

POL 443

TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE POLITICS II

STATE AND DEVELOPMENT IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Time: Thursday, 3:00–5:00 PM

Instructor: Prof. Brendan McElroy, Department of Political Science

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Office hours: Friday, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is the state's role in economic development? What caused the Industrial Revolution, and why was Britain at its forefront? These questions have preoccupied social scientists and political practitioners alike since the nineteenth century, and the recent profusion of economic history research suggests that consensus remains as elusive as ever. Much of this literature takes an institutional approach, attributing northwestern Europe's economic precocity to "good" political institutions such as secure property rights. This argument has a distinguished pedigree, but its assumptions are increasingly at odds with the findings of historical scholarship. We will work together to bridge this gap, contrasting the work of historians, political scientists, and economists on the causes of European economic growth, and devoting particular attention to the role of the state in each. Although we will concentrate on the institutional approach and its critics, we will also examine other (including some complementary) explanations for European economic development, including colonialism, class structure, demography, culture, and ideas.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Describe and evaluate competing and complementary explanations for the "Great Divergence" in global economic development since about 1750.
- Describe and evaluate competing theories of the state's role in stimulating economic development.
- Understand the differences in approach taken by historians, economists, and political scientists who study the sources of economic growth and, more broadly, the relationship between politics and economics.
- Write and evaluate a research proposal in the area of social or economic history.

ON CLASSES, ASSIGNMENTS, AND READING LOAD

This is a reading- and discussion-intensive course. I expect you to prepare and actively discuss some 100 pages' worth of readings a week on average. The readings, moreover, often span multiple world regions, historical periods, and topics. Although I have sought to choose engaging and accessible materials, there is no getting around either the complexity of the topics we will cover in this course or the foreignness of much of the discipline-specific terminology.

While I will guide you through this material as best I can, success in the course will require a substantial investment of time and effort on your part – as well as a willingness to understand each argument on its own terms and evaluate it in good faith, even if it reaches conclusions with which you disagree. Crafting an article (much less a book) in the social sciences is extremely difficult, and without an appreciation of the complexities involved it is easy to be dismissive. That is one reason why the final assignment for this course is not an ordinary term paper but instead a research proposal: the goal is for each of you to spend some time thinking in a more structured and rigorous way about what makes for a compelling argument.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In brief:

- Participation: 25%
- Weekly reading quizzes, due after each session: 25%
- Reading response, due February 14: 20%
- Research proposal, due April 7: 30%

In detail:

Participation (25%)

Your participation grade is based on a combination of *attendance* and *contributions* to the class discussion. All students are expected to complete the required readings before each session, including the first, and to contribute regularly to the discussion in class – a useful rule of thumb to follow is that you should speak at least once during each session to obtain a participation mark in the B range. To that end, come to class with questions to ask or your own thoughts on the readings to share. Keep in mind that *asking* relevant questions is just as important a form of participation (sometimes even more!) as answering them.

Beginning in Week 2, I will take attendance. Everyone gets one free absence – no questions asked, no need for justification. Further unexcused absences will lower your participation grade by 2 points per absence.

I will grant excused absences for a limited set of reasons (family or health emergencies, religious holidays, and so on): in such instances you must e-mail me before class, register your absence using the Absence Declaration tool on ACORN (<https://www.acorn.utoronto.ca/>), and then we can discuss ways of making up the material missed. If I ask you to document a medical event, you can do so using either the university's Verification of Student Illness or Injury (VOI) form or a doctor's note. The VOI indicates the impact and severity of the illness, while protecting your privacy about the nature of the illness: <http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca>.

Class will take on a variety of formats: short introductory mini-lectures, large-group discussion, and discussion in pairs or groups of three. The purpose of this format-mixing is to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the way they find most comfortable. If you have any specific questions about the material we discuss in class, you are welcome to come to my office hours to ask them; I will also factor this into your participation grade.

