

Government 6151  
State and Economy in Comparative Perspective  
Fall 2008

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Wednesday: 5:30-7:30 PM  
White 114

Course Description

This course surveys the extensive literature on the political economy of comparative state formation, economic development, and institutional change. Among the topics covered will be war-making and state expansion, regime evolution and modernization, and market processes and class transformation. The focus will range from the micro-economic foundations of political choice through the grand historical forces that have shaped the contemporary world economy. Although much of the reading and discussion will focus on European cases, the limits of this experience as a theoretical model for the remainder of the world will also be considered.

Course Requirements:

Because this course is designed as a general survey of the vast literature on political and economic development, a research paper will not be required. Instead, seventy-five percent of the course grade will be based on a take-home final conducted as if it were a small version of a doctoral qualifying examination. An additional fifteen percent will be allocated according to the amount and quality of individual contributions to class discussion. The remainder of the course requirements will be satisfied in the form of a class presentation in which each student leads discussion of the readings under at least one of the weekly headings.

However, a student can choose to prepare a research paper of (to be negotiated) length in place of the take-home exam. This research paper should be intended for presentation in a professional forum outside of Cornell and/or publication in a professional journal. If this option is chosen, the student will be asked to make additional presentations to the class, drawn from the weekly readings.

Final exam:

The final exam will have seven questions divided into two parts. Students will answer two questions from each part. The exam will last seventy-two hours with the expectation that students will write for no more than twenty-four hours (roughly the format of the doctoral examinations in the department). There is no minimum or maximum page limit on this exam. Students are expected to draw upon all the readings for the course in answering these questions but are not permitted to bring outside readings into their discussions.

Brief Outline of Topics to Be Covered:

Week One: Introduction.

Week Two: The Origins of the Nation-State.

Week Three: War and State Formation.

Week Four: Empires.

Week Five: The Rise and Fall of Complex Societies.

Week Six: World Systems.

Week Seven: China and Europe.

Week Eight: The Spanish Civil War and Politics without Solutions.

Week Nine: Habermas and Economic Origins of the Public Sphere.

Week Ten: Origins of Rational Choice Theory.

Week Eleven: The Micro-Foundations of Political Economy.

Week Twelve: World Capitalism in the Twentieth Century.

Week Thirteen: Ecological Causes of Global Social and Political Change.

Week Fourteen: Overview.

### Description of Weekly Sessions

First Session (September 3): Introduction.

No reading assignment. Participants in the class will be asked to select weeks in which they will take primary responsibility for presenting the material.

Second Session (September 10): The Origins of the Nation-State.

### Discussion Questions: Second Session

In this course, we will attempt to lay out five different levels of political economic analysis. From the largest to the smallest in scope, these are: a) world system; b) interactive relations between a state and a state or between a state and a group of states; c) the national unit as the indivisible site of an economic process (such as industrialization) or focal point of politics (such as a revolution); d) group and class dynamics within a nation; and e) the motives and decision-making practices of the individual. While these often overlap, the major challenge in a survey of the field is to try to fit theories of behavior at one level into interpretations of behavior at another (e.g., theories of individual behavior into interpretations of the interaction between nation-states). For the most part, the readings for this session take nations as cases and comparisons between them as the object of theoretical analysis; nation-states are more or less assumed and inserted into a broader international system. The primary question for this session involves the compatibility of the different models offered by each of these authors--how logically consistent are each of the models with the others?

### Required readings:

Perry Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State (London: Verso, 1984), pp. 7-59, 195-278, 397-431.

Charles Tilly, Coercion, Capital, and European States: AD 990-1990 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 1-95.

Hendrik Spruyt, The Sovereign State and Its Competitors: An Analysis of Systems Change (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), Preface and pp. 3-194.

Tanisha M. Fazal, State Death: The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Occupation, and Annexation (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 1-66, 229-242.

### Recommended:

Saskia Sassen, Territory, Authority, Rights: From Medieval to Global Assemblages (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 1-140.

Barrington Moore, The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967).

Stein Rokkan (edited by Stein Kuhnle, Peter Flora, and Derek Urwin), State

Formation, Nation-Building, and Mass Politics in Europe (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Robert L. Carneiro, "A Theory of the Origin of the State," Science 169 (August 1970): 733-738.

Third Session (September 17): War and State Formation.

Discussion Questions: Third Session

Stated in the simplest terms, most theories of state formation emphasize either trade (e.g., Spruyt) or war (e.g., Tilly) as the fundamental force driving political consolidation and expansion. This week we take up war once again, this time contrasting a micro-level explanation grounded in evolutionary biology with a macro-level interpretation positing grand historical cycles. Are these two approaches complementary, irrelevant to one another, or mutually contradictory?

