



**FREE MARKET
INSTITUTE**

TEXAS TECH
Research & Innovation

Political Economy Reading Program

The Wealth and Poverty of Nations

Participants explore works that examine the role of personal freedom, markets, and culture in wealth generation. Key questions include:

- Why are some nations prosperous while others remain impoverished?
- How has the quality of life changed over time around the world?
- How do government policies and markets affect our well-being?

Reading Schedule

Introduction

- Bailey, Ronald. (2022). “Why Is It So Hard to Admit When You’re Wrong?” *Reason Magazine*. January. Accessed at <https://reason.com/2021/12/11/why-is-it-so-hard-to-admit-when-youre-wrong/printer/>.

Session 1 – Geography

- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Why, When, and How Did the World Become Rich?” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 1-16.
- ——— (2022). “Did Some Societies Win the Geography Lottery?” 19-36.

Session 2 – Institutions

- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Is It All Just Institutions?” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 37-65.
- Leeson, Peter and Claudia Williamson. (2023). “Cheering for Capitalism.” In *The Anthem Companion to Peter Berger*, Jonathan B. Imber, Ed. London, UK: Anthem Press. 127-136. Accessed at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/anthem-companion-to-peter-berger/cheering-for-capitalism/D14E4376DB7048F08135AB0F0B9BB35D>.

Session 3 – Culture

- Henrich, Joseph, Steven Heine, and Ara Norenzayan. (2010). “The Weirdest People in the World.” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. Vol. 33, No. 2-3. 61-83. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X0999152X>.
- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Did Culture Make Some Rich and Others Poor?” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 66-87.



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Session 4 – The Origins of Economic Development

- King, M. Scott and Claudia Williamson Kramer. (2025). “State Antiquity and Economic Progress: Cause or Consequence?” *Public Choice*. Vol. 203, 77-103. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11127-024-01186-w>.
- Williamson Kramer, Claudia. (2023). “The Importance of Choice: Catfish Man of the Woods Theory of Development.” *Social Philosophy and Policy*. Vol. 40, No. 1. 260-271. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0265052523000456>.

Session 5 – Exploitation

- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Was It Just a Matter of Colonization and Exploration?” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 104-125.

Session 6 – European Origins

- Schulz, Jonathan et. al. (2019). “The Church, Intensive Kinship, and Global Psychological Variation.” *Science*. Vol. 366, No. 6466. Accessed at <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.aau5141>.
- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Why Did Northwestern Europe Become Rich First?” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 130-148.

Session 7 – The Industrial Revolution

- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Britain’s Industrial Revolution.” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 149-175.
- McCloskey, Deirdre. (2015). “It Was Ideas and Ideologies, Not Interests or Institutions, Which Changed Northwestern Europe, 1600-1848.” *Journal of Evolutionary Change*. Vol. 25, No. 1. 57-68. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00191-015-0392-x>.
- Wilson, Bart. (2025). “On Explaining Why the (Human) World is Rich.” *European Economic Review*. Vol. 174, No. 104969. May 2025. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euroecorev.2025.104969>.

Session 8 – Growth Goes Global

- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “The Rise of the Modern Economy.” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 176-197.
- ——— (2022). “Industrialization and the World It Created.” 198-221.



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Session 9 – The Environment

- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “Fewer Babies?” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 88-103.
- Desrochers, Pierre, Vincent Geloso, and Joanna Szurmak. (2021). “Care to Wager Again? An Appraisal of Ehrlich’s Counterbet to Julian Simon, Part 1: Outcomes.” *Social Science Quarterly*. Vol. 102, No. 2. 786-807. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12928>.
- ——— (2021). “Care to Wager Again? An Appraisal of Ehrlich’s Counterbet to Julian Simon, Part 2: Critical Analysis.” Vol. 102, No. 2. 808-829. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.12920>.

Session 10 – Foreign Aid

- Hassoun, Nicole and Jason Brennan. (2019). “Foreign Aid.” In *Ethics, Left and Right: The Moral Issues That Divide Us*, Bob Fischer, Ed. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. 153-173.
- Skarbek, David and Peter Leeson. (2009). “What Can Aid Do?” *Cato Journal*. Vol. 29, No. 3. 391-397. Accessed at <https://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/serials/files/cato-journal/2009/11/cj29n3-2.pdf>.

Session 11 – Pursuing Growth

- Kogelmann, Brian (2022). “We Must Always Pursue Economic Growth.” *Utilitas*. Vol. 34, No. 4. 478-492. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0953820822000358>.
- Koyama, Mark and Jared Rubin. (2022). “The World Is Rich.” In *How the World Became Rich: Historical Origins of Economic Growth*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. 222-225.
- Rose, Julie L. (2020). “On the Value of Economic Growth.” *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*. May. Vol. 19, No. 2. 128-153. Accessed at <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470594X19889123>.