

# STDC 342: Economic and Community Development

Dr. Jeffrey Bloem

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Office Hours: Friday mornings by appointment    Class Hours: Tuesdays, 5:30 - 8:30 pm

Office: TBD

Class Room: TBD

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## 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 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.

## Required Materials

- **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.

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\*Last Updated: 12/19/2022

- **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 Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course 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.

## Course Structure

### Class Structure

This course will meet once per week on Tuesday evenings from 5:30 to 8:30. Each class session will include a mix of activities including a discussion of the reading, a class activity, class presentations, guest speakers, etc. Attendance is mandatory.

### Discussion Forum

The foundation of this course is our in-class discussion. To prepare for these discussions, you will engage with discussion forum posts based on the assigned readings. Each week we will have a list of assigned readings made up of selections from the four books listed above. There will be several discussion prompts associated with the assigned readings.

### Development Project Paper

Much of this class will focus on how one-size-fits-all economic and community development policies and/or 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. 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 discuss your proposed development project with me and your classmates a couple of times during the semester. You will need to submit a proposal for your development project before the beginning of class on **Tuesday, January 24**. This will constitute 5% of your total grade for this project. Please note that you will have to discuss with me and 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 the reviewee in enhancing the quality of work. Your first draft is due before the beginning of class on **Tuesday, February 28**. This will constitute 10% of your total grade. Your peer review is due before the beginning of class on **Tuesday, March 7**. You will be responsible for reviewing one of your classmate's first drafts and this will constitute 5% of your total grade. The final draft of the paper is due on **Tuesday, March 28**. A complete summary of the grading structure for this project is shown below.

## Grading

The grading of this course is as follows:

- Discussion Forum Posts: 40%
  - 10 discussion forum posts, 4% each
- Development Project Paper: 35%
  - Development Project Proposal, 5% (Due: Tuesday, January 24)
  - First Draft, 10% (Due: Tuesday, February 28)
  - Peer Review, 5% (Due: Tuesday, March 7)
  - Final paper, 15% (Due: Tuesday, March 28)
- Final Presentation: 15%
- Participation: 10%

**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.

## Schedule

The schedule is tentative and subject to change.

### Tuesday, January 3 (remote meeting) — What is Development?

— Required Reading:

- Foreword from *Poor Economics*, (pp. vii-xi).
- Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2 from *Shrewd Samaritan*, (pp. xiii-32).

### Tuesday, January 10 — Christianity and Culture

— Required Reading:

- Selections from Essay I "Christianity and World Changing" from *To Change the World*, (pp. 3-47 and pp. 79-98).

### Tuesday, January 17 — Theories of Economic Development

— Required Reading:

- Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 from *Poor Economics*, (pp. 1-40).
- Chapter 3, Chapter 4, and Chapter 5 from *Shrewd Samaritan*, (pp. 35-87).

— Optional Reading:

- Rodrik, Dani (2022) "Development Economics Goes North," *Project Syndicate*, April 11, 2022.

### Tuesday, January 24 — Health and Education

— Required Reading:

- Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 from *Poor Economics*, (pp. 41-101).
- Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 from *Shrewd Samaritan*, (pp. 91-101 and pp. 116-133).

### Thursday, January 26 — Track Mentoring Group

— Details: TBD

### Tuesday, January 31 — Credit, Savings, and Insurance

— Required Reading:

- Chapter 6 through Chapter 9 from *Poor Economics*, (pp. 133-234)
- Chapter 7 and Chapter 9 from *Shrewd Samaritan*, (pp. 102-115 and pp. 134-149).

### Tuesday, February 7 — Conflict, War, and Violence

— Required Reading:

- Introduction and Chapters 1 through 6 from *Why We Fight*, (pp. 1-170)

### Tuesday, February 14 — Peace and Politics

— Required Reading:

- Chapters 7 through 11 from *Why We Fight*, (pp. 174-256)

### Thursday, February 16 — Track Mentoring Group

— Details: TBD

## **Tuesday, February 21 — Power**

— Required Reading:

- Essay II "Rethinking Power" from *To Change the World*, (pp. 99-196).

## **Tuesday, February 28 — Faithful Presence**

— Required Reading

- Essay III "Toward a New City Commons: Reflections on a Theology of Faithful Presence" from *To Change the World*, (pp. 197-286).