Required readings:

Stephen Peter Rosen, War and Human Nature (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 1-203.

Peter Turchin, War and Peace and War: The Rise and Fall of Empires (Plume, 2007), pp. 1-356.

Recommended:

Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Bruce D. Porter, War and the Rise of the State: The Military Foundations of Modern Politics (Free Press, 2002).

Philip G. Roeder, Where Nation-States Come From: Institutional change in the Age of Nationalism (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Fourth Session (September 24): Empires.

Discussion Questions: Fourth Session

In this session we review several studies on the politics of empires, one of the broadest levels of political economic analysis. Comparing these readings with those of the second week, how would you distinguish an empire from a nation-state? What differences in modes of warfare, security needs, state administration, economic organization, and national identity might play a role in making such a distinction? Many other questions also can be posed against these works but two are perhaps the most fundamental: the role of contingency and the respective influence of economics and politics. As an (overly-broad) generalization, theories or explanations of the dynamics of world systems have less contingency than those that address state-to-state relations in the international system. In turn, theories of international relations have less contingency written into their logics than accounts of the rise and survival of the nation-state as a governmental form. In fact, as a rule, the smaller the unit of analysis, the larger the role of contingency in explaining individual outcomes. Is this pattern more than superficially apparent? Why or why not?

Required readings:

Keith Hopkins, "Economic Growth and Towns in Classical Antiquity," in Philip Abrams and E.A. Wrigley, ed's., Towns in Societies: Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 35-77.

David B. Abernethy, The Dynamics of Global Dominance, European Overseas Empires, 1415-1980 (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2000), pp.

3-42, 175-273.

Prasenjit Duara, "The Imperialism of "Free Nations:" Japan, Manchukuo, and the History of the Present," in Ann Stoler, et al, ed's., Imperial Formations (School for Advanced Research, 2007), pp. 211-239.

Recommended:

Dominic Lieven, Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2001).

Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Economics of British Imperialism Abridged edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

Peter Liberman, Does Conquest Pay? The Exploitation of Occupied Industrial Societies (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998).

S.N. Eisenstadt, The Political Systems of Empires: The Rise and Fall of the Historical Bureaucratic Societies (New York: Free Press, 1969).

Alberto Alesina and Enrico Spolaore, The Size of Nations (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003).

Harold James, The Roman Predicament: How the Rules of International Order Create the Politics of Empire (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Fifth Session (October 1): The Rise and Fall of Complex Societies.

Discussion Questions: Fifth Session

The international dynamics that drive the rise and fall of advanced (complex) nations and empires have now been extensively reviewed. In this session, we explore the interdependent, internal processes (particularly ecological factors) that are influenced and often aggravated by those international dynamics. Some of the analysis in the Tainter and Diamond books has a distinctly Malthusian quality but the logic is not just population pressure on a stable resource base but the degradation of the resource base itself. And that is something that could apply to the contemporary world in which purely demographic pressures are somewhat less salient.

Required readings:

Joseph Tainter, The Collapse of Complex Societies (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 1-216.

Jared Diamond, Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed (New York: Viking Press, 2005), pp. 1-276, 358-377, 486-525.

Recommended:

David R. Montgomery, Dirt: The Erosion of Civilizations (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

Glenn M. Schwartz and John J. Nichols, Ed's., After Collapse: The Regeneration of Complex Societies (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006).

Sixth Session (October 8): World-Systems.

Discussion Questions: Sixth Session

There are several different ways in which we could address these readings. For example, we could ask when did the first world system emerge? And this would lead us naturally into a discussion of how we might define a world system. An even more interesting question, however, might be how the material disassociation

of formal political control and economic trade changes the dynamics of an international system. Seen from that perspective, world systems entail a form of economic integration that far exceeds the possibility of hegemonic political control. If that were not the case, we would be in the presence of a far-flung empire, as opposed to a world system. At the opposite, almost micro-level end of this theoretical frame, we might ask what might be the foundations, in terms of basic economic actors and their organizational routines, that drive the emergence and sustain the existence of a world system. That is where Avner Greif, who might otherwise seem out of place in this week's list, comes into play.

Required readings:

Janet Abu-Lughod, Before European Hegemony: The World-System A.D. 1250-1350 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), Preface, pp. 3-40, 251-373.

John M. Hobson, The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Preface, pp. 1-96, 283-322.

Immanuel Wallerstein, World-Systems Analysis (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), Preface and pp. 1-104.

Avner Greif, Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Preface, pp. 1-90, 153-157, 187-349, 379-405.

