This class is open to Ph.D. students in Political Science. Others can enroll, with the permission of the instructor, as space permits. The prerequisite is statistics up to the level of PS 200C, or the equivalent. At least one year of introductory (undergraduate) economics is strongly recommended.

There are two parts to this course – a reading/discussion part, and a data analysis part. The readings are designed to introduce you to some prominent debates on the political economy of development, both old (modernization theory, dependency theory) and new (on democracy, economic growth, inequality, poverty, civil war, and government performance). All of the readings are required.

You must also do seven out of eight possible weekly assignments. Some of the assignments may be done in pairs; these are marked below. The assignments are due at noon on Tuesdays, before class. Please place one hard copy in my box and a second in Brian Min’s box.

The class will be divided into two 80-minutes halves. In the first half, we will have a brief summary (two to three minutes), from each student, of their reactions to the readings, along with any questions they wish to raise for discussion. In the second half, one student or pair will present their findings from the assignment to the class (everyone will do this at least once during the quarter). Following the presentation, one or two discussants will comment on the presentation. I will randomly assign presentation duties, and discussant duties, on the Thursday before class.

Grades will be based on the seven assignments (each worth 10 percent of your grade) and class participation (worth 30 percent).

All the readings are available either on the web (mostly via JSTOR, various journal websites, or the personal home pages of the authors), or through PDF files that are posted on the course web page.
COURSE SCHEDULE

October 4

Introduction to the course

October 11

Reading: Modernization Theory
This week we will read the work of some of the most important early scholars who studied the politics of non-Western states. We can only sample Weber’s sprawling insights into pre-modern societies; this excerpt is perhaps his most influential, and forms the basis of what we mean when we discuss a ‘Weberian bureaucracy’ or a ‘Weberian state. McClelland and Deutsch were considered pathbreaking scholars in the 1950s and 1960s, in applying social science to the problems of the developing world. And the Huntington article encapsulates the central argument in his seminal book, which was a critique of modernization theory and is one of the key books in the field.

Among the questions you should bear in mind while reading are: what were these scholars trying to explain? What were their independent and dependent variables? What type of evidence did they use? Were there important variables they overlooked?


Assignment: Describe Economic Performance by Region
Examine the six major regions in the developing world (Africa, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia), between 1970 and 2000, using data from the World Development Indicators. Describe which regions performed well, and which poorly, along whatever you believe are the most salient dimensions. How did performances change over time? You should a) summarize the important dimensions of these economies in both table and graph forms, and b) in a short essay (four-five pages) explain the most salient features in your comparisons. The group with the prettiest graph will win a prize. You may work in pairs.
October 18

Readings: Dependency Theory
These readings constitute a brief introduction to dependency theory, a ‘theory’ of development that was influential in the 1960s and 1970s in political science, and which is still predominant in many universities in Europe and the non-Western world. Think carefully about the merits of this neo-Marxist approach to development. Did it correctly diagnose the problems of the developing world? How did the arguments change over time? Why did dependency theory die out in political science in the U.S? In addition to the readings, you may find it helpful to explore other material on dependency theory – on the web, in various encyclopedias, or in other readings.


Assignment: Design a Test of Dependency Theory
Identify what you believe are the one or two most important hypotheses at the core of dependency theory; then write a model, and describe a series of cross-national estimations, that would test these hypotheses. You are not expected to carry out the actual tests, but to tell us how – using indicators that are available in the real world – you could confirm or disconfirm the central tenets of dependency theory. Avoid ‘straw men’; instead, try to find hypotheses that advocates of dependency theory would agree with. Turn in an essay describing the hypotheses you have tested; explaining how you derived them; defining your variables; specifying the model; and telling us what results would confirm or falsify dependency theory. You may work in pairs.

October 25

Readings: the New Institutional Economics
Perhaps the most influential ‘theory’ of development today is that ‘institutions matter.’ This belief comes largely from the work of Douglass North, and has become widely accepted among economists – perhaps most notably at the World Bank. The readings for this week include North’s Nobel address (a good summary of his world view) and one of his most influential articles, plus two studies from World Bank economists trying to measure and study institutions.
Assignment: Using Data to Understand Institutions

Download indicators of institutional quality from at least three different sources; describe each of these datasets, and what they measure; and evaluate how accurately they capture North’s concept of institutions.

November 1

Readings: Democracy

This week we take a quick look at studies of democracy, focusing on economic factors that seem to make democracy more likely. Readings include Lipset’s classic piece (which represents a ‘modernization’ view); a number-crunching exercise from Barro; my own piece on democracy and income from oil; and an iconoclastic analysis by Acemoglu et al.


Assignment: Country Case Studies of Regime Type

You will be randomly assigned a country. Is the history of regime type, and regime change, in this country more consistent with the Barro argument or the Acemoglu et al.
argument? Can you identify additional variables from your case study that should be placed in the Barro or Acemoglu models? Write a brief essay explaining your answers.

November 8

Readings: Civil Wars
Since about 2000, the problem of civil war has become one of the most exciting areas of new research. This week we read four state-of-the-art articles. Collier and Hoeffler touched off many controversies with their 1998 study, several of which have not been settled. Fearon and Laitin produced what is today the most widely-accepted model of civil wars, and Fearon’s later piece on civil war duration is equally important. Finally, Sambanis raises some disturbing questions about earlier studies with his new article.


c. Sambanis, Nicholas (2005), “What is a Civil War?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*.


Assignment: Replicate the Fearon-Laitin Model and Evaluate its Robustness
The model used by Fearon and Laitin to explain civil wars has become highly influential. Find the dataset they use and replicate their main model (i.e., Table 1, Column 1); then evaluate its robustness along several dimensions: model specification, sensitivity to outliers, and sensitivity to other measurements of the key variables. You may work in pairs on this assignment.

November 15

Readings: Economic Growth
This week we read four articles that serve as an introduction to the study of economic growth, and how economists see the proper role of the state.


**Assignment: Evaluate Prior Research**

Create a list of the 10-15 most important studies, written in the last ten years, on economic growth. Produce a table that compares the studies to each other along whatever dimensions you find salient. Summarize in a paragraph what each study finds about the role of political factors in explaining economic growth. Be sure to include the work of Sala-i-Martin. You may also find Jonathan Temple’s website on economic growth helpful. *You may work in pairs.*

**November 22**

**Readings: Poverty**

Too often we focus on growth, not poverty alleviation. The essays this week look at a broader set of social indicators, paying special attention to the needs of the poor. Note the debate between Lake and Baum on one hand, and Ross on the other, over whether democracy really matters. How could this dispute be (peacefully) resolved?


**Assignment: Evaluate the validity and completeness of inequality measures**

Locate, download, and evaluate the data quality of measures of country-level inequality since 1970. Which of the measures appear to be the most accurate and why? Are they comparable cross-nationally? What is the pattern of missing data? Write a brief essay describing your findings. *You may work in pairs.*
November 29

Readings: Government Performance
Recently scholars have turned back to an issue raised by Max Weber: the importance of high-quality government. The essays for this week look at how and why the quality of government varies cross-nationally, and how much this variation really matters.


Assignment: Thanksgiving
Go home, rest, eat.

December 6

Readings: Geography, Natural Resources, and Colonial Origins
Our final set of readings cover a recent debate over how a cluster of factors – geography, natural resources, colonialism, and institutions – have influenced the development trajectories of non-Western countries.


Assignment: Adjudicate the Dispute

Write a brief essay summarizing the debate among these scholars; then design a test – one that would use data that is obtainable – that would clarify the role of institutions in producing the variation in outcomes that we observe in the non-Western world.