that it silenced European domination over the rest of the world: a. the rise of the “West” *coincides with* the exceptional wielding of power at a global scale on other societies, leading to the *enslavement* and *dispossession* of other peoples at an unprecedented scale; yet, the origin of the exceptional wealth of some people in Europe and North America is rarely analysed in a global context, necessary to account for the role of this exceptional deployment of power; b. this global military domination, came along with *ideologies* that justified it; we will examine the logic of these ideologies, and how they sneaked their way into power and into how social science is done today.

Third, recognizing that military domination might have created an asymmetry of what knowledge is perceived to be valid, we will try to rebuild our knowledge of development, drawing on sources from outside the power-wielding centres. We will explore a fertile ground of ground-breaking research, covering a diversity of institutions, historical processes, worldviews, socio-political traditions, and ideas in societies outside the so-called West, have contributed to the political economy of human societies. To explore this area fertile in *possibilities*, we will first dig into the philosophical foundations of select worldviews outside the so-called West, as examples, in their own words and with the help of philosophers and social anthropologists from outside the West. We will then attempt to re-interpret social organization and historical processes, from the lens of their actors.

Course Objectives

The objective of the class is for you to grow intellectually and humanely beyond common presuppositions that dominate the development discourse today. It is about ideas that have received little to no voice in the dominant narrative of development. I hope that you come out of the class with a richer appreciation of your own position in the world, with an expanded ability to work in societies outside the West with respect and appreciation for history, the logic of their societies, the rich diversity of cosmologies and ways of life across societies and therefore of prescribed policies adjusted to each context, a better ability to create partnerships and relationships, and ultimately, more informed choices about your attitude in the area of development (and whether you want pity and contempt to be a driving force).

The class is about ideas, not about surveying the rich diversity of societies in the world. Most examples will come from *Sub-Saharan Africa*, which is an area I devoted the last 15 years of my personal and intellectual life.

Lectures' ground rules

Given the ambitious objectives of the class, discomfort can arise, impeding the quest for truth and knowledge and for intellectual and personal growth. Thus, the classroom will be a respectful space where discomfort is to be expected. Exchange of ideas will be achieved through three ground rules. First, by accepting that:

- a. we *can* at times feel offended, that being offended does not mean being harmed,
- b. being uncomfortable is to be challenged and being challenged is ok,
- c. being uncomfortable is not the same as being unsafe;
- d. we are adults, and we are not in need of protection against ideas
- e. those proposing ideas always come from a place of humanity and not to harm anyone.

Second, by promoting a conversation that dissipates private dissent into conversation, so:

- a. talking is strongly encouraged;
- b. you can interrupt the instructor.
- c. you can and are encouraged to disagree and to (attempt to) correct the instructor.

Third, by encouraging not only to speak freely about all issues but also to listen carefully and respectfully. I will follow the following principle: *“Maximal freedom of expression, including offending and uncomfortable ideas, without attacks against the dignity of anyone.”* You should speak civilly and respectfully to one another, especially when you strongly disagree.

The views in this class do not represent the views of the University (see the [Kalven](#) principles). The goal of the class is not to tell you how to think, but to entertain the possibility that there is truth in voices typically silenced, and to bring those to the forefront so that they, too participate the conversation. It is up to you then to know what to do with it.

This Class is Optional. By Joining, you are agreeing to the following.

This is an optional class. To avoid any disappointment, please do take another class:

1) if you are expecting a space to feel comfortable or to confirm your presuppositions. In fact, by *joining the class, you explicitly consent to be exposed to topics that can make you uncomfortable, ideas that you will disagree with and that you may even find offensive.* The class is built around tolerance for dissent and empathy. This is University principles. It is also the first amendment. It is also the school's Op-Ed. The goal of the class is to expand our horizons in one dimensions, not all: preference will be given to voices of the weak, with a focus on the actors' perspective; that is the goal of the class. I will entertain the possibility that these voices can teach you something, to the fullest extent even if the experience of these actors portrays you in a negative light or challenge your beliefs or identity.

2) if you are expecting to learn about societies across the globe; this class is about ideas, not places, and applications will come predominantly from Sub-Saharan Africa, not elsewhere.

Grades

10%: Participation in class (maximizing learning as a public good)

Each time you talk, we record it. Good contributions count more, bad don't exist. You are graded as a function of your contribution to the discussion in class, which means that efforts to invite others to speak that have something to say will also be rewarded. If you are shy, no worry: public postings in canvas discussion count the same.

20%: reading quizzes (understanding the readings)

Reading is a core part of how you will learn in this class. In each lecture, there is a 50% chance that the lecture starts with a reading quiz. Reading quizzes evaluate your articulate understanding of the readings marked "what you read (and is evaluated as readings)." Other readings are not evaluated in the reading quizzes.

