

# PAPM 4000 B – CAPSTONE SEMINAR IN DEVELOPMENT POLICY STUDIES

Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs and Policy Management

Fall 2025 | Wednesdays, 18:05–20:55

Check Carleton Central for Schedule and Location

**Instructor:** A. McDougall

**Office Hours:** Office hours are held virtually and scheduled by appointment. Students should email to arrange a time that works.

**Email:** [alex.mcdougall@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:alex.mcdougall@cunet.carleton.ca) Email is the best way to reach me. Please allow up to 24 hours for a response, Monday through Friday. Always include the course number in the subject line.

**Homepage:** [PAPM4000B Capstone Seminar \(SEM\) Fall 2025](#)

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## 1. Course Description

This capstone seminar consolidates and applies your prior studies in development policy. The course explores major theoretical and empirical debates about development, with an emphasis on how political, economic, and institutional factors shape development outcomes.

### Guiding Questions:

- Why do some countries prosper while others struggle with violence, poverty, and authoritarianism?
- Can struggling countries replicate the success of prosperous nations? If not, what are the barriers?
- How has the West influenced these trajectories, and what should its future role be?
- Why do reforms that seem promising in theory often fail in practice?

We will also explore the political economy of development, focusing on the incentives facing leaders, organizations, and bureaucracies when addressing reform. The aim is not just to learn “how-to” strategies, but to develop conceptual tools for understanding why development succeeds or fails.

**Undergraduate Calendar Description of course:** Capstone Seminar in Public Affairs and Policy Management: Policy workshop focusing on the application of public affairs analysis to develop problem solving and research skills. Seminar is policy-focused and organized by area of Specialization in the program. Students, working in small groups, examine concrete policy problems, actual or simulated, in

specific institutional contexts. Prerequisite(s): [PAPM 3000](#) and Good Standing in the Bachelor of Public Affairs and Policy Management program.

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## 2. Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

### Knowledge & Application

- Demonstrate understanding of development and policy concepts in contemporary contexts.
- Identify how these themes appear in current debates and events.
- Apply theory to explain complex social issues.

### Analysis & Understanding

- Critically evaluate diverse theoretical perspectives.
- Use policy and development frameworks to analyze societal challenges at multiple scales.
- Adapt this knowledge to tasks under time constraints.

### Communication

- Effectively communicate complex ideas to academic and non-academic audiences, orally and in writing.
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## 3. Seminar Organization

This course involves approximately 3 hours of class time per week and an average of 10 hours per week of preparation, reading, and assignments. The instructor will introduce each week with a foundational reading, but the seminar is primarily student-led. Early in the term, students will finalize topics and readings for their two seminar presentations. Later weeks will focus on policy memo presentations.

Each week includes:

- Brief instructor introduction with a classic reading.
  - Two student-led presentations and discussion.
  - Group discussion and peer feedback.
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#### 4. Texts & Course Materials

Course readings will consist of journal articles, book chapters, and other sources. All materials will be available through Ares and Brightspace. All readings are available free of charge through Ares and Brightspace.

#### 5. Evaluation

Component	Weight	Due Date
Reading Journals (10)	10%	Weekly, starting Sept 9 (Tuesdays, 11:59 pm)
Critical Review	15%	Oct 1
Seminar Presentations (x2)	30%	Weeks 2–10
Policy Memo Proposal	5%	Sept 22
Final Policy Memo	30%	Nov 15
Policy Memo Presentation		Nov 19–Dec 3
Attendance & Participation	10%	Ongoing

#### Class Policies:

**Late policy:** Critical Review & Policy Memo: -3% per late day. Reading Journals: no late submissions (0 if missed). Presentations: missing a presentation may result in a grade of 0.

**Completion Policy:** To pass the course, students must complete the Critical Review, Policy Memo, and Seminar Presentations.

**AI Policy:** The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include: any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT). In other words, students must submit original work. AI-generated submissions are prohibited and may result in a grade of 0 and referral to the Associate Dean’s office.

