Comparing Institutions G8492
Timothy Frye
tmf2@columbia.edu
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Thursday 2:10-4:00
1219 IAB
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Office hours: Tuesday 1-2 or by appt.

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Course Description
This course aims to make graduate students familiar with the major concepts, theories and debates on the causes and consequences of institutions in comparative politics.

Requirements
One referee report on any of the articles or books on the syllabus. The report must be circulated to the class by 5:00 on the Wednesday prior to our meeting. E-mail is fine. These are not literature reviews, but should demonstrate your analytical skills. Also they should identify the strengths and weakness of the work and then make a recommendation (reject, major revision, minor revision, publish essentially as is) to the editor. No more than five pages. (10% of the final grade). Due at any time.

One seminar paper is due on December 17 at 5:00. (70% of the final grade). In week 1, we will discuss research strategies. The papers can be either:

a) a research proposal that identifies a theoretical or empirical puzzle worth exploring, reviews and critiques existing literature, lays out hypotheses to be tested, identifies appropriate methods for testing the argument, and discusses the potential strength and weaknesses of the proposal. Research proposals need not actually collect the data and conduct the analyses, although it is hoped that this can be done in the future.

b) Research papers that are written with the goal of submission to an academic journal. It includes all the steps of a research proposal, but also conducts some preliminary data collection and analysis.

One-page research proposals describing the research question, dependent variable, possible sources of data, etc. are due before the 9th week and outlines are due by week 12.

Data Analysis. Each student will critique a quantitative or qualitative analysis from an academic article, book, or data-set. You can either replicate and critique the use of a data-set or simply analyze the data-set itself. Data-sets can be quantitative or qualitative. Qualitative analysis might examine the sources cited by an author for their veracity and potential sources of bias. It is important to start early as data analyses always take longer than expected. (10% of the final grade). Due by week 6. No more than 5 pages.

Class participation. Thoughtful participation based on extensive preparation is essential. (10% of the final grade). To promote discussion, everyone will e-mail a question or comment based on the week’s readings for the group to discuss by 5:00 on Wednesday prior to class. This question/comment should not exceed a half page, but should be sufficiently developed to provoke discussion. Please read others’ comments.

Most works are available from JSTOR or the Columbia Electronic Library. These are marked with “J.” I will also post works on the Courseworks website. These are marked with a “C.” Many are also available via Google and other electronic sources. The readings may change in some weeks based on student interest. Depending on class size, we may also have students present their research proposals.

For Purchase at Book Culture, 536 W 112th, 212 865-1588, www.bookculture.com


**Academic Honesty**: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. The complete text of the GSAS statement on academic honesty is at [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/rules/chapter-9/pages/honesty/index.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/gsas/rules/chapter-9/pages/honesty/index.html). It includes the following definition of plagiarism: “Plagiarism includes buying, stealing, borrowing, or otherwise obtaining all or part of a paper (including obtaining or posting a paper online); hiring someone to write a paper; copying from or paraphrasing another source without proper citation or falsification of citations; and building on the ideas of another without citation.” There is a fine line between sloppy citations and punctuation and intentional plagiarism. It is your responsibility to learn and use proper attribution and citation. Be safe and determine in advance that you are being both ethical and orderly so as to avoid questionable work that could create an accusation of academic misconduct. You are responsible for asking questions about policies and about my expectations for your work If you are not certain you are doing the right thing.

You also are violating the GSAS academic integrity policy if you self-plagiarize, i.e. if you turn in for this course a paper that you already have written for another course. Although scholars do build on their early ideas as they advance their scholarship, I expect that written work you do for this course does not duplicate your earlier work. Please talk to me if your paper for this course pursues a topic on which you have written and submitted a paper for another course.”

There are many websites that address academic integrity. The comprehensive “Avoiding plagiarism, self-plagiarism, and other questionable writing practices: A guide to ethical writing” by Miguel Roig is at [http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/index.html](http://ori.hhs.gov/education/products/roig_st_johns/index.html); it includes samples of illustrative good and bad practices as well as a useful and detailed table of contents.

[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/) is a relatively brief overview of academic integrity, written for students, with sections on originality and reliance on earlier work, when and when not to include citations, and how to write so as to avoid unintentional plagiarism.

**Week 1. September 9. Introduction**


**Further Readings**


http://sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty/evans/InstitutionalTurn.pdf

**Week 2. September 16. Institutions and Institutional Analysis: What is it and What is it Good For?**


**Further Reading**


**Week 3. September 23. Institutions, Endogeneity, and Path Dependence**

Adam Przeworski, “The Last Instance: Are Institutions the Primary Cause of Development?” *European Journal of Sociology* 45:2, 165-188.


Edward Glaeser, Rafael La Porta, Florencio Lopez-de-Silanes, and Andrei Shleifer “Do Institutions Cause Growth?” *Journal of Economic Growth*, September, 2004


**Further Reading**


**Week 4. September 30. Regimes: What Are They and How Do They Emerge?**


Benjamin F. Jones, Benjamin A. Olken. “Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassinations on Institutions and War.” Ms.


**Further Reading**


On measurement of democracy


Datasets on Regimes.


**Week 5. October 7. Democracy In Action**


**Further Reading**


Week 6. October 14. Autocracy: Emergence and Maintenance


Further Reading.


Week 7. October 21. Institutions and Economic Development


Further Reading


**Week 8. October 28: Governance and Bureaucracy**  


**Further Reading**  

Dan Treisman “What Have We Learned about Corruption.” Ms.  


**Some Reading on Federalism**  


Week 9. November 4. The State: Two choices


OR


Further Reading


**Week 10. November 11. Informal Institutions and Politics by Other Means**


Timothy Frye, “Reputation and the rule of Law in Russia: Complements or Substitutes?” ms.


**Further Reading**


**Week 12. November 18. Either Legislatures and Presidents, Or Political Parties**

**Legislatures and Presidents**


OR
Political Parties:


Further Reading


Week 13. December 2. To Be Determined based on class interest. Some possibilities include
A) Institutions and Ethnicity
B) Institutions and the Resource Curse
C) Institutions and the Rule of Law
D) Federalism
E) Institutions
F) Or Student Presentations with Discussants.

Appendix: Advice on the paper:

Strategies for writing papers and becoming famous with some examples.


Ronald Rogowski, Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Political Alignments. Import a theory and apply to a political question.


Stefanie Coontz, The Way We Never Were. Puncture a myth by showing that the received history is wrong.


Rebecca Morton, Methods and Models. Use a formal model to get a counterintuitive prediction.
