

CP 4813 / INTA 3303
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN PUERTO RICO
Spring 2025
TR 12:30 am - 1:45 pm, Cherry Emerson 322

Instructor: Alberto Fuentes (alberto.fuentes@inta.gatech.edu)
Office Hours: Virtual or in person, by appointment

Teaching Assistant: Joshua Ayers (gtg014b@gatech.edu)

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help students master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social, or geographic relationships develop, persist, or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion

Description

In the era of climate change, the political economy of sustainable development and resilience planning emerges as a crucial concern. This course will introduce students to the central outcomes of interest associated with “development,” including sustainable development and resilience. It will then examine the role of the economy’s three sectors (i.e., primary, secondary and tertiary) in affecting processes of development. Finally, the course will turn to politics, reviewing the institutions and organizations that shape how these development processes unfold.

To illustrate the central concepts and themes, the course will draw heavily on the case of Puerto Rico, a United States Territory that is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. While the first part of the course will address Puerto Rico’s 20th century history, much of the rest will be devoted to the “tragic” 21st century. During this latter period, the Territory has faced devastating natural disasters (i.e., Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, the 2019 earthquakes, and Hurricane Fiona in 2020), a deep economic crisis, sharp cuts to public expenditures and population decline.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, you will be able to:

- describe the key economic, political and environmental factors that shape the socio-economic wellbeing of citizens in Puerto Rico
- use your knowledge to address issues of immediate international concern relating to sustainable development and resilience:

- demonstrate an understanding of key concepts
- characterize the key obstacles
- assess different approaches for understanding and addressing key issues
- become more aware of the diversity of cultural and ethical systems in the world
 - describe the challenges relating to sustainable development and resilience planning across the globe
- express arguments clearly both in written and oral form; and work in small groups in a way that demonstrates both respect for your colleagues and efficient collaboration towards shared goals

Course Requirements and Grading

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Attendance and Participation	All classes	10
Worksheets (x 10)	~Weekly	10
Midterm Exam		25
Lab 1		10
Lab 2		10
Lab 3		10
Final Exam		25
TOTAL		100

Description of Graded Components

1. Attendance and Participation. You are expected to complete required readings, attend every class, and actively participate in discussions. Your attendance and participation will comprise 10% of your final grade.
2. Worksheets. On most weeks, at least one class will include a worksheet addressing the day's material. Together, the worksheets will comprise 10% of your final grade (1% each).
3. Midterm Exam will cover the material addressed during the first and second parts of the course. More details will be provided one week before the exam. The exam will account for 25% of the final grade.
4. The Group Labs will allow you to work in groups during class on specific problems. Each lab will account for 10% of the final grade.
5. Final Exam will cover all the material addressed in the course. More details will be provided one week before the exam. The final exam will account for 25% of your final grade.

Grading Scale

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	65-69%
F	0-64%

Policy for Late Assignments

Late assignments are strongly discouraged, except in the event of an illness or emergency (documentation will be requested). Any major scheduling conflicts – including those that arise due to participation in “approved Institute activities” – should be discussed with the professor before the assignment due date. The penalty for assignments turned in less than 24 hours late is a 20% grade reduction. Assignments turned in over 24 hours late will not be accepted.

Course Materials

- Course Readings. Electronic copies of all assigned book chapters and articles will be available on Canvas.
- Course Website. I will be using the Course’s Canvas Page extensively throughout the semester. On the Canvas page, you will be able to access important information about the course including the most updated version of the syllabus, course announcements, and all required reading material. I will also use the Canvas page to record grades. Please make sure to check the Canvas system regularly.

Feedback and contact with the faculty

- Office Hours. I am available to meet with you to discuss any aspect of the course. If you would like to meet, please send me an email and I will make the necessary arrangements. Meetings can be virtual or in-person.
- Email Policy. Email is the best way to contact me outside of class. However, note that I will often be unable to respond to email inquiries outside of regular working hours, so please keep this in mind when anticipating response times.

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty in the form of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. According to the Georgia Tech Student Affairs Policy, “Plagiarism” is the act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts of passages of their writings, and passing them off as your own products. It involves the deliberate use of any outside source without proper acknowledgment. For information on Georgia Tech’s Academic Honor Code, please visit

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/>

<http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>

Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity.

Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities.

If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services (often referred to as ADAPTS) to discuss your special needs and obtain an

accommodations letter. If you would like to discuss your learning needs, please email me as soon as possible to set up a time to do so.

Student-Faculty Expectations

At Georgia Tech we believe that faculty and the student body must continually strive for an atmosphere of mutual respect, acknowledgement, and responsibility. I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week		Topic	Readings
PART I. OUTCOMES			
Week 1 January 7 & 9	T	Introduction to the course	
	R	Puerto Rico: the 20 th and 21 st centuries	Frontline (2016). Blackout in Puerto Rico (https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/documentary/blackout-in-puerto-rico/) Mora et al, <i>Population, Migration, and Socioeconomic Outcomes among Island and Mainland Puerto Ricans: La Crisis Boricua</i> , read chapter 3.
Week 2 January 14 & 16	T	Economic Output	Lamba-Nieves et al, “PROMESA: A failed colonial experiment?” Federal Reserve of New York. “Puerto Rico Economic Indicators.” 2024.
	R	Inequality and poverty	Vargas Ramos, C. et al. “Pervasive Poverty in Puerto Rico: A closer look.” Centro, 2023.
Week 3 January 21 & 23	T	Human Development	Ul-Haq, M. "The human development paradigm in <i>Readings in Human Development</i> . Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and A. K. Shiva Kuma (eds.).Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003 (read pp. 17-22) Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission, “Mandated Report – Medicaid in Puerto Rico.” 2019.
	R	Human and Civil Rights	CPI. “US Commission on Civil Rights Confirms FEMA Discriminated Against Puerto Rico After María.” 2022. https://periodismoinvestigativo.com/2022/09/us-commission-on-civil-rights-confirms-fema-discriminated-against-puerto-rico-after-maria/ Wilson et al. “Quantifying inequities in U.S. federal response to hurricane disaster in Texas and Florida compared with Puerto Rico.”
Week 4 January 28 & 30	T	Sustainability	Soto Lacourt, Miguel. “Statement at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.” South Africa, 2002. Valdez and Ebeid in <i>The Atlantic</i> . “What Puerto Rico Needs Most.”
	R	Resilience	Benson and Craig, <i>The End of Sustainability</i> , read chapters 2 and 3.