Weekly reading quizzes (25%)

Weekly quizzes on the content of the readings will be posted to Quercus beginning on January 18. There will be no quiz during reading week. Quizzes will post shortly after each week's session and must be completed within 24 hours of posting. These are open-book quizzes, each consisting of three multiple-choice or true-false questions; once the quiz is opened, however, you will have only 15 minutes to complete it. The correct answers will not be revealed immediately upon submission; instead, I will review the results of each quiz at the beginning of the following week's session.

The purpose of the weekly reading quizzes is to ensure that everyone has read in advance; a review of the answers at the beginning of each session will also serve as a convenient point of departure for the discussion.

All quizzes will count equally toward this portion of your mark. Since we will discuss the answers in class each week, quizzes cannot be made up after the fact. However, you are allowed to miss one quiz (and no more) without penalty – whether due to illness, forgetfulness, family emergency, or any other reason. Plan accordingly.

Reading response (20%)

Your first writing assignment is a critical response to the readings for one particular week. The response paper should be between 1,500 and 1,800 words in length and must be submitted through Quercus by 11:59 PM on February 14, 2024. Choose whichever week presents the greatest interest for you. This includes weeks 7 through 12, which fall after the submission deadline.

This is an open-ended assignment, in the sense that you may select any topic you want and advance any thesis you want, as long as the argument is coherent and supported by appropriate evidence. I strongly encourage you to use this reading response exercise as an opportunity to begin formulating the question or questions you intend to explore further in your research proposal.

A few words of explanation:

- Your response paper should compare and contrast the readings for a particular week, bringing the authors into conversation with one another. It should be more than mere summary, either of the readings themselves or of the discussion in class; the point of this assignment is for you to contribute your own, original ideas and thoughts.
- Since this is a short paper, it will behoove you to focus on one or two key issues in the readings, rather than trying to cover too much. These issues might be theoretical, methodological, empirical (that is, questions of data and measurement), or some combination thereof. A response to the readings from Week 5, for instance, might explore the different ways in which this week's authors define and measure the strength of

representative institutions. Do different authors propose different definitions and measurement strategies? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Can we improve upon the measurement strategies used by previous researchers?

- Although this is a *critical* response paper, meaning that you should think carefully about the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments made in the readings, it need not consist solely of *criticism*. If, for instance, you want to defend North and Weingast against the critiques advanced by Carruthers and Hoppit (and myself), do so! More broadly, your paper should also speak to a positive research agenda: how can we make progress in studying and understanding some phenomenon in the real world?
- Although this assignment asks you to respond to the readings for a particular week, you are welcome to cite outside sources and the course readings from other weeks too. I encourage you to explore the literature on the topic you've chosen in greater depth; look to the citations in recent pieces for ideas about where to start, then ask me, and I can give you references for further reading.

The response paper should be formatted in 12-point font, double-spaced, with the word count and the week you've chosen indicated near the top of the first page. Use whatever citation style you prefer, as long as citations are complete – they should include page numbers where appropriate – and consistent.

Research proposal (30%)

As a final assignment for this course, you will write a research proposal. The proposal should be 15–20 pages long, double-spaced (including references and any tables or figures you may choose to include), and is due by 11:59 PM on April 7, 2024. Your proposal should pose an original research question related to the “Great Divergence” or the state’s role in economic development, advance a tentative theory and set of hypotheses with regard to this question, and develop a plan to test your theory and hypotheses. You do not need to actually implement the plan you propose – this is a research proposal, not a research paper.

More specifically, your proposal should do the following:

- Pose a novel, well-defined, and empirically tractable research question that pertains to the “Great Divergence,” the state’s role in development, or both. “Well-defined” and “empirically tractable” both imply that your research question should be narrower than “what caused the Industrial Revolution?” or “what is the state’s role in economic development?” Almost invariably, a compelling proposal will address itself to a small but significant part of a larger puzzle.
- Explain the *significance* of your research question. This is often glossed as the “so what?” question. What will we learn by answering the question you’ve posed? What are the implications for other researchers, or for policymakers?
- Briefly survey the existing research on the topic. Is there a consensus you want to challenge? Are there several established, competing points of view, one of which you propose to bolster with the help of new data or methods? Or do you have a novel theoretical perspective to contribute? In a word, what is your distinctive contribution?

