

Economics 5001 Fall 2026
ECONOMIC GROWTH

Dalhousie University operates in the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaw, Wolastoqey, and Peskotomuhkati Peoples. These sovereign nations hold inherent rights as the original peoples of these lands, and we each carry collective obligations under the Peace and Friendship Treaties. Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982 recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Canada.

We recognize that African Nova Scotians are a distinct people whose histories, legacies, and contributions have enriched that part of Mi'kma'ki known as Nova Scotia for over 400 years.

Instructor:

Prof. Mrittika Shamsuddin

Email: Mrittika.Shamsuddin@dal.ca

Address: Room - B22, 6214 University Ave

Office Hours:

Wednesday: 11am-12pm and by appointment.

Communications - If you have questions, you can email me at Mrittika.Shamsuddin@dal.ca or post them on the Brightspace Discussion Board. When sending an email, please include the course code in the subject line to help me respond more efficiently. If you would like to meet during my office hours, no appointment is necessary.

Course Information

Meetings: Tuesday and Thursday

Time: 1:05-2:25 pm

Location: McCain 1170

Credit Hours: 3

Course Delivery:

This course will be delivered primarily in person. If needed, supplementary video recordings will be posted on Brightspace. Lecture recordings and annotated slides will also be made available on Brightspace to support your learning. However, regular attendance is strongly encouraged, as many course activities and learning experiences will take place during class.

Course Description:

Why are some countries much richer than others? Why is income in developed countries so much higher today than it was 100 years ago? Why have poor countries fallen behind, and what can they do to catch-up? Is having a well-educated workforce important for economic growth?

The primary aim of this course is to introduce students to the macroeconomics of growth. In the process we would try to provide some answers to the questions posed above. We discuss the theory behind economic growth and also study the quantitative importance of several factors behind growth such as saving, education, as well as technological and institutional change. We will study these factors in isolation and study the interactions between them. Along the way, we also examine the importance of macroeconomic policies.

Course Prerequisites:

This course is intended for students enrolled in the Master of Development Economics and Master of Economics programs. It assumes that students have a working knowledge of college-level calculus and statistics, which will be used throughout the course.

Course Learning Outcomes:

1. Analyze global growth patterns using core measurement tools, empirical strategies and key datasets
2. Apply and critically evaluate major growth models by solving formal models and assessing empirical evidence on proximate determinants of growth.
3. Identify and synthesize fundamental causes of cross-country growth differences and integrate these with proximate factors to produce context-specific, evidence-based policy recommendations.
4. Critique and communicate growth research effectively by evaluating academic papers, policy reports, and media sources, and translating technical insights into accessible arguments for non-academic and policy audiences.

Course Materials:

There is no textbook for the course. I will be posting the links of your required readings in Brightspace (A short list appears on the course schedule).

I base my lectures on the following textbooks, which form your recommended book list (Older Editions are fine too).

Recommended Book List: -

Introduction to Modern Economic Growth, by Daron Acemoglu (2009). Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Economic Growth: Fourth Edition, by David N. Weil (2025). Toronto: Pearson.

Course Assessment:

Response Papers and Presentations	20% of your final grade	In-class, Thursdays (4 best taken of 5)
Term Project	35% of final grade	Due: Oct1, Oct10, Oct17, Oct 31, Nov20, Dec 1, Dec11
Theory to Policy Activity	10% of final grade	In class, September 29 th , October 19 th , November 17 th
Final Exam	35% of final grade	Scheduled by Registrar (December 11-20) 2 hrs, in person

Course Offerings/ Requirements:**Response Papers and Group Presentations:**

- One group presents the weekly reading for 10 minutes. You can choose your own group of 2/3 and the week you want to present in. There is a sign-up sheet in the Brightspace module called “Paper presentation & Response Paper”. In the same folder, you will find the weekly readings. After the presentation, all students write a short response paper of 200-300 words in class.
- Details about the presentation can be found in the same folder.
- Response papers should include - Core argument of the reading, insight gained from the group presentation, your own critique or extension.
- Presentations are not graded but the response papers are. Rubric can be found under the same module.
- Best 4 of 5 response papers count toward the final grade.
- Note that all students are required to read the articles before coming to class, the presentation and the following discussions are meant to give you some conceptual clarity as you write your response.
- Learning outcome 4 is measured.