20%: Mid-Terms 1 and 2 (understanding the lectures)

Evaluates your *articulate* understanding of everything that was said in the lectures.

30%: Teamwork (practicing shared humanity and finding intellectual compromise)

By the mid-term, I will provide instructions about the teamwork. To help with the success of this exercise... do the readings and pay attention in classes. The end of the teamwork will be one presentation, with slides. There will be no other written output. Groups will be composed by the teaching team.

20%: Final

The final will evaluate your articulate understanding of everything in the lectures. There will also be a freeform answer where you are now asked to think for yourself using the material in the readings and the lectures as inputs into a narrative.

Remote participation and recording

Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights and will be referred to the Area Dean of Students. This is an in-person class only. Under exceptional circumstances, I will approve zoom participation. Students acknowledge that they will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats, neither during nor after the end of the course; or (ii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course. They will not share links course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session.

Available resources

Teaching Fellow Daniel Sonnenstuhl

- Be nice to him, he is working hard to make your learning better
- Will manage a **canvas public discussion about readings**
- Will not be available on email
- Will hold a **recitation** in the first week, March 22nd 2024. Hour will be determined through a link to be filled online prior to the first lecture
- Will hold **weekly office hour** to discuss the readings (not the lectures), TBD

Teaching Fellow Muhammad Fajar Mughraha

- Be nice to him, he is working hard to make your learning better
- Will join the teaching team for the lectures and **class discussion**
 - o Will provide **student support**. To achieve that, he kindly made himself available on email, after you checked canvas (mfugraha@uchicago.edu). An email response can be expected by 48 hours from the email, but *not before*.
- Will be the **point person for the group exercise** in the second part of the course, and will hold a weekly meeting with each group after the start of the group work (TBD).

Instructor Raul Sanchez de la Sierra

- Will lead the lectures
- Will hold **weekly office hour** to discuss the lectures
- Will hold **weekly office hours about the lectures** (TBD)
- You can be mean to him, he is working hard to make your learning uncomfortable

Accommodations

I will follow the University's policies regarding students with disabilities are available online. Students who have disability accommodations awarded by the University Student Disability Services Office should inform the Dean of Students.

If you or someone you know is overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, remote counselling services are available. Student Counselling Service urges you to attend to your mental wellbeing and to reach out to them. The instructor or teaching fellow Mughraha are available to you to discuss any type of personal issues, whomever you feel most comfortable.

Course Syllabus

Lecture 1 – March 19th

Introduction: Social Science as Narratives

We start with various stories from a militia Eastern Congo as metaphor for development narratives based on social science. This metaphor will follow us through the course.

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Keim Curtis A, Somerville, Caroline. 2009. *Mistaking Africa : Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. 2nd ed. Boulder CO: Westview Press. (Ch. 3-6)

*Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice*, Introduction

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Michel Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past* (Chapter 1)

Part I - Political Economy of Development: A North Atlantic Narrative of a Great Divergence

In Part I, we study the story that has dominated the economists' narratives of political economy of Development. This story draws its ideas from the "global North's" own narrative, dominant until recently, for why the "modern world" rose since 1400. It is about Europe's peculiar markets, technology, culture, and, more recently, institutions. This is about the invisible hand, market failures, economic, and political rules for organizing the economy.

Lecture 2 – March 21st

North Atlantic Narratives of Markets and Development

A specific interpretation of this old idea re-gained at a specific historical juncture. Yet, in the last 60 years, progress in economics explored what is missing in that interpretation.

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Adam Smith, "Theory of Moral sentiments" Part I, Section I (all chapters)

*Zubin Jelveh, Bruce Kogut, and Suresh Naidu, "Political Language in Economics"

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Ronald Coase (1960). "The Problem of Social Cost". *Journal of Law and Economics*. 3 (1): 1–44. doi:10.1086/466560

BBC documentary by Adam Curtis, *The Trap* (first episode)

Stiglitz, Joseph (2001) Nobel Prize lecture, December 8th 2001

Lecture 3 – March 26th

North Atlantic Narratives of Institutions and Development: Re-Birth of Political Economy

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Chapter VII (1851)

*Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. "Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth." Handbook of economic growth 1 (2005): 385-472.

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

North and Weingast (1989) "Constitutions and Commitment: The evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth century England" Journal of economic history vol 49

Bates, Robert H. (1981) Markets and States in Tropical Africa, Berkeley: University of California Press (Chapters 5, 8)

North, Douglass C. (1992). "Transaction costs, institutions, and economic performance."

Screening: March 27th, 5pm Keller Center

Taking Development to the Global South: Discovering Awkward Symptoms

Congo Calling, a conversation with Director Stefan Hilpert (In lieu of April 4th)

Lecture 4 – March 28th

Taking Development to the Global South: Pathologies in Practicing Development

Enthused by the promise of progress inherent in the "Western" liberal political institutions model, and concerned by corruption in "developing countries," the West tried to transform political institutions outside to look more like theirs, sometimes with ludicrous consequences.