Recommended:

Immanuel Wallerstein, The Modern World-system: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-economy in the Sixteenth Century (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

Victor Lieberman, Strange Parallels: Southeast Asia in Global Context, c. 800-1830 Volume 1, Integration on the Mainland (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Seventh Session (October 15): China and Europe.

Discussion Questions: Seventh Session

Although scholars have begun to focus on evidence of substantial cross-fertilization between the East and West well before 1500, most work still sets up China and Europe as separate civilizations prior to the nineteenth century or so. This approach enables comparison of political (Hui) and economic (Pomeranz) development in the two (largely assumed to be) autonomous spheres. The most general question to be addressed this week is whether or not China was and is a political economic world which differs significantly from Europe in terms of working principles and logics. If so, what are the differences? If not, why study China?

Required readings:

Victoria Tin-bor Hui, War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 1-258.

Kenneth Pomeranz, Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 1-107, 211-297.

Gregory Clark, A Farewell to Alms: A Brief Economic History of the World (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 193-377.

Recommended:

R. Bin Wong, China Transformed: Historical Change and the Limits of European Experience (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997).

Karl A. Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism (New York: Vintage, 1981; reprint of 1957 edition).

Eighth Session (October 22): The Coming of the Spanish Civil War and Politics without Solutions.

Discussion Questions: Eighth Session

There are some situations in which we can easily identify the causes of a disaster. For example, a small fire may kill almost everyone in a movie theater because the patrons all run for the exits at the same time. The doors become jammed as everyone struggles to escape and those who are trapped perish as the fire spreads. If the patrons had coordinated their escape, no one would have died. And this interpretation of the problem naturally leads to a policy solution: a public announcement before the film begins that, in the event of an emergency, people should move slowly and deliberately toward the nearest exit.

All the elements of a social science analysis and interpretation are present in this example: a well-defined situation, a shared (if implicit) normative orientation with respect to why the situation should be studied, an understanding of the interaction between the individual motivations and the collective outcome, and an explicit policy recommendation that doubles as an experimental intervention into and manipulation of the social dynamics at issue.

Now consider the coming of the Spanish Civil War, as interpreted by three of its most prominent analysts. Which of the elements that we have just listed are present in their interpretations? For example, was the war something that all the participants wished to avoid (i.e., does it truly qualify as a "disaster" for all or even most of them)? If it could have been avoided, what should have been done (and by whom)? Was this a collective action problem in which no one individual or small group of individuals was to blame? Or was it a process that neither they nor we are able to understand completely as it unfolds? The fundamental question here is whether or not the Spanish Civil War was inevitable. How would you go about formulating that question? And how would you then answer it?

Required readings:

Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War: Revised Edition (Modern Library, 2001), Preface and pp. 1-186.

Stanley G. Payne, The Collapse of the Spanish Republic, 1933-1936: Origins of the Civil War (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), Preface and pp. 1-7, 248-368.

Antony Beevor, The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936-1939 (New York: Penguin, 2006), Introduction and pp. 3-52.

Ninth Session (October 29): Habermas and the Origins of the Public Sphere.

Discussion Questions: Ninth Session

One of the underlying themes of this course is that all politics ultimately arise, in one way or another, out of the way in which a society organizes its social and economic reproduction. However, in a more proximate sense politics originates in ideation, the capacity of the mind to form and receive ideas. For example, the grand political economic theories that so fatally influenced the course of the twentieth century first arose out of competition between "schools of thought" founded by extraordinarily charismatic and otherwise gifted thinkers. The competition between these schools of thought, in turn, was disciplined by the extent to which they did or did not explain the material conditions of their time.

For his part, Habermas views the material basis of information transfers as more important than the terms of social and economic reproduction; from his perspective, capitalism and capitalist markets grounded the emergence of the public sphere which then, in turn, gave rise to a conceptual construction of the modern state and society. In fact, if we press hard enough, we might be able to claim that "information" created "markets" which, in turn, created "capitalist civilization." All along, before our very eyes, the prime mover has been "information," the spatial transmission of ideation. Modes of production and state institutions have merely been epiphenomenal byproducts...

Required readings:

Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), Preface, Introduction, and pp. 1-140.

Brian Cowan, The Social Life of Coffee: The Emergence of the British Coffeehouse (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 147-151, 225-256.

Phil Withington, "Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England," American Historical Review (October 2007): 1016-1038 (atop folders for course).

Tenth Session (November 5): Origins of Rational Choice Theory.

