PS 255: Political Change  
Wednesdays 3-6 pm  
Fall 2002

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Office hours: Mondays 3-4:30

This class is open to Ph.D. students in Political Science. Others can enroll, with the permission of the instructor, as space permits. If the class fills up, priority will be given to Ph.D. students who have already completed the methods sequence.

The course has two parts. The first is a survey of major theoretical approaches to the politics of "developing" states over the past fifty years. The second part addresses three leading issues in the field: economic performance, democratization, and civil war. We will also devote a week to the study of methodological problems in comparative politics, and conclude the course with a week of readings on the future of the field of political development.

The reading for this course is heavy; moreover, all of the readings are required. There will usually be no lecture; instead, the seminars will be devoted to our collective efforts to evaluate and synthesize the week's readings. Since the course is a survey -- and hence designed to introduce students to a wide range of contending approaches -- I have selected readings from a wide range of traditions, and juxtaposed scholars with conflicting views on each issue. To understand each debate, it is critical to do all of the readings.

Each student will write four short papers, of five to six pages in length. During the second class meeting, students will select dates (and hence, topics) for three of their four papers; all students will submit papers on the methodology readings. Hard copies of the papers are due in my office by 5 pm the day before class. Papers longer than six pages will be returned to the author, with no grade, for editing. Same if you use abnormally small margins (less than 1") or fonts (less than 12 point).

Each week we will begin with a brief summary (two to three minutes), from each student, of their initial impressions of the readings, along with any questions they wish to raise for the day's discussion. After this first round of comments, one student will make a ten-minute presentation – evaluating and synthesizing the readings – to lead off the discussion. To guard against any facile criticisms, a second student will be appointed "defender of the texts," and will parry attacks on
the week's main authors. No research papers are required; students should devote
the time they would otherwise spend on such a paper to careful scrutiny of the
readings. Grades will be determined by averaging the four papers, and a class
participation grade (which in effect counts as a fifth paper).

The vast majority of the readings are in a coursepack. Students are also expected
to have access to three books, which are available for purchase at the Ackerman Union:

North, Douglass (1990), *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic

University Press.

Przeworski, Adam, Michael Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando
Limongi (2000), *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

October 2: **Introduction to the course**

October 9: **Early Approaches to the Study of Development.** This week we will read
some of the most important early scholars who studied the politics of non-Western, pre-
modern, or developing states: Weber, Lerner, Pye, and Deutsch. Each of these authors
deserve a week or two of their own, but unfortunately, we must compress all into a single
week.

We can only sample Weber’s sprawling insights into pre-modern societies; these excerpts
should give you a sense of his approach. Pye’s article offers an excellent summary of
what political scientists knew, or thought they knew, about politics in non-Western states
in the late 1950’s. Lerner’s book is a classic statement of what later became known as
“modernization theory.” Deutsch offers his own theoretical framework for the study of
development. Since these readings frame many subsequent debates, pay close attention
to them: we will be repeatedly referring back to them.

If you choose to write a paper this week, please summarize and review either the Weber
or the Deutsch, and answer the following: what were they trying to explain? What were
their independent and dependent variables? What type of evidence did they use? Were
there important variables they overlooked?

b. Lerner, Daniel (1958), The Passing of Traditional Society, chapters 1-3.


October 16: Dependency Theory. These readings follow the rise and fall of dependency theory, which was the main challenge to modernization theory in the 1960's and 1970's. Think carefully about the merits of this neo-Marxist approach to development. Did it correctly diagnose the problems of earlier approaches to development? How did the arguments change over time? Why did dependency theory die out in political science in the U.S. – even though it still enjoys popularity in sociology, radical history, and among non-U.S. and non-Western scholars?

Gunder Frank's autobiographical essay – though not really a piece of scholarship – will help give you a feel for the emotional battles that characterized academic discourse at the time.

Those of you writing essays this week, please describe and defend your own conclusions about the merits of dependency theory. What was it trying to explain? What evidence did it use? What, if anything, should be salvaged from this approach to development?


October 23: **Rational Choice Institutionalism.** The leading -- or at least, most influential -- approach to development today, rational choice institutionalism (sometimes called "the new institutionalism," "positive political economy," and assorted other names) is arguably less a theory than a loosely-connected set of assumptions borrowed from neoclassical economics. But does it imply a theory of development? Does RCI generate important insights into political phenomena; or prevent us from asking critical questions?

In many ways the RCI approach to development comes from the remarkable work of economic historian (and Nobel laureate) Douglass North; please read his assigned book in its entirety. The Geddes article does an excellent job of spelling out some of the implications of North’s work for developing countries. Note that I have not included critics into this week’s readings – but fear not, we will hear them out in the final week of the course.

If you are preparing an essay this week, focus on the North book. What is North’s central argument? What are his independent and dependent variables? What are the normative implications of his argument for developing states – in other words, what does North think should be done to achieve successful development?