Term Project (Research Portfolio):

This is a process-based scaffolded assignment. The aim is for you to have a 2,500–5,000 word paper on a topic related to economic growth, choosing one of the following approaches:

- Empirical Paper: Develop a theoretically motivated hypothesis about income differences or economic growth across countries and use data and statistical analysis to test it.
- Replication Paper: Replicate an existing empirical study using more recent data or data from an alternative source and present your analysis in your own words.

- Debate Paper: Examine a major debate in the economic growth literature, present competing arguments and empirical/quantitative evidence, and critically evaluate the evidence.
- Learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are measured.
- Grading Rubric is posted under in Brightspace module.

Portfolio Components

1. Topic Rationale Memo
2. Annotated Bibliography (at least 3 peer-reviewed academic papers for Empirical/Replication Paper, 6 for debate paper)
3. Theory Map
4. Data Log + Summary Statistics (Empirical/Replication Paper)
5. Draft Paper + Revision Plan
6. Oral Exam
7. Final Paper

Portfolio Deadlines

- Topic Rationale Memo — Oct 2 (11:59 pm) in Brightspace
- Annotated Bibliography — Oct 9 (11:59 pm) in Brightspace
- Theory Map — Oct 16 (11:59 pm) in Brightspace
- Data Log — Oct 30 (11:59 pm) in Brightspace
- Draft + Revision Plan — Nov 20 (11:59 pm) in Brightspace
- Oral Exam Reflection — Week of Dec 1st, in-person
- Final Paper — Dec 11 (11:59 pm), in Brightspace

Theory to Policy Activity:

- You are given a scenario of different countries' growth successes and challenges. In class, you will discuss in small groups to analyze the case using one or more growth models, identify the core mechanisms driving the outcome, and develop policy recommendations supported by theory.
- Discussion grading rubric is given under the Brightspace module called "Theory to Policy".
- Best 2 out of 3 counts towards your grade.
- Learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are measured.

Ungraded Practice Problem Set

- After major theoretical blocks, practice problem set will be posted. They are ungraded and for you to build quantitative and qualitative skills, which will be handy for your term project and final exam.
- Learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are measured.

Final Exam

- The final exam will contain 5 short answer questions. These questions will be based on the required readings, my lectures slides, and the ungraded practice problem sets.
- You will have 2 hours to complete the final exam.
- The final exam will be scheduled by the Registrar's Office during the final exam period (December 11-20), in person. Do not make travel arrangements during this period.
- Learning outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 4 are measured.

This course has a Brightspace page for all registered students; see <https://dal.brightspace.com> for details. **Class materials, grades, and announcements will be posted to Brightspace.** It is essential that you familiarize yourself with how to use the Brightspace system.

Important Dates:

September 22	Last day to add fall term courses Last day to drop fall term courses with no financial implications
October 1	December Exam Schedule posted
October 7	Last day to change fall term courses from audit to credit (and vice versa) Last day to drop fall term courses without a “W”
November 5	Last day to drop fall term courses with a “W”

Conversion of Numerical Grades to Final Letter Grades following the Dalhousie Common Grade Scale:

A+ (90-100)	B+ (77-79)	F (0-69)
A (85-89)	B (73-76)	
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	

Course Policies:

Response Papers and Presentations: Considering that your lowest 1 response papers and presentation will be dropped, I cannot accept any excuses for missed or late submissions.

Theory to Policy Activity: Considering that your lowest graded activity will be dropped, I cannot accept any missed or late submissions.

Missed Final Exam: If you miss the final exam for a valid reason, as defined in Section 16.8 of the University Calendar, you will receive an INC or ILL until they take the make-up exam. The make-up exam will be scheduled on the second week of the following term. The make-up final exam will be in person.

Term Project: If you need an extension for any of the deadlines, please contact me within the first 24 hours after the deadline.

Use of Generative AI (Copilot Chat): According to Dalhousie and Nova Scotia privacy laws, instructors are not permitted to require students to use generative AI other than Microsoft 365 Copilot Chat, which is a free AI-powered tool included with all Dalhousie accounts. The following table outlines for which purposes and tasks you are required, allowed, and prohibited to use generative AI (Copilot Chat) in this course. If generative AI is used in cases where it is not permitted, it will be considered an academic integrity offence, and you will be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or corrective measures.