- Advance a theory and set of hypotheses to be tested. By “theory” I simply mean a general explanation for some phenomenon of interest – for variation in some outcome we care about, such as the level of economic development or inequality – in the real world. By hypotheses, in turn, I mean specific claims or predictions about what we *should* observe in the real world *if* your theory is right.
- Propose a research design to test your theory and hypotheses. This can be almost anything: qualitative or quantitative, observational or experimental, a single case study or a statistical analysis. Pay close attention to alternative theories or explanations for the outcome you are trying to explain: how does your research design rule out these alternative explanations? If you lack formal training (from political science, sociology, economics, or some adjacent discipline) in qualitative or quantitative methodology, don’t panic: I can provide you with additional resources on the nuts and bolts of research design.
- *Justify* your choice of research design. For instance, if you intend to conduct a single case study, you need to explain why this is the best (or the only feasible) way of answering your question.
- Describe the data. Again, these can be qualitative, quantitative, or both – substitute “sources” for “data” if you prefer. Is there an existing dataset you will use to test your theory? Or does your project involve some original data collection? If the latter, you should briefly describe your plan to collect the relevant data.

There is no single best way to structure a research proposal, so the order in which I have listed these tasks is not dispositive. You might, for example, briefly allude to the significance of your research question in the introduction and return to this subject in greater detail in the conclusion.

Your research proposal should be formatted in 12-point font, double-spaced, with the word count and the week you’ve chosen indicated near the top of the first page. Use whatever citation style you prefer, as long as citations are complete – they should include page numbers where appropriate – and consistent.

WEEKS AT A GLANCE

Week	Date	Topic	Notes
1	January 11	What was the “Great Divergence”?	
2	January 18	Pomeranz’s “Great Divergence”	First reading quiz due after class
3	January 25	Colonialism and forced labor	
4	February 1	Political institutions and development: the dominant perspective	
5	February 8	Political institutions and development: other interpretations	
6	February 15	Agrarian class structure	Reading response due February 14 by 11:59 PM

	February 22	<i>Winter reading week</i>	No lecture
7	February 29	Society, civic organization, and public goods	
8	March 7	Demography and family structure	
9	March 14	Ideas and culture	
10	March 21	Developmental states in theory and history	
11	March 28	Escapes from the periphery: failed and successful (part I)	
12	April 4	Escapes from the periphery: failed and successful (part II)	Research proposal due April 7 by 11:59 PM

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Note: I may make and communicate revisions to selected readings during the semester.

1. What was the “Great Divergence”?

For January 11, read:

- From the “Arenas in Global History: Dating the Great Divergence” exchange in *Journal of Global History* 16.2 (2021):
 - Jack Goldstone, “Dating the Great Divergence,” pp. 266–285.
 - Stephen Broadberry, “Historical National Accounting and Dating the Great Divergence,” pp. 286–293.
 - Paolo Malanima, “Past Growths: Pre-Modern and Modern,” pp. 301–308.
- Jørgen Møller, “Feet of Clay? How to Review Political Science Papers That Make Use of the Work of Historians,” in *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53.2 (2020), pp. 253–257.

2. Pomeranz’s “Great Divergence”

For January 18, read:

- Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, new ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, [2000] 2021), preface, introduction, and chaps. 1, 6; pp. ix–xix, 3–27, 31–68, 264–297. (Note: Read the preface *after* reading the introduction and other chapters.)
- Jan de Vries, “*The Great Divergence* after Ten Years: Justly Celebrated Yet Hard to Believe,” in *Historically Speaking* 12.4 (2011), pp. 13–15.
- Philip T. Hoffman, “Comment on Ken Pomeranz’s *The Great Divergence*,” in *Historically Speaking* 12.4 (2011), pp. 16–17.