October 30 [note: I’ll be out of town on this day so we’ll need to find another time to meet]: **Methodological Issues in Comparative Politics.** This week we put aside the question of theory and talk about how those who study comparative development conduct actual research. To keep matters as simple as possible, we will focus on the volume by King, Keohane and Verba (KKV), which has become a standard text on political science methodology; we will also cover some of its critics. Before coming to class, think carefully about which view(s) you find most persuasive – and be sure you understand the basic logic of how KKV believe a hypothesis should be tested. We will be drawing on their arguments repeatedly in the remainder of the course; and when you write your dissertation prospectus, you will have to grapple with it again. If you don’t understand the KKV argument – and those of its critics – now is the time to learn.

Everyone will write an essay this week. In it please describe in your own language (i.e., not simply by using quotations) the KKV recipe for conducting social science research.
Then discuss whether or not you agree with their argument that all research in political science should follow this recipe. If you disagree, what exceptions would you make? If you agree, why are their critics (especially Laitin and Rogowski) wrong?


November 6: **Economic Growth and the State.** This week we read three articles that should serve as an introduction to the study of economic growth, and how economists see the proper role of the state. All four articles are classics. Rostow heavily influenced a generation of political scientists; Krueger’s work became the foundation for many critiques of the state; and Barro’s article was a milestone in explaining the determinants of economic performance.

If you are writing an essay this week, please compare the role(s) of the state in economic development in these three articles. What does each scholar believe the state should do to promote economic growth?


November 13: **Where is Development Economics Today?** This week we read three state-of-the-art efforts by economists to assess what is known, and not known, about the economic performance of developing states. If you are writing an essay this week – and I only recommend it if you have a good background in economics – please summarize and compare the arguments of any two of these articles about the accomplishments of development economics since the 1950’s.


November 20: **What Causes Democracy?** This week we take a first crack at answering this question, looking at the prevailing views on democracy in the developing world in the 1950’s (Brzezinski), the most important early effort to discover the determinants of democracy (Lipset), a landmark article by Huntington, and a recent, highly sophisticated, study of this issue (Barro). I encourage you to also visit the web site of Freedom House (www.freedomhouse.org) and look up the latest figures and trends on democracy – where it’s advancing, where it’s facing setbacks. Although Freedom House is sponsored by the conservative Heritage Foundation, you will find plenty of links to other, more liberal organizations that monitor democracy and human rights (click on ‘research’ then ‘resources’).

If you wish to write an essay this week, please use Barro to critique Lipset. Which of his propositions are confirmed by Barro’s analysis? Which are not? How well does Lipset fare in 2001?


November 27 [note: we must reschedule this meeting so that people are free to leave early for Thanksgiving]: **How Do Democracy and Economic Performance Interact?** Our reading this week is the new and ambitious book by Przeworski et al., plus an essay by Collier and Adcock on how democracy should be measured. Although Collier and Adcock profess to rise above the fray and take a catholic approach to measuring democracy, some believe that their essay is a subtle attack on Przeworski’s approach.

Should you wish to write an essay this week, please offer a methodologically-based critique of Przeworski et al. Do they measure their variables in the right way? Have they defined their universe of cases properly? Do they draw the correct inferences from their
analyses?


December 4: **The Study of Civil Wars.** Civil war has become one of the hottest topics in both comparative development and international relations. This week we’ll read a series of papers on this issue, which are designed to acquaint you with some of the leading debates. The Collier and Hoeffler paper is perhaps the most influential work to emerge in this field for the last decade. Gurr et al. compile a fine summary of recent global trends, and Fearon and Laitin offer some results from what is certain to be a landmark study of the causes of civil war.

If you wish to write a paper this week, compare the Collier and Hoeffler paper with the Fearon and Laitin paper. How do their findings differ? What accounts for these differences? Whose results are more valid?


December 11: **The Future of Comparative Development.** This week we will try to sum up and reflect on the study of the developing world in political science, and to discuss where it should be going in the future. To fuel your thinking, I have selected some provocative articles.

In an article that touched off considerable backbiting and introspection among Asia scholars, Bruce Cumings -- a radical historian who specializes in Korea -- draws on newly-declassified U.S. government documents to argue that the entire enterprise of "Area Studies" and "International Studies" in the U.S. was heavily shaped by the hands of U.S. intelligence, and largely served to advance U.S. Cold War interests; Chalmers Johnson, a leading scholar of Japan, responds to Cumings and defends his own ties to the CIA. Bates, Johnson, and Lustick fiercely debate the merits of "Area Studies" in
comparative politics; and Lindblom -- a former APSA President -- delivers a scathing evaluation of our field's "accomplishments" over the past half-century. If you're thinking of quitting graduate school, Lindblom may push you over the edge. In any case, come prepared to evaluate each of these articles and offer your own views on how the field of comparative development should evolve over the next decade.