Discussion Questions: Tenth Session

In this session, we connect one of the leading approaches to the study of political economy (exemplified, for example, by the orientation of the Political Economy section of the American Political Science Association) with the larger political context within which scholars write and conduct research. There are several likely dimensions to this relationship. One is the motivation for research and publishing. Because they wish to be viewed as socially relevant, many scholars orient their work at least implicitly toward topics that seem important to society at large and frame their research in terms that the average lay person can at least appreciate as reasonable. The other is the reception of published research, the esteem and reputational rewards that accompany popularity (in the sense of widespread exposure and public comment). In that sense, scholars often view book reviews and journal citations as powerful indicators of what kind of research they should conduct and how they should conduct it.

In addition to these factors, the kind of research we conduct changes how we ourselves conceptualize society and our personal relationship to society. For example, von Neuman and Morgenstern conceded that "the common individual does not [now] measure his utilities exactly but rather conducts his economic activities in a sphere of considerable haziness." However, "at a future date...[o]nce a fuller understanding of economic behavior has been achieved with the aid of a [rational choice] theory which makes use of this [sophisticated measure of utility], the life of the individual might be materially affected." [Chapter 1, p. 20.] Put another way, they are saying that the perfection of an abstract theory of rational economic behavior would encourage the reconstruction of ordinary individuals in a way that more closely approximated an ideal "economic man." For this session, the discussion questions might be: How might we study the relationship between how we theorize and the larger society in which we live? Would there be any scholarly gain to such study?

On a somewhat grander scale, we might also ask whether the practices associated with particular economies and state institutions "automatically" engender the attitudes and behaviors which sustain the existence of those economies and institutions as power relationships? If so, does that mean that economic behaviors and attitudes are malleable, socially constructed by pre-existing power relations? Put crudely, does politics trump economics in these readings? From where these scholars sit, does that question make any sense?

Required readings:

John von Neumann and Oskar Morgenstern, Theory of Games and Economic Behavior (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007; reprint), Introduction, Prefaces, pp. 1-45, 633-636, 675-726.

S.M. Amadae, Rationalizing Capitalist Democracy: The Cold War Origins of Rational Choice Liberalism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), Acknowledgments, Introduction, Prologue, pp. 1-80, 251-296.

Avinash K. Dixit, Lawlessness and Economics: Alternative Modes of Governance (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), Preface, pp. 1-23.

Mark Blyth, Great Transformations: Economic Ideas and Institutional Change in the Twentieth Century (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) Preface and pp. 3-45.

#### Recommended:

Allan Drazen, Political Economy in Macroeconomics (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Michael C. Jensen, A Theory of the Firm: Governance, Residual Claims, and Organizational Forms (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957; reprint of 1944 edition).

Robert Axelrod, The Complexity of Cooperation: Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997).

Anthony Downs, An Economic Theory of Democracy (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Eleventh Session (November 12): The Micro-foundations of Political Economy.

#### Discussion Questions: Eleventh Session

Most of the works we have now read have presumed a strong collective identity and inclination to coordinate action on the part of individuals. But how do individuals become "habituated" into collective groups, classes, corporate bodies, and state organizations? And what are the (often unintended) consequences and limits of such habituation? Even if the entry into collective social life was a conscious decision on the part of individuals sometime in the past, has the subsequent development of the institutions thus created ever been consciously directed? Or are the evolving development and legitimating foundations of political organization and economic change somehow autonomous from original, purposeful intention--the product of myths (such as the legitimating mysteries of the Mayflower Compact or the Magna Charta), of exotic assumptions (e.g., those in the complex composing radical individualism), and of unforeseen but nonetheless imperative consequences (e.g., the failure of the Bolshevik state to "wither away" after the revolution)? Put another way, individual intention and design appear to reign supreme over the short-term and on the small scale yet the larger and more enduring frames of individual action seem somehow beyond both intention and, indeed, comprehension itself. Even where social-engineering on a grand scale is attempted, the consequences often appear to be cataclysmic because the spontaneity and unfathomable nature of social adaptation and change frustrate even the most benign plans and visions.

All this raises two questions that might be posed to this week's readings. First, is there a natural (meaning stable and appropriate) form of politics that would accommodate the limits of what we can "social-engineer" in terms of changing the basic practices and nature of a people? Second and relatedly, how should we conceptualize these limits and impose them as conditions on politics?

#### Required readings:

James C. Scott, Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998), Acknowledgments, pp. 1-146, 309-357.

Timothy Earle, How Chiefs Come to Power: The Political Economy of Prehistory (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), Preface and pp. 1-211.

Twelfth Session (November 19): World Capitalism in the Twentieth Century.