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

* Humphreys, Macartan, Raúl Sanchez de la Sierra and Peter van der Windt (2020) "Exporting Democratic Practices:" *Journal of Development Economics*, Volume 140, 279-301.

* Gauthier Marchais, 2020 "Leaving the white house," (Translated from French: "Le Deni Blanc: Penser la Question Raciale du Point de Vue d'un Blanc") (Chapter 1, Chapter 3.1, 3.2)

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Mansuri, Ghazala; Rao, Vijayendra. 2004. Community-Based and Driven Development: A Critical Review. Policy Research Working Paper; No.3209. World Bank, Washington, D.C..

Part II – Power And Development: A Real Political Economy of Development

Disenchanted Development

Lecture 5 – April 2nd

Coercive Foundations of Development: Civilizing or Replacing the “Savages”

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Exterminate all the Brutes, Documentary (HBO), Raoul Peck, episodes 3,4

*Dunbar-Ortiz, And Indigenous History of the United States, Chapters 2,3,4

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Deb Debal. 2009. Beyond Developmentality: Constructing Inclusive Freedom and Sustainability. London: Earthscan. (Chapter 1)

Hochschild Adam. 1998. King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa. Boston: Houghton Mifflin (Chapter 10)

Young, Crawford. Politics in Congo. Princeton University Press, 2015. (Chapter 4)

Césaire Aimé 1955 Discours sur le colonialisme: discours sur la négritude. Presence Africaine.

Lecture 6 – April 4th [Replaced by Forum event 6 pm March 27th, 5pm Keller Center]

Lecture 7 – April 9th

Coercive Foundations of the Great Divergence

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Northrup David. 2011. The Atlantic Slave Trade. 3rd ed. Boston MA: Wadsworth (Ch. 1-3)
Williams, Eric (1964). Capitalism and Slavery. London: André Deutsch (Chapter 1)

*Exterminate all the Brutes, Documentary (HBO), Raoul Peck, episodes 1,2

*Appartheid Convention (pages 1, 2), [here](#) + Convention on Genocide (page 1): [here](#)

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Curtin, P. (1998). The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex. Cambridge U. Press (Ch. 3)

Sweet, James H. “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought.” The William and Mary Quarterly 54, no. 1 (1997): 143–66.

Fredrickson, George M. Racism: A Short History: Princeton University Press 2016. (Ch1)

Re-Thinking Development

Lecture 8 – April 11th

Development or Reparations? Re-Thinking the Roots of Current Global Inequality

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Williams, Eric (1964). *Capitalism and Slavery*. London: André Deutsch (Chapter 3)

*Naidu, Suresh "Accounting for Thanksgiving's Ghosts" *Jacobin*, [here](#)

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Kenneth Pomeranz, "The Great Divergence: China, Europe and the Making of the Modern World Economy." Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000. (Chapter 6)

Nunn, Nathan (2008) "The Long Term Effects of Africa's Slave Trades," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 123 (1): 139--176.

Piketty, *A brief history of Equality*, 2022, Belknap Press of Harvard University (Chapter 3)

Lecture 9 – April 16th

Development or Power Relations? Re-Thinking the Relevance of Development

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Nunn, Nathan (2019) "Rethinking economic development," *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 52(4), 1349-1373.

*Anthony Loewenstein, (2023) *The Palestine Laboratory*, Chapter 1

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Susan Williams, "White Malice: The CIA and the Covert Recolonization of Africa" *Ch. 1*

Dube, Arindrajit, Ethan Kaplan, and Suresh Naidu. "Coups, Corporations and Classified Information." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126, no. 3 (2011): 1375-409.

Piketty, *A brief history of Equality*, 2022, Belknap Press Harvard University (Chapters 8, 9)

Lecture 10 – April 18th

Re-Assessing Development

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Fanon, Franz (1952) *Black Skin, White Masks*, New York: Grove Press. (Chapter 1)

*Marchais, G.; Bazuzi, P. and Lameke, A. (2020) "The Data is Gold, and we are Gold-diggers': Whiteness, Race and Contemporary Academic Research in DRC", *Critical African Studies* 12.3

Part III – Political Economy After “Development:” Re-Humanizing Development

Having recognized the role of military domination and power relations in the Great Divergence, we try to start all over again with new foundations of a political economy that does not ignore those power relations, but also that does not fall in the trap of victimization.

