

# PNA 524: Economic and Community Development

## Course Description

“Economic and community development” refers to material and social progress, in all its dimensions. Few topics are as important for the world as a whole and, in particular, for Christians. The study of economic and community development largely began with the study of *low- and middle-income countries*, with the goal of promoting global convergence whereby the gap between low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries (in a variety of measures of development) would shrink over time. While we have indeed witnessed dramatic improvements across a wide variety of development outcomes within low- and middle-income countries, the last decade has revealed widespread awareness of a number of deficiencies present *within high-income countries*. Now, perhaps more than ever, studying the barriers to economic and community development in low- and middle-income countries carries relevant insights for high-income countries.

This course will, therefore, take a global perspective on economic and community development by aiming to learn from applications and case studies from around the world. We will specifically discuss topics relating to poverty and inequality, improving education and health systems, developing inclusive financial systems, the promotion of peace, the consequences of conflict and violence, the role of institutions (such as the government, the church, and civil society organizations), and how each of our personal and professional lives fit in with all of this.

## Course Objectives

---

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Articulate** the role different actors play in community development.
2. **Explain** the ways in which economic, environmental, political, social, and cultural factors affect community development.
3. **Critique** competing theoretical approaches to community development.
4. **Evaluate** strategies of community development in specific contexts.
5. **Analyze** data to make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.
6. **Communicate** productively with a diverse audience.

## Program Objectives

---

Upon completion of this program, students will be able to:

1. **Articulate** and **apply** a Reformed Christian vision for public service across government, society, and the church.
2. **Participate** in, and **contribute** to, the policy process.
3. **Analyze** and **synthesize** data and think critically to solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.
4. **Lead** and **manage** in the public interest.

5. **Communicate** and **interact** productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.

## Required Textbook and Resources

---

**Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.** 2012. *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. Public Affairs. Available on Amazon.com for under \$12.

**Bruce Wydick.** 2019. *Shrewd Samaritan: Faith, Economics, and the Road to Loving Our Global Neighbor*. Thomas Nelson. Available on Amazon.com for under \$9.

**Christopher Blattman.** 2022. *Why We Fight: The Roots of War and Paths to Peace*. Viking Press. Available on Amazon for under \$21.

**James Davidson Hunter.** 2010. *To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World*. Oxford University Press. Available on Amazon for under \$25.

## Course Assessments

---

### Discussion Forums

The foundation of this course is your thoughtful reflection on the assigned readings. Each week we will have a list of assigned readings made up by selections from the four books listed above. There will be several discussion prompts associated with the assigned readings.

In addition, each week you will need to engage with your classmates' posts. While you are required to post **two** thoughtful responses each week, quality responses and engagement is best. Both your individual experience and the experience of your classmates will improve with more and better quality virtual engagement with the assigned readings. Together these discussion posts and responses will contribute to 30 percent of your final grade in this course.

### Weekly Quizzes

Each week will also include a brief quiz to assess your engagement and comprehension of some of the key topics within the assigned readings. These quizzes will contribute to 20 percent of your final grade in this course.

### Development Project Paper

Much of this class will focus on how one-size-fits-all development projects do not work as well as intended. The course project is designed to give you practice in identifying a project that will enhance development, broadly defined. You will be required to write a 10-page paper (double spaced). In the paper, you will identify a specific geographic context, define a development objective, and design a program that may achieve that objective. You must discuss relevant course material, including relevant theories and evidence that supports your program.

You are expected to submit progress of your work on this development project paper to me a couple of times during this course. You will need to submit a proposal for your development project

before the end of **week 2**. This will constitute roughly 5 percent of your total grade for this project. Please note that you will have to provide a justified reason to change your development project once you have submitted this proposal.

The first draft of each project will be reviewed by several classmates. Peer review is a well-established practice in the scientific community. It helps both the reviewer and reviewee in enhancing the quality of work. Your first draft is due before the end of **week 6**. This will constitute roughly 10 percent of your total grade for this project. Your peer review is due before the end of **week 7**. You will be responsible for reviewing one of your classmate's first draft and this will constitute roughly 5 percent of your total grade for this project. The final draft of the paper, with revisions based on your received peer review, is due before the end of **week 8**. This will constitute roughly 80 percent of your total grade for this project.

## Grade Computation

Following is an example showing how grades will be calculated.

Assessment	Grade
Discussion Forums	30 percent
Weekly Quizzes	20 percent
Development Project Paper	50 percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 percent</b>

## Grading Scale

93-100% A, 90-93% A-, 88-90% B+, 83-88% B, 80-83% B-, 78-80% C+, 73-78% C, 70-73% C-, 60-70% D, below 60% F.

## Course Schedule

- Module 1 – What is Economic and Community Development?
  - Required Material:
    - Read the Forward from *Poor Economics* (pp. vii-xi).
    - Read Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 from *Shrewd Samaritan* (pp. xiii-32).
    - Read selections from Essay 1 from *To Change the World* (pp. 3-47 and pp. 79-98).