That said, Students may use AI tools for basic word processing and formatting functions, including:

- Grammar and spell checking (e.g., Grammarly, Microsoft Word Editor)
- Basic formatting and design suggestions (e.g., Microsoft Word’s formatting tools, PowerPoint Design editor)

**Documenting AI use:** It is not necessary to document the use of AI for the permitted purposes listed above. If you have questions about a specific use of AI that isn't listed above, please consult me.

**Attendance and Punctuality:** Regular attendance and punctuality are expected. If you need to miss a class, please inform me in advance whenever possible. Participation is a graded component of the course and can only be earned through active in-person presence and engagement.

**Submission and Return of Graded Work:** All written work must be submitted through Brightspace using the assignment dropboxes. Please allow up to two weeks for grading of written assignments. Presentation grades will normally be available within one week, and participation grades will be compiled within one week of the final class.

**Group and Collaborative Work:** Group work is permitted for the policy memo project, provided the group is authorized in advance as part of the proposal. All other assignments must be completed individually.

**Student Conduct:** Students are expected to conduct themselves respectfully and professionally at all times, both in class and online. This includes engaging with peers and the instructor in a constructive manner, upholding academic integrity, and contributing to a supportive learning environment.

**E-Proctoring:** Not applicable; no e-proctoring is used in this course.

**Recording and Cellphone Use:** Recording of class sessions is not permitted. Cellphones should be silenced and not used during seminar discussions.

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## 6. Detailed Components

### Reading Journal

Starting in Week 2, you are required to submit 10 weekly check-ins by Monday, 11:59 pm (submitted via Brightspace).

Late submissions will not be accepted, as the purpose of the journals is to demonstrate that you have prepared for class. Each check-in should be approximately one page (250–500 words).

Grades will be determined at the end of the semester based on the number and quality of your submissions. Generally, journals are assessed on a pass/fail basis. I am looking for clear evidence that you both completed and understood the assigned material for that week.

Each journal should address two questions:

1. What is one thing you learned from the reading?
    - This could be a new concept, theory, historical fact, or piece of information. In your own words, briefly define or describe it.
  2. What is one thing you found unconvincing or problematic?
    - This could relate to the author's argument, methodology, evidence, or a specific concept. Explain briefly why you found it problematic.
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## Critical Review

The Critical Review is a 1,750-word analytical essay summarizing and responding to the readings for a given week. Students may write on the same topic as one of their seminar presentations if they wish.  
What is a Critical Review?

A critical review is a concise, analytical essay that evaluates and makes an argument about a specific piece (or set) of academic literature.

### Learning Objectives

The assignment is designed to develop the following skills:

- Reading Comprehension
  - Identify central arguments, ideas, and themes in a large volume of writing.
  - Distill complex material into a focused, concise analysis.
- Argument Formulation
  - Generate and defend a thesis statement.
  - Organize the essay around this central argument.
- Effective Writing
  - Produce a clear, professional piece of writing.
  - Communicate ideas succinctly and persuasively.

### Scope

- Reviews may address one specific reading or a broader theme spanning multiple readings.
- Regardless of scope, all relevant assigned readings should be incorporated.

### Position Toward the Readings

- You do not need to disagree with the author(s).
- A strong review may align with or build on a reading's argument.
- The emphasis is on independent analysis and argumentation.
- Sympathetic critiques (e.g., refining or extending an argument, addressing objections, or applying the argument to a case) are welcome.

## Structure

- Introduction: State the essay's objective and thesis.
- Body: May include a brief literature summary, but should primarily develop your argument in an organized way.
- Conclusion: Summarize your analysis and offer broader insights.

## Approaching a Large Volume of Reading

When evaluating readings, consider:

- What is the central issue/question?
- What is the main argument?
- Is the logic of the argument sound?
- How could the argument be tested?
- What assumptions underlie it?
- How broadly is it applicable?
- How might it be improved?