3. Colonialism and forced labor

For January 25, read:

- Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 3rd ed. (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, [1944] 1994), chaps. 3, 5, 7–8; pp. 39–66, 77–85, 100–122.
- Caitlin Rosenthal, “Slavery’s Scientific Management: Masters and Managers,” in Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery’s Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp. 62–86.

4. Political institutions and development: the dominant perspective

For February 1, read:

- Douglass C. North and Barry R. Weingast, “Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England,” in *Journal of Economic History* 49.4 (1989), pp. 803–832.
- Bruce G. Carruthers, “Politics, Popery, and Property: A Comment on North and Weingast,” in *Journal of Economic History* 50.3 (1990), pp. 693–698.
- Steven C. A. Pincus and James A. Robinson, “What Really Happened during the Glorious Revolution?” Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, working paper no. 17206 (2011): <https://www.nber.org/papers/w17206>.
- Julian Hoppit, “Compulsion, Compensation and Property Rights in Britain, 1688–1833,” in *Past & Present* 210 (2011), pp. 93–128.

5. Political institutions and development: other interpretations

For February 8, read:

- Yuhua Wang, “Sons and Lovers: Political Stability in China and Europe before the Great Divergence.” Working paper, available at *Social Science Research Network* (2018): <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3058065>.
- Deborah Boucoyannis, “No Taxation of Elites, No Representation: State Capacity and the Origins of Representation,” in *Politics and Society* 43.3 (2015), pp. 303–332.
- Brendan McElroy, “Representation, Property Rights, and Growth Revisited.” Working paper (2023). (You may skip the Appendix.)

6. Agrarian class structure

For February 15, read:

- Robert Brenner, “Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe,” in *Past & Present* 70.1 (1976), pp. 30–75.
- Carsten Porskrog Rasmussen, “Innovative Feudalism: The Development of Dairy Farming and *Koppelwirtschaft* on Manors in Schleswig-Holstein in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Agricultural History Review* 58.2 (2010), pp. 172–190.

- Tracy Dennison, *The Institutional Framework of Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), selections from chaps. 1, 2, 9; pp. 1–17, 25–49 (start from the last paragraph on p. 25), 213–233.

7. Society, civic organization, and public goods

For February 29, read:

- Tine De Moor, *The Dilemma of the Commoners: Understanding the Use of Common Pool Resources in Long-Term Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), introduction and chap. 1; pp. 1–60.
- Mitsuo Kinoshita, “Sanctions, Targetism, and Village Autonomy: Poor Relief in Early Modern Rural Japan,” in Masayuki Tanimoto and R. Bin Wong, eds., *Public Goods Provision in the Early Modern Economy: Comparative Perspectives from Japan, China, and Europe* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), pp. 78–99.
- R. Bin Wong, “Coping with Poverty and Famine: Material Welfare, Public Goods, and Chinese Approaches to Governance,” in Masayuki Tanimoto and R. Bin Wong, eds., *Public Goods Provision in the Early Modern Economy: Comparative Perspectives from Japan, China, and Europe* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2019), pp. 130–144.

8. Demography and family structure

For March 7, read:

- Tracy Dennison and Sheilagh Ogilvie, “Does the European Marriage Pattern Explain Economic Growth?” in *Journal of Economic History* 74.3 (2014), pp. 651–693.
- Jan Luiten van Zanden, Tine De Moor, and Sarah Carmichael, *Capital Women: The European Marriage Pattern, Female Empowerment, and Economic Development in Western Europe, 1300–1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), chaps. 1, 9; pp. 1–20, 223–244.