Required Purposes/Tasks	Allowed Purposes/Tasks	Prohibited Purposes/Tasks
	Response Presentations Term Project, Ungraded Practice Problems	Final Exam Response Papers Theory to Policy Activity

Disclosure requirements: Students must include a Generative AI Disclosure Statement with any assessment in which Microsoft Copilot Chat or another generative AI tool was used. The disclosure should briefly describe how the tool was used and the extent of its contribution.

Citing requirements: If you are using AI, please add it to the reference table.

Submission requirements: For any assignment involving generative AI, students must submit:

1. The disclosure statement described above.
2. A copy of the prompts used and the answers generated as a link or a shareable link to the full Copilot Chat conversation transcript and add the link at the end of the document as appendix.

Accessibility: Students who have approved accommodations through the Accessibility Centre for the final exam are responsible for arranging their alternate exam accommodations directly with the Accessibility Centre by the required deadlines.

Please note that all other assessment components are designed without time constraints. However, if you anticipate any barriers that may affect your ability to complete course requirements, please contact me as early as possible so that we can discuss appropriate supports and options.

Culture of respect and Inclusivity: This course is committed to fostering a respectful, inclusive, and supportive learning environment that values diverse perspectives, experiences, and approaches to learning. Economic growth theories and evidence will be examined across a range of historical, cultural, and geographic contexts, with opportunities for critical discussion and reflection. Students are expected to contribute to a positive classroom environment by treating others with courtesy, professionalism, and respect.

Universal Design of Learning: This course incorporates a variety of learning activities and assessment methods to support student success. Students will engage with course material through lectures, readings, discussions, case studies, and applied activities. Learning will be assessed through multiple formats, including problem-solving exercises, written assignments, presentations, and group work, providing students with diverse opportunities to demonstrate their understanding and skills.

Cell Phone policy: To minimize distractions and maintain an effective learning environment, the use of cell phones is not permitted during class. Cell phones must be silenced (ringer off) and stored in a bag or backpack for the duration of the class.

Email policy: We will do our best to respond to email within 24 hours on a weekday and 48 hours on a weekend.

Health and safety: All students are required to comply with health and safety requirements on campus and should be considerate of others' health concerns. Non-compliance may be reported under the Code of Student Conduct.

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, and Deliverables
1.	September 8 (T)	Introduction to Economic Growth Historical Facts & the Big Question Readings: Ch 1 (Acemoglu)/ Ch 1-2 (Weil), Overview (Development Report 2024) Jones, C. I., & Klenow, P. J. (2016). "Beyond GDP? Welfare Across Countries and Time." American Economic Review, 106(9), 2426–2457. Diamond, J. (1999). Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies. W. W. Norton. Ch 1-3
2.	September 15	Proximate Causes of Growth – Theory Submit: Response Paper 1 on Thursday Readings: Ch 2 (Acemoglu), Ch 3-4 (Weil) <i>Learning Outcomes 1 evaluated by response paper and presentation</i>
3.	September 22	Proximate Causes of Growth – Measurement, Empirics and Policy Submit: Theory to Policy 1 (in class) on Thursday Readings: Ch 3 & 4 (Acemoglu), Ch 6-7 (Weil) Comin, D., & Hobijn, B. (2009). "The Diffusion of Technology." Review of Economic Dynamics, 12(2), 338–353. Mokyr, J. (1990). The Lever of Riches: Technological Creativity and Economic Progress. Oxford University Press. Ch 1-2 <i>Learning Outcomes 2 & 4 evaluated by theory to policy activity</i>
4.	September 29	Neoclassical Growth Models - Theory Submit: Response Paper 2 on Thursday, Term Project (Topic Rational) due Oct 2 (11:59 pm) Readings: Ch 8 (Acemoglu), Ch 8 (Weil) <i>Learning Outcomes 2 & 4 evaluated by response paper and presentation</i>
5.	October 6	Neoclassical Growth Models – Measurement, Empirics and Policy Submit: Theory to Policy 2 (in class) on Thursday, Term Project (Bibliography) — Oct 9 Readings: Ch 9 -10 (Weil) Caselli, F. (2005). "Accounting for Cross-Country Income Differences." In Handbook of Economic Growth, Vol. 1A, 679–741. Elsevier. Mankiw, N. G., Romer, D., & Weil, D. N. (1992). "A Contribution to the Empirics of Economic Growth." Quarterly Journal of Economics, 107(2), 407–437. <i>Learning Outcomes 2 & 4 evaluated by theory to policy activity</i>
6.	October 13	Endogenous Growth Models - Theory Submit: Response Paper 3 on Thursday, Term Project (Theory Map) – Oct 16 Readings: Ch 11 (Acemoglu), Ch 11-12 (Weil) <i>Learning Outcomes 2 & 4 evaluated by response paper and presentation</i>
7.	October 20	Endogenous Growth Models – Measurement, Empirics and Policy Readings: Ch 13-14 (Weil) Jones, C. I. (1995). "R&D-Based Models of Economic Growth." Journal of Political Economy, 103(4), 759–784. Bils, M., & Klenow, P. J. (2000). "Does Schooling Cause Growth?" American Economic Review, 90(5), 1160–1183. <i>Learning Outcomes 2 & 4 evaluated by response paper and presentation</i>
8.	October 27	Endogenous Technological Progress – Theory Submit: Response Paper 4 on Thursday Readings: Ch 12 and 14 (Acemoglu), Term Project (Data Log) – Oct 30 <i>Learning Outcomes 1, 2 & 4 evaluated by midterm exam</i>
9.	November 3	Endogenous Technological Progress – Measurement, Empirics and Policy Submit: Response Paper 5 on Thursday Readings: Part 2 & 3 – Creative Destruction (World Bank Development Report, 2024) <i>Learning Outcomes 2 & 4 evaluated by response paper and presentation</i>

