Course Description

The question of why some countries stagnate economically while others grow rapidly is one of most important in the field of economics. It is now widely acknowledged that politics plays a central role in influencing growth. This makes the political economy of economic development one of the cutting edge areas of research. The field is characterized by fierce debate over several critical issues. In this course we will study major issues of contention from multiple perspectives.

Organization

We will read one or two books every week. The class will be divided into five groups of four students each. The first half of each class will be devoted to a presentation by a group to the rest of the class of the main arguments of the book(s), and the evidence offered in support of its main claims. The second half of each class will be devoted to a discussion of the book and the key issues discussed therein.

Requirements

Two thirds of the class grade will be based on class participation, i.e. the quality of presentation and the quality of contributions to classroom discussion. In order to get a good grade it is essential to demonstrate that you have carefully read the assigned readings. The remaining third of the grade will be for writing a ten page paper explaining the development trajectory of any country of your choice in the context of the theories that we will have studied in class. The last two classes of the semester will be devoted to presentations of the highlights of these papers.
Availability of books

All books are available at the reserves desk in Bobst Library. They may also be easily purchased via the internet. (Many are available used or at deep discounts.) Groups may also economize by sharing copies of some books. Links have been provided below for all the assigned articles.

Readings

1) September 4- Introduction to course.

No readings.

2) September 11- Fundamental Issues in Economic Development:


3) September 18- Foreign Aid and Development (Part 1): The Planners


4) September 25- Foreign Aid and Development (Part 2): The Searchers

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.


5) October 2- Foreign Aid and Development (3)- Neo-colonialism


6) October 9- Globalization and Development (1)


http://uclaforecast.com/reviews/Leamer_FlatWorld_060221.pdf

7) October 16- Globalization and Development (2)


8) October 23- Systems of Governance (1)-


9) October 30- Systems of Governance (2)-


10) November 6- Who Lost Russia?/Russia: A Normal Country?


11) November 13- Latin America’s Leftward Turn


12) November 20- Emerging Giants: China and India


13) November 27- Student presentations

14) December 4- Student presentations

15) December 11- No class (Thursday schedule)