Seminar on Contending Perspectives on the Political Economy of Development

Department of Politics in Conjunction with the Alexander Hamilton Center for Political Economy

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Course Description

Few disagree that the question of why some countries stagnate economically, while others grow rapidly, is one of most important in the field of economics. In line with the importance of the question, the field of Economic Development has been characterized by numerous fierce debates. As a consequence of these debates it is now widely acknowledged that politics plays a central role in influencing the success or failure of key economic policies. This makes the field of economic development one of the cutting edge areas of research in political economy. In this course we survey six of the most important debates in the political economy of development. All these debates have substantial policy implications. We will study each debate for two weeks, with each of the weeks being devoted to the detailed study of one or two major books.

The key requirement for the course is a 15 page paper on a major issue in the political economy of development which is due on the last day of class. In addition to submitting this paper each student will present his/her paper in class at the end of the semester. The written paper is worth 50% of the grade. The presentation is worth 20%, while class participation in worth 30%.

Readings-

A) Weeks 1 and 2: Debates on Foreign Aid

Week 2- William Easterly. 2006. The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good. New York: Penguin.

B) Weeks 3 and 4: Debates on The Role of the State in Economic Development: The East Asian Miracle-


C) Weeks 5 and 6- Debates on Africa’s Growth Tragedy-


D) Weeks 7 and 8: Debates on Free Capital Flows.


E) Weeks 9 and 10: Debates on China’s economic and political future


F) Weeks 11 and 12- Debates on India’s economic and political future-


Weeks 13 and 14- Student Presentations.