9. Ideas and culture

For March 14, read:

- Marc Raeff, “The Well-Ordered Police State and the Development of Modernity in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Europe: An Attempt at a Comparative Approach,” in *American Historical Review* 80.5 (1975), pp. 1221–1243.
- Paul Slack, *The Invention of Improvement: Information and Material Progress in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), chaps. 1, 4; pp. 1–14, 91–128.

10. Developmental states in theory and history

For March 21, read:

- Stephan Haggard, *Developmental States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), chaps. 1–4; pp. 1–52.

- Wolfgang Streeck, “Beneficial Constraints: On the Economic Limits of Rational Voluntarism,” in J. Rogers Hollingsworth and Robert Boyer, eds., *Contemporary Capitalism: The Embeddedness of Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 197–219.

11. Escapes from the periphery: failed and successful (part I)

For March 28, read:

- Stephan Haggard, *Developmental States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), chaps. 5–6; pp. 52–71.
- Richard F. Doner and Ben Ross Schneider, “The Middle-Income Trap: More Politics than Economics,” in *World Politics* 68.4 (2016), pp. 608–644.
- Thandika Mkandawire, “State Capacity, History, Structure, and Political Contestation in Africa,” in Miguel A. Centeno, Atul Kohli, and Deborah J. Yashar, eds., *States in the Developing World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 184–216.

12. Escapes from the periphery: failed and successful (part II)

For April 4, read:

- Jean Batou, “Nineteenth-Century Attempted Escapes from the Periphery: The Cases of Egypt and Paraguay,” in *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 16.3 (1993), pp. 279–318.
- Laura Panza and Jeffrey G. Williamson, “Did Muhammad Ali Foster Industrialization in Early Nineteenth-Century Egypt?” in *Economic History Review* 68.1 (2015), pp. 79–100.

COURSE POLICIES

Office hours: I will post a sign-up sheet for my regular office hours to Quercus. If you cannot make my regular office hours due to a scheduling conflict but would like to meet, e-mail me to set up an appointment. I cannot guarantee that I will be available to meet outside of regular office hours.

Email correspondence: Consult the syllabus, Quercus course site, and other course documentation before contacting me with questions. E-mail correspondence should be reserved for organizational questions; substantive questions about the course material are best addressed to me either in class or in office hours.

Academic integrity: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will be dealt with accordingly. For further information and clarification, examine the University of Toronto’s policies on plagiarism (<https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize/>). This course uses anti-plagiarism software. All suspected cases of plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty, will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the Code of Behavior on Academic Matters. Potential offenses include, but are not limited to:

- Using someone else’s ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgment.
- Making up sources or facts.

- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment.

For additional information, see Writing at U of T: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources>.

Anti-plagiarism software: Students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation web site (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

Generative AI: Students may not use generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to write the response paper for this course, to write the research proposal, or to answer the weekly reading quizzes. All final submitted assignments must be original work produced by the individual student alone.

Extensions: Workload-related extensions may be granted under extraordinary circumstances. I will only consider requests for workload-related extensions made during office hours, not those submitted by email. I will not consider workload-related extension requests made less than one week before the assignment due date.

Late and missed assignments: Late papers will be subject to a penalty of 5% (of total marks for the assignment) per calendar day. This includes weekends. In other words, a response paper submitted the day after the deadline cannot receive a grade higher than 95%; a paper submitted two days after the deadline cannot receive a grade higher than 90%, and so on. Papers submitted five or more calendar days after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, as will any work handed in after the assignment in question has been returned to the class. I will not make accommodations for late registration in the course.

Accessibility needs: Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. If you require accommodations, register with Accessibility Services on the phone, by e-mail (accessibility.services@utoronto.ca), or in person at their office (455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400, Toronto, ON, M5S 2G8). E-mail me, or have a representative from Accessibility Services contact me, as soon as possible so you can be accommodated in a timely manner. Also, contact me as early as possible to discuss accommodating any anticipated absences related to religious observances or family care.

Equity statement: The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As an instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behavior that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the U of T Equity and Diversity officer.