- What is due?
  - Discussion Forum
  - Weekly Quiz
- Module 2 – Theories of Economic and Community Development
  - Required Material:
    - Read Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 from *Poor Economics* (pp. 1-40).
    - Read Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 from *Shrewd Samaritan* (pp. 35-87).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Weekly Quiz
    - Development Project Paper Proposal
- Module 3 – Health and Education
  - Required Material:
    - Read Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 from *Poor Economics* (pp. 41-101).
    - Read Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 from *Shrewd Samaritan* (pp. 91-101 and pp. 116-133).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Weekly Quiz
- Module 4 – Credit, Savings, and Insurance
  - Required Material:
    - Read Chapter 6 through Chapter 9 from *Poor Economics* (pp.133-234).
    - Read Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 from *Shrewd Samaritan* (pp. 102-115 and pp. 134-149).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Weekly Quiz
- Module 5 – Conflict, War, Violence
  - Required Material:
    - Read the Introduction and Chapters 1 through Chapter 6 from *Why We Fight* (pp. 1-170).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Weekly Quiz
- Module 6 – Peace and Politics
  - Required Material:
    - Read Chapters 7 through Chapter 11 from *Why We Fight* (pp. 174-256).
    - Read selections from Essay 2 from *To Change the World* (pp. 99-196).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Weekly Quiz
    - Development Project Paper First Draft
- Module 7 – Faithful Presence
  - Required Material:
    - Read selections from Essay 3 from *To Change the World* (pp. 174-256).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Weekly Quiz
    - Development Project Paper Peer Review

- Module 8 – Wrap up
  - Required Material:
    - Read Conclusion from *Poor Economics* (pp. 267-274).
    - Read Chapter 10, Chapter 11, and Chapter 12 from *Shrewd Samaritan* (pp. 153-198).
    - Read Conclusion from *Why We Fight* (pp. 273-300).
  - What is due?
    - Discussion Forum
    - Voice Threads post (5 minutes) summarizing your paper
    - Development Project Paper Final Draft

## Time Management and Late Assignments

Deadlines are an unavoidable part of being a professional and this course is no exception. Avoid any inclination to procrastinate. To encourage you to stay on schedule, due dates have been established for each assignment; **20% of the total points will be deducted for assignments received 1-6 days late; assignments received more than 1 week late will receive 0 points.**

## Course/Discussion Participation

Active participation is a must in this course. Each week one or more key discussion questions, activities, debates, etc. will be posted. Generally, you will be required to respond to the main discussion and then also make comments (a minimum of two) on the responses of others in the course. *Please note that the quantity of responses is not as important as the quality of the responses.*

A running dialog about course topics will be maintained via the website discussion forums. It is expected that you will fully participate in the online discussions. This means posting your own thoughts about the weekly topics, commenting on others' ideas, and responding to questions about your own postings. Class participation points will be based more on quality than quantity. While it is relatively easy to post numerous, non-substantive comments, it takes more thought and effort to post intelligent, meaningful comments that move the discussion forward. For example, meaningful posts tend to:

- Provide concrete examples, perhaps from your own experience
- Identify consequences or implications
- Challenge something that has been posted – perhaps by playing —devil's advocate
- Pose a related question or issue
- Suggest a different perspective or interpretation
- Pull in related information from other sources – books, articles, websites, courses, etc.

Consider your time commitment to our online discussions to be critical to your success as a learner, as well as to the success of the course. Because *ongoing* participation is expected, participation scores will be based on three primary criteria:

1. Frequency and timeliness of postings
2. Content of your postings (the thoughtfulness/reflection that goes into your responses and the extent to which they address the topic for the week, including the assigned readings)
3. Adherence to online protocol (see rubric in the course website)

An online discussion forum is a “technological cognitive tool” that stimulates cognitive learning and critical thinking. Students engaged with course content in forums engage with other students in a generative processing of information. “Students draw upon their own experiences and interpretations and share these in the group discussion. They read other student responses and interpretations and compare these with their own thoughts. This involves the processes of reflection and the construction and re-construction of domains of knowledge. The resulting kinds of learning from these processes are not a regurgitation of a lecture or reading. It is a negotiated interpretation of knowledge with student ownership. The learning is deeper and more long lasting and students refine their thinking and their voice (Markel, S. 2009).

Asynchronous discussion enhances learning as you share your ideas, perspectives, and experiences with the class. You develop and refine your thoughts through the writing process, plus broaden your classmates’ understanding of the course content. Use the following feedback to improve the quality of your discussion contributions.

Examples of postings that demonstrate higher levels of thinking:

- “Some common themes I see between your experiences and our textbook are....” (analysis)
- “These newer trends are significant if we consider the relationship between ....” (synthesis)
- “The body of literature should be assessed by these standards ....” (evaluation)

## **Institutional Policies**

---

Please refer to the University and Course Policies and Resources block within your course.

Policies at Calvin offer our students both support and boundaries for wellness and success. It's important that you read through these policies and know your responsibilities and rights, whether on campus or online.