Discussion Questions: Twelfth Session

One way or another, the readings this week all focus on capitalism as an independent force driving global change. In the past, some scholars have told us that capitalism is a robust, transformative process that must be controlled. Others have contended that capitalism, as vital as it is, is doomed to strangle itself in the very web of control that humanitarian interests compel us to spin. Still other scholars gloomily argue that modern capitalism is eating away the political and social organization of periphery societies, perhaps dooming the nation-state in the process. But we can also find authors who celebrate modern capitalism's supersession of the nation-state as a transformative liberation of social energy, noting the novel forms of economic and political organization that have and will emerge.

While all these interpretations present fundamental analytic questions and challenges, we are after something different in this session: the respective weights that we should place on economics and politics in explaining the now-hegemonic triumph of capitalism as an organizing force in the modern world. In assigning these weights and roles, we need to consider both intentionality (e.g., self-maximizing elite behavior) and unintended systemic result (e.g., capitalism as an unfolding logic that needs no central director). How would you use the readings to identify and articulate an analytical division between politics and economics? Would the results of that task also compel you to define "political economy," perhaps one of the most elusive terms in all of social science?

Required readings:

Youssef Cassis, Capitals of Capital: A History of International Financial Centres, 1780-2005, trans. Jacqueline Collier, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Forward, pp. 1-6, 143-287.

Ronald Findlay and Kevin H. O'Rourke, Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), Preface, pp. 1-42, 429-546.

Jeffrey A. Frieden, Global Capitalism: Its Fall and Rise in the Twentieth Century (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), Forward, pp. 1-250, 413-476.

Recommended:

Robert H. Bates, John H. Coatsworth, and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Lost Decades: Postindependence Performance in Latin American and Africa," Journal of Economic History 67:4 (December 2007): 917-943.

Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962; reprint of 1950 edition).

William Reno, Warlord Politics and African States (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

Saskia Sassen, The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000).

Thirteenth Session (December 3): Ecological Causes of Global Social and Political Change.

Discussion Questions: Thirteenth Session

By this point in the semester the case in favor of a political economy of international systems, state formation, group politics, and individual behavior has been repeatedly entertained. While the internal inconsistencies within and the contradictions between our earlier readings limit how completely we can embrace any grand perspective, we have given, in each case, more than a sympathetic hearing to "political economy" as a product of individual intention, collective design, and institutional action. This week we briefly examine some of the most massive, systematic, and yet unintended formative influences driving the grand processes of political economic change. How, if at all, can factors such as geography, disease, and environmental degradation be integrated into a theory of intention and design? Is, for example, a "biology" of political economy necessary and, if so, possible? Or are these things just (immensely bothersome) "noise" in the system--both random and beside the point?

Required readings:

Fernand Braudel, trans. by Sian Reynolds, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), Prefaces and pp. 25-352.

Jared Diamond, Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), pp. 9-425.

Recommended:

Philip D. Curtin, Disease and Empire: The Health of European Troops in the Conquest of Africa (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Alfred W. Crosby, Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 1-40, 269-311.

Paul W. Ewald, Evolution of Infectious Diseases (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

Timothy Silver, The New Face on the Countryside: Indians, Colonists, and Slaves in South Atlantic Forests, 1500-1800 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

Paul Colinvaux, The Fates of Nations: A Biological Theory of History (New York: Simon Schuster, 1980).

William H. McNeill, Plagues and Peoples (Garden City, New York: Anchor Press, 1976).

Robert William Fogel, The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

Fourteenth Session (December 10): Overview.

There are no new readings for this week. We will both review all the readings on the syllabus and address the discussion questions (see below).

Discussion Questions: Fourteenth Session

Many, if not most, social scientists and historians would contend that states and economies evolved together in a highly synergistic, often mutually parasitical, relation. From that perspective, it would make no sense to ask which came first, because they were mutually constituting. However, while states seem to have always been sensitive to and empowered by a universal lust for power, many theorists would be reluctant to similarly ascribe the rise of economies to a universal impulse to "truck and barter." If so, the drive to power may have dominated in the historical dialectic between state and economy by creating the opportunity for wealth-seeking behaviors to emerge. If this were the case, politics would trump economics in the study of political economy, rather than the other way around.

Recommended:

Tim Appenzeller, et al., "Archaeology: Transitions in Prehistory," Science 282 (November 20, 1998): 1441-1458.

Douglass C. North, Structure and Change in Economic History (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981).

Haim Ofek, Second Nature: Economic Origins of Human Evolution (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Michael McCormick, Origins of the European Economy: Communications and Commerce, A.D. 300-900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Christopher Chase-Dunn and Thomas D. Hall, Rise and Demise: Comparing World Systems (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997).