POLI 7976
Comparative Political Economy

Tuesday 9:40 am – 12:30 pm, spring 2011

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OH: 2:00 – 3:00 pm on Tuesday, or by appointment
Stubbs 229, Department of Political Science

This seminar provides a critical evaluation (with some methodological comment) of the main theories and empirics in comparative political economy. This course is divided into three parts. The first part of the course examines main theoretical perspectives of complex relationships between state(s), market(s), and society(ies), and the dynamics of capitalism in historical perspective. The second part is a review of various approaches to the study of socio-economic development and political institutions. The third part of the course is devoted to the established literature on the welfare state, redistribution/representation, and globalization/neoliberalization.

While the purpose of this seminar is to actively engage in academic discussions, our ultimate goal is to search for a “better” political socio-economic organization in the real world. We proceed behind a veil of ignorance, amicable to various positions, methods, ideologies, cultures, religions, and cults. As such, the only approach is Bayesian – updating our existing beliefs.

This is an advanced graduate seminar. A “seminar” is a forum for a collaborative exploration of ideas, focusing on identifying what we do not know and on theoretical and empirical formulations for finding out. The pace of the course will depend on our understanding of topics; we will stop and think of new approaches if there is no satisfying answer given by existing scholars. Hence, this seminar will probably contribute little to your academic career if you already have a dogmatic faith in the same methods and same models safely used by everyone else. Class meetings will combine lectures, student presentations, and discussions.

REQUIREMENTS

1) Readings: Each student is expected to read (before class) the items under ‘required reading’ for each session. If possible, you should read the readings in the order listed. You may wish to reread the material after it was discussed in class.

2) Attendance and participation (1/3): Students are expected to make a brief presentation on that week’s assigned readings (at least once throughout the semester). This presentation should provide the necessary background for questions or points of discussion to be directed to your fellow seminar participants.

3) Final take-home exam (1/3): The exam provides an incentive device that forces you to review materials systematically, which may also help you to prepare for your comprehensive exam later on. The exam questions will be given out on Tuesday, May 1, and you have one week to complete the exam. Your exam answers should be emailed to me by May 8 at midnight.

4) Final paper (6,000 – 10,000 words) (1/3): Students are expected to write a term paper. The paper may take a variety of forms. It may be an empirically informed research paper in which a research
question is posed, a hypothesized answer is advanced, and the plausibility of that answer is evaluated with some evidence (N.b.: theoretical discussions must be incorporated even in a heavily empirical paper). The paper may be a critical review essay in which some body of work is reviewed with avenues for future research identified. The paper may also take the form of a research proposal in which the significance of a problem is explained, existing attempts to address it are reviewed, and a research design to address the problem is developed. A warning: The least satisfactory paper would be either the one that has little to do with the spirit/topics of the seminar or the one that tries to synthesize too much, too abstractly, and too pretentiously. Whatever format is chosen, students should frequently discuss their papers with me. The paper (a hard copy) is due in class on Tuesday, May 1. Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements have been made in advance.

### SCHEDULE/OUTLINE OF TOPICS

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I. Capitalism and Political Socio-Economics</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>January</td>
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<td>February</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td><strong>II. Economic Development and Political Institutions</strong></td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>March</td>
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<td><strong>III. The Politics of Social Welfare Provision</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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PART I. CAPITALISM AND POLITICAL SOCIO-ECONOMICS

1. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Reading concerning this week’s topic:


Remedy (general reading, book-length surveys, study materials):


2. TRINITY OF STATE-MARKET-SOCIETY AND ITS DYNAMICS


Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Karatani, Kojin. 2005. *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press. (This work is highly philosophical (his conception of “parallax” has influenced many scholars including Žižek), but some of Karatani’s analysis on the history of the capitalist state is brilliant (“trinity of capital-nation-state” is taken from him). See also his 世界共和国 ~(Tekaikyouwakoku~), (2006), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, and his recent article that summarizes his core idea, “Beyond Capital-Nation-State,” *Rethinking Marxism* 20: 569-595.


Further reading on *The Great Transformation*


3. NATURE/ENGINES OF CAPITALISM AND GROWTH MODELS

**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Background and further reading on this week’s issues:**

*Growth models and empirics:


**Other issues:**


*Some reading on classical theories of capitalism:


If you are interested in major classical perspectives of capitalism, it is essential to read the following original texts (at some point in your life, read at least Smith and Marx). Adam Smith’s An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776); Karl Marx’s The Communist Manifesto (1848), The Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859), and, above all, Capital, Vol. I (1867); Vladimir Lenin’s Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism (1916) and State and Revolution (1917); Max Weber’s Economy and Society (posthumous, 1922) and The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905); Rosa Luxemburg’s The Accumulation of Capital (1913); Nikolai Bukhann’s Imperialism and World Economy (1929).
4. ORIGINS OF CAPITALISM AND THE GREAT DIVERGENCE

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Further reading on the history of capitalism and "great divergence":


Wallerstein, Immanuel. 2006. *World-Systems Analysis*. Durham: Duke University Press. [Here Wallerstein provides a succinct account of his famous three volumes of *The Modern World-System*, the fourth volume has been published recently in 2011]


5. LEVIATHAN AND THE SPIRIT OF CAPITALISM


**Required reading:**


**Background & further reading:**


**PART II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS**

6. CONCEPTION, CLASSIFICATION, AND “FACTS”


**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Background & further reading:**


7. ECONOMIC PERFORMANCES AND REGIME TRANSITIONS

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


**Background & further reading:**

The literature on political regime transitions is huge (probably the largest in comparative politics). The following are only some of them.

**Economic performances/modernization/culture/modes of transition/international dimensions:**


**Strategic interactions/transition games:**


***Recently revived interests on enfranchisement:


8. IMPACTS OF INSTITUTIONS ON LONG-RUN GROWTH


Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Further reading:


Identification issue and causality


9. POVERTY TRAPS, BIG PUSH, AND STATE-DIRECTED DEVELOPMENT

History vs. expectations. Trap and miracle. Multiple equilibria. Development state. State autonomy and "embeddedness." Industrial policy. War and development. Incentive for rulers. Idiosyncratic factors? Selection bias and case study. Can the East Asia’s success be emulated in other countries?

Required reading:


**Recommended reading:**


**Further reading:**


**10. COLONIALISM AND DEVELOPMENTAL PATHS**


**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Background & further reading:**


PART III. THE POLITICS OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROVISION

11. WELFARE STATES: HOW MANY WORLDS?

Required reading:


Recommended reading:


Background & further reading:


22


12. VARIETIES OF CAPITALISM


**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Further reading:**


13. INEQUALITY AND THE POLITICS OF REDISTRIBUTION


**Required reading:**


**Recommended reading:**


**Background & further reading:**


*One the conception and measurements of inequality:


**I think that Miliband-Poulantzas debates almost forty years ago are still fascinating, although some of their discussions are eccentrically and unnecessarily convoluted. The following is a short list of some of the essential readings on the capitalist state and ideology.


14. GLOBALIZATION/NEOLIBERALIZATION and CONCLUSION


Required reading:


Recommended reading:


**Background & further reading:**