10. November 10 **Fall Reading Week**
11. November 17 Fundamental Causes of Growth – Theory
 Submit: Draft of Term Paper by Nov 20, 11:59pm
 Submit: Theory to Policy 3 (in class) on Thursday
 Readings: Ch 25 and 26 (Acemoglu)
 Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty. Crown Publishers., Ch 3-4
Learning Outcomes 3 & 4 evaluated by theory to policy activity
12. November 24 Fundamental Causes of Growth – Measurement, Empirics and Policy
 Readings: Ch 24 (Acemoglu) and
 Acemoglu, D., & Robinson, J. A. (2012). Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty. Crown Publishers., Ch 11-12
 Mokyr, J. (1990). The Lever of Riches: Technological Creativity and Economic Progress. Oxford University Press. Ch 1-2
Learning Outcomes 3 & 4 evaluated by response paper and presentation
13. December 1 Submit – Oral Exam on Term Project (Meeting with me)
Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 & 4 evaluated by oral exam

Note: Tuesday, December 8 - Monday classes will be held.

Exam period Submit:
 Term Project by December 11, 11:59 pm
 Final Exam (Scheduled by Registrar's Office during December 11-20)
Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3 & 4 evaluated by term project and final exam

University Policies and Statements

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the University Calendar and by Senate.

Academic Integrity

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

Information: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/academic-integrity.html

Accessibility

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (Canada and Nova Scotia).

Information: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/accessibility.html

Student Code of Conduct

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution.

Code: https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/student-life/code-of-student-conduct.html

Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness.

Statement: <http://www.dal.ca/cultureofrespect.html>

Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit or e-mail the Indigenous Student Centre (1321 Edward St) (elders@dal.ca).

Information: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html

Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)

https://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html

University Grading Practices

https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html

Student Resources and Support

Advising

General Advising https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html

Science Program Advisors: <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/science/current-students/undergrade-students/degree-planning.html>

Indigenous Student Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html

Black Students Advising Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html

International Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/international-centre/current-students.html

Academic supports

Library: <https://libraries.dal.ca/>

Writing Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html

Studying for Success: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html

Copyright Office: <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office.html>

Fair Dealing Guidelines <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/fair-dealing.html>

Other supports and services

Student Health & Wellness Centre: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness.html

Student Advocacy: <https://dsu.ca/dsas>

Ombudsperson: https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html

Safety

Biosafety: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/biosafety.html>

Chemical Safety: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/chemical-safety.html>

Radiation Safety: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/radiation-safety.html>

Scent-Free Program: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

Dalhousie COVID-19 information and updates: <https://www.dal.ca/covid-19-information-and-updates.html>