## **Tuesday, March 7 — Wrap-up**

— Required Reading

- In Place of a Sweeping Conclusion from *Poor Economics*, (pp. 267-274).
- Chapter 10, Chapter 11, and Chapter 12 from *Shrewd Samaritan*, (pp. 153-198).
- Conclusion from *Why We Fight*, (pp. 273-300)

## **Tuesday, March 14 — Track Mentoring Group**

— Details: TBD

## **Tuesday, March 21 — Track Mentoring Group**

— Details: TBD

## **Tuesday, March 28 — Development Project Presentations**

— Details: Give a 12-minute presentation about your development project paper

## **Tuesday, April 4 — Track Mentoring Group**

— Details: TBD

## Course Policies

### COVID-19 Precautions

We will follow the guidelines set by the Calvin University, the CCCU, and the City of Washington, DC. I also want us all to be willing to go above and beyond these guidelines, if necessary, and when doing so will make others in our class more comfortable. I hope that you will all do what is necessary to keep each other, and yourselves, safe. Even if you consider yourself low risk, people around you may not be. If you feel at all sick, or have a temperature, please get tested. If you test positive, email me and we can discuss how to handle the situation.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. We only meet once per week, for a total of 11 times during the semester. Missing just one class period, therefore, represents missing a substantial portion of our in-class time together. With that said, I understand that travel plans can sometimes be unavoidable. If you do expect the need to miss a class period, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can adjust. In addition, "attendance" does not simply mean showing up for class. I also expect that you will participate with our discussion and activities in each class period.

### Communication Policy

E-mail is my preferred method of communication. E-mails sent between Monday and Friday will be responded to within twenty-four hours. Please do not wait until the last minute to send questions. Also, note that e-mails sent after 7pm will typically not be read until the next day. My phone number, for use in emergencies, is (774) 242-2588.

### Late Assignments Policy

Late assignments will not be accepted. If you anticipate that you will complete an assignment late due to unforeseen circumstances or events, please notify me *before* the assignment due date. If you experience challenges with technology, please notify me as soon as possible.

### Physical and Mental Health

Your physical and mental health is important. I encourage you to take full advantage of the services provided by Calvin University and the CCCU to facilitate your physical and mental health.

- Schedule time to exercise. Run, walk, do something to move around as you are able.
- Care of yourself mentally. Take breaks from your studies, spend time with friends and family, do something to rest from your most pressing task.
- Familiarize yourself with available mental health resources: <https://calvin.edu/offices-services/counseling-and-wellness/>
- Other available resources:
  - Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance: <https://www.dbsalliance.org/>
  - Suicide Prevention Crisis line: 1-800-273-8255 or <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

### Accommodations for Disabilities

Calvin University is committed to assisting students with documented disabilities. A student with a disability who may need academic accommodations can contact the Disability Services office: <https://calvin.edu/offices-services/center-for-student-success/disability-services/>

### Academic Integrity and Honesty

Academic dishonesty is regarded as a major violation of both the academic and spiritual principles of this community and may result in a failing grade or suspension. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, and abuse or misuse of library materials when such abuse or misuse can be related to course requirements.

## Lauren's Promise

I will listen and believe you if someone is threatening you.

Lauren McClusky, a 21-year-old honors student athlete, was murdered on October 22, 2018 by a man she briefly dated on the University of Utah campus. We must all take actions to ensure this never happens again.

If you are in immediate danger call 911. Do not hesitate.

If you are experiencing sexual assault, domestic violence, or stalking please seek help from the police whether or not you are in immediate danger.

- Washington DC police: 202-671-7233.

Additional resources:

- The Red Flag Campaign: <http://www.theredflagcampaign.org/>
- HAWC (Healing Abuse, Working for Change): <https://hawcdv.org/>
- National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence: <http://www.ncdsv.org/>
- National Coalition Against Domestic Violence: <https://ncadv.org/>

Calvin University also has Counseling Services that can help you in the aftermath of an incident: 616-526-6123.

I can also help connect you to the appropriate resources, or put you in touch with a female colleague faculty member who will do so. You can learn more about a variety of resources related to all aspects of sexual assault, domestic violence, or predatory behavior at Calvin University here: <https://calvin.edu/offices-services/counseling-and-wellness/>.