This part of the course focuses on how societies outside Europe are organized, trying to unearth their own logic, in their own worldview, beyond European particularism and beyond exoticizing those societies nor starting with the presupposition that they need to be fixed. The starting point of this adventure is to learn to take the actors’ perspective rather than that of the “West.” It is about eliminating the “Orient” and “Occident,” the Global North and South:

“[We need] a better understanding of the way cultural domination has operated. If this stimulates a new kind of dealing with the Orient, indeed if it eliminates the ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ altogether, then we shall have advanced a little in the ‘unlearning’ of the ‘inherent dominative mode.’” Edward Said (1978), Orientalism

Lecture 11 – April 23rd

Social World from Below: Social Science Starts with Cosmology

To do so, we start by pushing the philosophical foundations that “we” have taken as granted into areas that are generally foreign to European and North American social science. Non-European Cosmological Foundations exist. And they have their own logic, too.

We begin by asking what, if anything, non-western cosmologies and vision of the world can contribute to explain the emergence of different social and political organization. We examine specifically the nature of causality, the connection between people and ancestors, the importance of the lineage, concepts of persons, the connection between individual and community and how those differ across societies.

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Gyekye Kwame. 1995. *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought : The Akan Conceptual Scheme* Revised ed. Philadelphia: Temple University Press (Chapter 12)

*Sanchez de la Sierra (2022): the role of the supernatural in economics

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Nunn, Nathan, and Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra, “*Magical Warfare Technologies and the Persistence of False Beliefs,*” *American Economic Review*, 107 (2017), 582–587.

Mariam Konate Deme, “*Heroism and the Supernatural in the African Epic*” (introduction)

Aimable Amani Lameke, Lewis Dunia Butinda, Nathan Nunn, Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra and Max Winkler (2022) “*Indigenous Religions and Economic Behavior: Beer Sellers in DRC*”

Lecture 12 – April 25th

Institutions, from Below

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *And Indigenous History of the United States*, Chapter 1

* Polanyi, Karl. 1957. "The Economy as Instituted Process." in *The Sociology of Economic Life*, edited by mark Granovetter and Richard Swedberg. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Vansina, Jan (1990) *Paths in the Rainforests: Toward a History of Political Tradition in Equatorial Africa*, University of Wisconsin Press, Chapters 5,6

Ferguson, James (1985) "The Bovine Mystique: Power, Property and Livestock in Rural Lesotho," *Man*, 20, 4, pages 647-674.

Lecture 13 – April 30th

The State, from Below: Stationary Bandits

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Tilly, Charles. 1985. "War making and state making as organized crime," in *Bringing The State Back In*, eds P.B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, & T. Skocpol. Cambridge:

*Sánchez de la Sierra, Raúl (2020) "On the Origins of the State: Stationary Bandits and Taxation in Eastern Congo," *Journal of Political Economy*, 128,1, 32-74.

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Olson, Mancur. 1993. "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development." *American Political Science Review* 87(3): 567-576.

Lecture 14 – May 2nd

The State, from Below: The *Real State*

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra, Kristof Titeca, Stan Xie, Aimable Amani Lameke, Albert Jolino Malukisa (2022) "*The Real State: Inside Congo's Traffic Police Agency*"

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

J. P. Olivier de Sardan (1999) "A Moral Economy of Corruption in Africa?" *Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Mar., 1999), pp. 25-52.

Aimable Amani Lameke, Albert Jolino Malukisa, Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra, Vincent Tanutama and Kristof Titeca (2022) "Socially Embedded Corruption : An Experiment"

Lecture 15 – May 7th

Conflict, from Below: Moral Motives in Violence

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

*Marchais, Gauthier, Raúl Sánchez de la Sierra and Qihang Wu (2020) “Communities Substituting for the State: The Communal Logic of Militias in Eastern Congo”

What I talk about (and is not evaluated as readings)

Fearon, James D. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” International Organization 49 (1995)

Dunia Butinda, Lewis, (2022) “From Child of Walikale to Combatant: A Return Trip”

Part IV – Development after Power: Rehumanizing Political Economy of the Future

This part will require a different type of muscle, one that relies on the power of empathy and on shared humanity in order to develop the skill to exchange ideas, engage with dissent, while at the same time being respectful and with the goal to finding the largest possible common ground. Rather than studying power and development, in this part of the class, you will be doing it yourself as the actors.

Section 1 (TR 02:00 pm - 03:20 pm KELLER 0023):

- 8 groups of 5 members each,
- presentation of 10 minutes, discussion of 10 minutes

Section 2 (TR 03:30 pm - 04:50 pm KELLER 0023):

- 5 groups of 4 members each,
- presentation of 10 minutes, discussion of 10 minutes

What you read (and is evaluated as readings)

Readings for these last two sessions will be provided by the mid-term. They have to be read (and will be evaluated) between April 25th and May 14th.

Lecture 16 – May 9th

Reading quiz, Midterm 2 + Class discussion

Lecture 17 – May 14th

Group presentations 6 presentations + discussions

Lecture 18 – May 16th

Group presentations 6 presentations + discussions