POLS 5365: Political Economy of Institutions

Wednesdays @ 3:00 in Holden Hall 255

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Office Hours by Appointment

We will study how institutions affect political and economic performance. We cover varieties of governance, the Bretton Woods Institutions, culture/trust/corruption, the modern impact of historical institutions, sanctions, rent-seeking, state capacity and state failure.

The main emphasis is on getting students into writing their own research on one of these topics.

The main expectations that I have for you as students are (1) DO THE READINGS AND COME TO CLASS PREPARED. This is a graduate seminar, I am not going to be lecturing for 3 hours a week. (2) Be respectful of your fellow students. (2) Do NOT plagiarize the work of others in ANY of your assignments. If you have any doubts, ASK FIRST before turning something in.

Grading:

Research Paper 50% (see time line at back of syllabus)
Referee Report 25% (topic and paper to be decided by consulting with me)
Participation 25% (these points are yours to lose. If I become dissatisfied with participation, I reserve the right to create specific assignments for these points)

Topics and some initial readings (the syllabus is never truly done!) follow
Institutions and Economic Performance:


Where does Government come from?


Corruption


Treisman, D., 2007. What have we learned about the causes of corruption from ten years of cross-national empirical research?. Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci., 10, pp.211-244.


Sanctions


IMF/WB/Aid


The Long Arm of the Past


Miscellaneous cool stuff


**Timeline for the research project**

Topics submitted by September 7 (email, as much detail as you can) Sooner is better
Topic approved by September 19th
Data search completed to confirm viability of topic by September 26th
Literature Review by October 17
Data Collected and Cleaned by October 24
Preliminary Results submitted by November 14
Rough Draft due November 28
Final Turn in, December 10

If you are planning to double submit in another class you must get my permission AND the other class’s instructor permission from the beginning. Feel free to consult with your primary advisor about a topic and how you can use this assignment to further your publishing / dissertation goals.

**How to critically read/evaluate a paper**

1. What is the main point / argument / take away
2. What is the evidence offered in support?
3. How appropriate is the argument / evidence
4. Does the statistical analysis make sense
5. Biggest strength / Biggest weakness
6. Can you think of extensions or refutations?
7. What would you have done differently?
8. What new ideas have you come up with from reading the paper?