

## "Why Are Some Countries Poor?"

[WT 1G-002](#), Winter 2025

M-F 1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

### Office Hours:

Instructor:	Dr. Olaniyi Ige	M	12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Office:	BES 119	T	12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:igeos@eckerd.edu">igeos@eckerd.edu</a>	W	12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Phone:	864-8462	T	12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
Mailbox :	BES 119	F	12:30 pm – 1:30 pm

## Overview

Welcome to *Why Are Some Countries Poor?* This course is designed to explore one of the most pressing questions in global economics and development: why do some nations thrive while others struggle with poverty? By examining historical legacies, institutional frameworks, geographic factors, and global systems, we will delve into the complex web of influences that shape economic outcomes across the world.

This course adopts a global perspective, encouraging you to think critically about the interconnected systems—economic, political, social, and environmental—that drive disparities in wealth and development. Through case studies, group projects, debates, and data analysis, you will investigate diverse paths of development, identify patterns, and propose solutions to global poverty challenges.

No prior knowledge of economics is required, making this course accessible to students from all academic backgrounds. Our goal is to foster a collaborative and inclusive learning environment where diverse perspectives are valued, and thoughtful dialogue is encouraged.

By the end of this course, you will have a deeper understanding of global inequality, the factors contributing to poverty, and the tools needed to assess and address these challenges. Whether your interests lie in economics, policy-making, international development, or global citizenship, this course will equip you with the knowledge and skills to engage meaningfully with one of humanity's most enduring issues.

Let's embark on this journey together to better understand the complexities of poverty and explore pathways to a more equitable world.

**Required Texts:** "Why Nations Fail" by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson

Choose your purchase option at:

[https://eckerd.bncollege.com/c/Why-Nations-](https://eckerd.bncollege.com/c/Why-Nations-Fail/p/MBS_1209639_used?currentCampus=494&currentTerm=494_1_25)

[Fail/p/MBS\\_1209639\\_used?currentCampus=494&currentTerm=494\\_1\\_25](https://eckerd.bncollege.com/c/Why-Nations-Fail/p/MBS_1209639_used?currentCampus=494&currentTerm=494_1_25)  
[W&currentCourse=494\\_1\\_25\\_W\\_235\\_1G\\_2&rental=true](https://eckerd.bncollege.com/c/Why-Nations-Fail/p/MBS_1209639_used?currentCampus=494&currentTerm=494_1_25)

**Other:** You are expected to be “up-to-date” on political and economic affairs for each class period. You will accomplish this by reading *The Wall Street Journal* every day. *The Wall Street Journal* is required reading for the class and is free for Eckerd students.

I am happy to meet with you during my office hours to discuss any questions you may have about the material.

**House Rules:** In consideration of others, please: 1) arrive on time; 2) show courtesy and respect when discussing the ideas of others and 3) do not use laptops/phones/smart watches in class unless given explicit permission to do so. You will be expected to fully participate in class discussion and group analysis of topics. A necessary (but not sufficient!) condition for participation is that you regularly attend class. Attendance is extremely important as the class material builds upon what was previously learned.

To prepare for class, please read ahead the chapter we are covering in your text.

**Honor Code:** All Eckerd students are required to pledge to the following honor code: "On my honor, as an Eckerd College student, I pledge not to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to tolerate these behaviors in others." All written assignments must have on them the word “Pledged” and the student’s signature, signifying their ongoing commitment to this code. This college takes issues of academic honesty and plagiarism very seriously. Violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the EC Academic Honor Council (AHC). Typically, a first offense violation of the Honor Code will result in failure in the course and a letter documenting academic dishonesty in the student’s file. A second violation typically results in suspension from the college, and a third, expulsion.

**Accommodations:** If you have a disability or believe that you qualify for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or other laws, please contact The Office of Accessibility at extension 7724 or via email at [accessibility@eckerd.edu](mailto:accessibility@eckerd.edu) as soon as possible. Appropriate accommodations can only be arranged through that office, located in Brown Hall 101, and may not be made retroactively. The request form for accommodations can be found at [eckerd.edu/aes/academic-accommodations](http://eckerd.edu/aes/academic-accommodations).

**Title IX Reporting Policy:** In accordance with Title IX, faculty who become aware of any incident of sexual violence are required by law to notify Eckerd’s Title IX Coordinator. For more information about your rights and reporting options at Eckerd, including confidential and anonymous reporting options, please visit: <http://www.eckerd.edu/titleix/>.

**Unauthorized Use of Course Materials:** All course materials (including lectures, PowerPoint, and materials posted on Moodle or other course management sites or shared by email) may only be used for the purposes of an individual’s or group’s study while enrolled in this course, and may not be shared with a wider audience on or off campus nor posted on an external website without my explicit permission.

**Student Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Eckerd College is committed to supporting and advancing the mental health and well-being of our students. If you are experiencing mental health concerns Counseling Services is located in Edmundson Hall and offers free and confidential appointments. You can request an appointment by completing a confidential form on the Counseling Services website (Eckerd.edu/counseling). If someone you know is experiencing mental health concerns and you would like someone to reach out to them, please reach out to Student Outreach and Support (SOS) by completing a referral form at care.eckerd.edu. If you have experienced power-based interpersonal violence (sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking) and are in need of confidential support, please reach out to Advocacy Services by emailing [advocacy@eckerd.edu](mailto:advocacy@eckerd.edu).

**Emergency Preparedness:** If for any reason Eckerd College is evacuated, students who leave campus for stays of overnight or longer should **bring their texts, notes and syllabus** so that they are ready to continue their course work. In such an event, check your Eckerd e-mail from your off-campus location and continue with the course work according to the syllabus and as delivered via Moodle.

**Grading outline:**

Participation and Discussions	20%
Final Paper:	30%
Group Presentation:	25%
Case Study Assignments:	25%

**LETTER GRADE CALCULATION**

<b>A</b>	<b>93 – 100</b>
<b>A-</b>	<b>90 – 92</b>
<b>B+</b>	<b>88 – 89</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>83 – 87</b>
<b>B-</b>	<b>80 – 82</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>78 – 79</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>73 – 77</b>
<b>C-</b>	<b>70 – 72</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>60 – 69</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>Less than 60</b>

## **TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF COURSE TOPICS AND EXAMS**

### **Major Topics:**

- 1. Introduction to Economic Development**
- 2. Colonialism and Historical Legacy**
  - The impact of colonization
  - Historical exploitation and its economic consequences
- 3. Institutions and Governance**
  - Political institutions, corruption, and governance
- 4. Geography and Natural Resources**
  - Resource curse and environmental challenges
- 5. International Trade and Globalization**
  - Trade patterns, dependency theory, and global inequality
- 6. Debt and Foreign Aid**
  - The role of foreign aid and debt in economic progress
- 7. Social Structures and Inequality**
  - Education, health, gender disparities, and their link to poverty
- 8. Modern Challenges**
  - Climate change, pandemics, and technological advancements
- 9. Case Studies**
  - Comparative analysis of Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and other regions

### **Important Date**

Last day to withdraw with “W”: Jan. 8

\*This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.\*