PO8045
State and Society in the Developing World

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Course description

What kind of institutions promote human flourishing? How can the character of domestic politics and institutions explain underdevelopment in the Global South? These are the fundamental questions that this course addresses. In the course we will take a historically informed approach to answering these questions over the longue durée. We will look first at how structural factors like geography and histories of colonialism and slavery have shaped long term institutional development. We will then examine in detail the nature of the state in most countries in the Global South, comparing them to states in the Global North. The relationship between democracy and development will be examined, including the reasons why clientelism and corruption are so pervasive. Finally we will address the issue of sequencing: how democratizing at different levels of state development leads to different development outcomes.

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- Understand the long-term legacies of colonialism and slavery
- Analyze the nature of states in the Global South
- Critically review the evidence on the relationship between democracy and development
- Understand the root causes of clientelism and corruption
- Debate the effect of aid on politics and institutions

Course structure

There will be 5 weekly seminars of 3 hours and is worth 5 ECTS credits. Attendance at these seminars is compulsory. Please contact me in advance by email if you cannot make a seminar.

Assessment

1. Participation (20%): You will be evaluated on a) discussion points for your assigned reading submitted the day before the seminar and b) your participation in class: how actively you contribute to the discussion, demonstrate preparation for class, and critically engage with the material.

2. Response papers (20%):

Students are expected to submit three short response papers (of 700 words). Papers are due the week after the class for that topic.
All response papers should be submitted via Blackboard.

A response paper should critically engage with the overarching topic for that week, relating the readings to each other and to the main questions. It should show understanding of the key arguments of at least two of the readings, critically engage with these readings (especially through comparing them to each other), and relate their arguments to the overall question under consideration.

3. Final Assignment (60%)

The final assignment has two parts.

Part One (55%):
Select one of the five topics we have looked at on the course. Focusing on the key questions on that topic and two case study countries in which to analyze this question. Justifying why you have chosen these two countries, use the comparison between them to analyze a) what light these cases shed on the question under discussion and how they relate to the general literature discussed on the course and b) how the similarities and differences between these cases provide insight into the question. Note: your analysis should be empirical and analytical rather than normative. The assignment should be approximately 2,500 words in length (+/- 10%) excluding notes/bibliography. Exceeding the limit will result in deduction of marks.

Part Two (5%):
Write a short reflection piece (500-600 words) engaging with the key insights you take away from the module. This piece can be personal in nature and relate the academic themes of the course to your lived experience, and the ways in which your outlook may have changed over the module.

Essays must be submitted via Blackboard.

Academic Dishonesty and Citations

The university takes plagiarism very seriously. There are severe penalties associated with passing someone else’s work off as one’s own. This includes plagiarizing the work of others, using an essay writing service, or any similar activity. All written assignments will pass through an electronic plagiarism checker. Remember that careless note-taking can lead to this happening; remember to enclose direct quotations in quotation marks, and even when paraphrasing, ensure that a reference is provided. The university’s policy regarding plagiarism can be found at: http://www.tcd.ie/undergraduate-studies/general-regulations/plagiarism.php.

Please use the Harvard style of citations with the authors name, year of publication and page reference in brackets in the text and the full quotation in the reference list at the end of the essay. Wikipedia, blogs, and other such online sources might be useful as a first step but they should not be relied upon when writing essays.
These readings are subject to change. Additional material may be added.

Week 1: Geography and History

Key questions: how have history and geography shaped patterns of development? How does history continue to matter?

Required readings


Week 2: The State

Key questions: how are states built? how have processes of state formation varied between the Global North and South? How does this explain varying levels of development?

Required readings


Week 3: Democracy and Autocracy

Key question: Does democracy lead to development? Is democracy incompatible with development and rapid growth? Is Chinese autocracy a viable development strategy for developing countries?
Required readings


Week 4: Clientelism and Corruption

Key questions: How do we explain the puzzle that corruption increases in young democracies?

Required readings


Week 5: Aid and the State

Questions: does aid harm or help long term institution-building in developing countries?