*Note: flaws in an argument do not necessarily make it unworthy of study or application.*

## Marking Criteria

- Quality of Argument (45%)
    - Clear research question and thesis.
    - Well-evidenced, compelling argument.
    - Logical structure.
  - Reading Comprehension (45%)
    - Accurate understanding of key arguments.
    - Fair representation of the author's position.
    - Critical engagement without distortion.
  - Style & Writing Quality (10%)
    - Clear, concise, professional writing.
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## **Seminar Attendance and Participation**

As this is a seminar, active participation is essential. Students are expected to:

- Come to class prepared, having completed the assigned readings.
- Contribute thoughtfully and regularly to discussion.
- Engage respectfully with peers' presentations and arguments.

Participation will be assessed based on both the frequency and the quality of contributions.

## Seminar Presentation

Each student will complete two seminar presentations during the semester.

These presentations are based on topics and readings chosen by the student. Students may select any topic related to the course theme. You are encouraged to choose a topic that interests you, that you have worked on previously, or that aligns with your future research interests.

For each presentation, students must:

- Select at least one core reading to be assigned as “required reading” for the class.
- Provide 2–3 supplementary readings that inform the presentation (not required for the class to read).
- Have all readings selected and approved by Week 2.

The presentation should focus primarily on the topic itself, not just the assigned reading. While the readings may be discussed, the aim is to present your overall take on the topic and teach your peers about it. This includes providing background, explaining why you selected the topic, and why it is relevant to development. You may also want to explore controversies or debates surrounding the issue. When covering the article, explain why you chose it, its key arguments and approach, and whether you found it interesting, convincing, or problematic.

## Seminar Presentation Guidelines

Your seminar presentation should guide the class through a comprehensive exploration of your chosen topic. The presentation should be structured as follows:

1. Introduction to the Topic
  - Provide an overview of the background and context.
  - Explain why the topic is important in international development and significant in today’s global landscape.
  - Aim for 8–10 minutes. Consider adding interactive elements, such as questions to engage the class.
2. Overview of the Readings
  - Discuss the readings you selected.
  - Explain how they relate to the topic and contribute to understanding it.
  - Highlight any issues or problems with the readings and, importantly, what the implications of these issues are (e.g., a flawed methodology and how it affects conclusions).
3. Your Views and Response
  - Offer your own perspective and analysis.
  - This might involve agreeing with, critiquing, or synthesizing aspects of the readings, or offering independent reflections.

- Focus on your insights and takeaways.
- 4. Discussion Questions
  - Develop 3–4 thought-provoking questions to encourage discussion.
  - These may be introduced during the presentation or posed at the end.

*Additional Requirements:*

- Visual Aids: Use PowerPoint, Prezi, or other visuals to support your presentation. Minimize text and use concise bullet points.
- Delivery: Do not read directly from your notes or slides. Notes should serve to keep you organized or to quote directly, but most of your talk should be delivered conversationally.
- Answering Questions: Be prepared to respond thoughtfully to questions from the class or instructor.
- Instructor Notes: Provide the instructor with an outline or copy of your notes (not graded, for reference only).
- Duration: 45–50 minutes total (about 20 minutes presentation + discussion).
- Outside Research: Include some supplementary research beyond the assigned readings.

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## **Policy Memo Project**

The Policy Memo Project has three components:

1. Written Policy Memo (2,500 words) – due November 15
2. Policy Memo Proposal (250 words) – due September 29
3. Memo Presentation (15 minutes) – begins November 21

### ***Instructions***

Individually or in groups, students will write a 2,500-word policy memo that identifies a development policy problem and:

- Diagnoses the problem.
- Assesses past attempts to address it (successes and failures).
- Proposes alternative approaches, informed by lessons from the course.

The memo topic may overlap with syllabus themes or be entirely new.

Strong memos will:

- Incorporate course readings and concepts (where relevant).
- Draw from a wide body of literature on the chosen country/policy.
- Be well-organized, clearly written, and well-researched.