Week 5 February 4 & 6	T	LAB 1: Disaster Colonialism	Rivera, D. “Disaster Colonialism: A commentary on disasters beyond singular events to structural violence.” United Nations. <i>International bill of human rights</i> , 1948. (read Articles 1-30)
	R	NO CLASS	
PART II. ECONOMIC SECTORS			
Week 6 February 11 & 13	T	Primary Sector	Jayne, T.S. et al, “Agricultural productivity growth, resilience, and economic transformation in Sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for USAID.” BIFAD, 2021. (read pp. 20 – 43).
	R	Colonialism, Dependency and Puerto Rico’s Primary Sector	Ayala, <i>Puerto Rico in the American Century</i> , read chapters 1 and 2. Mintz, <i>Woker in the Cane</i> , read chapters 1 and 2 (available in digital form at GT library)
Week 7 February 18 & 20	T	Secondary Sector	Amsden, A. H., & Chu, W.-W. <i>Beyond Late Development: Taiwan’s Upgrading Policies</i> . MIT Press, 2003. Read Chapter 1.
	R	Modernization and Puerto Rico’s Operation Bootstrap	Ayala, <i>Puerto Rico in the American Century</i> , read chapters 5 and 9.
Week 8 February 25 & 27	T	Tertiary Sector	Cruz, J. “Exporting the Knowledge Economy.” (unpublished manuscript)
	R	Critical Infrastructure in Puerto Rico (virtual)	Kwasinski et al, “Hurricane Maria Effects on Puerto Rico Electric Power Infrastructure” read Sections I to III and VII. RAND, <i>Recovery Plan for the Communications and Information Technology Sector after Hurricanes Irma and Maria</i> , read pp. 1-18. Homeland Security. <i>Infrastructure Interdependency Assessment</i> , read pp. 35 – 51.
Week 9 March 4 & 6	T	LAB 2: Re-igniting economic development	Ocampo, J. et al, “Devising a growth strategy for Puerto Rico.” Center for the New Economy, 2016.
	R	Midterm Exam	

PART III. INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS			
Week 10 March 11 & 13	T	The National State	Haslam et al. (eds). <i>Introduction to International Development: Approaches, actors and issues</i> . Canada: Oxford University Press, 2012. (read pp. 127 – 140)
	R	The Federal Disaster Response	<p>CDBG funds for Puerto Rico’s recovery (https://recuperacion.pr.gov/welcome/en/home/), read about CDBG-DR and CDBG-MIT, alongside other initiatives.</p> <p>Reina Perez in The Atlantic. “Trump’s Malign Neglect of Puerto Rico.”</p> <p>Lamba-Nieves and Santiago-Bartolomei. “Who gets emergency housing relief? An analysis of FEMA Individual Assistance Data Following Hurricane Maria,” read pp. 3-9.</p> <p>Garcia, I. “Deemed Ineligible: Reasons homeowners in Puerto Rico were denied aid after Hurricane Maria.”</p>
SPRING BREAK March 16 – 23			
Week 11 March 25 & 27	T	The Subnational State (virtual)	Eaton, Kent. "Latin American politics and the subnational comparative method: Vertical and horizontal challenges." <i>Latin American Politics and Society</i> 62.3 (2020): 149-172.
	R	The Disaster Response by Puerto Rico’s Commonwealth and Municipal governments	<p>Mazzei, P. and Frances Robles in the New York Times. “Ricardo Rosello, Puerto Rico’s Governor, Resigns After Protests.”</p> <p>Rosello, R. <i>Build Back Better</i>, pp. 1-8.</p> <p>Rosas et al. “Assessing the impact of municipal government recovery from Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico.”</p> <p>Marxuach, S. “Puerto Rico Recovery Task Force.”</p>
Week 12 April 1 & 3	T	National and subnational states: fostering economic development	<p>Evans, P. <i>Embedded autonomy: states and industrial transformation</i>. Princeton University Press, 2012. Read Chapter 1.</p> <p>McDermott, Gerald A. "The politics of institutional renovation and economic upgrading: Recombining the vines that bind in Argentina." <i>Politics & Society</i> 35.1 (2007): 103-144.</p>

	R	LAB 3: Planning for Resilience	TBD
Week 13 April 8 & 10	T	Civil Society Organizations (virtual)	Immerwahr, D. <i>Thinking Small: The United States and the lure of community development.</i> (read Introduction) Sanyal, B. "The Myth of Development from Below."
	R	NO CLASS	
Week 14 April 15 & 17	T	Civil Society Disaster Response in Puerto Rico	Sewordor, E. et al "Challenges for mobilizing resources for disaster recovery and reconstruction: perspectives of the Haitian diaspora." Torres Cordero, A. <i>The Struggle for a Just Recovery: Insurgent Planning, Transnational Networks and Colonial Legacies in Post-disaster Puerto Rico</i> , read chapter 3. Garcia and Chandrasekhar. "Impact of Hurricane Maria to the Civic Sector: A profile of non-profits in Puerto Rico."
	R	Final Exam	