- Present a persuasive, evidence-based argument.
- Be dense with ideas and insights.

Memos may propose original solutions or synthesize existing sources — both are valuable policy skills.

### ***Policy Memo Proposal***

- A 250-word summary of the proposed memo topic.
- Should describe the development problem to be addressed.
- Must include a preliminary bibliography of at least five sources.
- Graded pass/fail.
- Worth 5% of the final memo grade.

### ***Policy Memo Presentation***

In the final weeks of the course, groups will present their memos. Presentations should:

- Provide background on the policy problem.
- Outline key debates and issues.
- Summarize the memo's approach and main argument.
- Offer discussion questions and suggest further readings.

### **Presentation format:**

- 15 minutes presentation + discussion (allocated class time = ~45 minutes).
- Two weeks prior, students must assign one reading to the class that provides background or context for the memo.

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## **7. Course Schedule**

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC	READINGS	NOTES
1	Sept 3	Introduction	Ferguson, <i>The Anti-Politics Machine</i> (1994), Intro	Finalize topics & presentations
2	Sept 10	Historical Legacies	Herbst, <i>States and Power in Africa</i> (ch1) Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. "Reversal of fortune: Geography and institutions in the making of the modern	Presentations 1–2

world income distribution." The Quarterly journal of economics 117.4 (2002): 1231-1294.

3	Sept 17	Land Reform	Studwell, <i>How Asia Works</i> (2013), Part I	Presentations 3–4
4	Sept 24	Conflict & Development	Bates, <i>When Things Fell Apart</i> (2015), Part I and III	Presentations 5–6
5	Oct 1	Democratization	Stasavage, <i>The Decline and Rise of Democracy</i> (2020)	Critical Review due; Presentations 7–8
6	Oct 8	Poverty	Banerjee & Duflo, <i>Poor Economics</i> (2010), Ch. 1–3	Presentations 9–10
7	Oct 15	Famine & Food Security	Ó Gráda, <i>Eating People is Wrong</i> (2015), Ch. 1–2	Presentations 11–12
–	Oct 22	<b>Fall Break – No Class</b>		
8	Oct 29	Data & Development	Jerven, <i>Poor Numbers</i> (2013)	Presentations 13–14
9	Nov 5	The Development Industry	Autesserre, Séverine. <i>Peaceland: Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention</i> . Cambridge University Press, 2014.	Presentations 15–16
10	Nov 12	Gender & Development	Evans, “How Did East Asia Overtake South Asia?” (2021)	Presentations 17–18
11	Nov 19	Aid	Koch, Dirk-Jan. <i>Foreign aid and its unintended consequences</i> . Taylor & Francis, 2024.	Policy Memo Presentations
12	Nov 26	Education & Development	Banerjee & Duflo, <i>Poor Economics</i> (2010), Ch. 4	Policy Memo Presentations
13	Dec 3	Wrap-Up	None	Policy Memo Presentations

## Annex

### Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

**Emergency Resources (On and Off Campus):** <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
  - Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
  - Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
  - Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
  - Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
  - Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>
- **Off-Campus Resources:**
  - Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
  - Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
  - Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
  - Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
  - The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

### Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

- **Pregnancy Accommodation:** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form [here](#).

- **Religious Accommodation:** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, click [here](#).
- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation, or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, click [here](#).
- **Accommodation for Student Activities:** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more information, click [here](#).

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

### **Sexual Violence Policy**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working, and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support).

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

### **Plagiarism**

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of others as one's own." This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas, or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet, and/or conversations.

**Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:**

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part by someone else.
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment.
- Using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgment.
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own.
- Failing to acknowledge sources through proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotation marks.

**Use of Artificial Intelligence**

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, images, summaries, videos, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

**Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations**

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

**Intellectual Property**

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

**Submission and Return of Term Work**

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

**Grading**

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points, is:

Percentage	Letter Grade	12-Point Scale	Percentage	Letter Grade	12-Point Scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5

80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.