Political Science 246A/446A
Paths to the Modern World: Islam and the West
Lisa Blaydes∗  Gary Cox†
Autumn 2018

Class: 9:30 - 10:50 am, Monday and Wednesday (Encina West 400)
Office Hours for Blaydes: 10:30 - 11:30 am, Thursday (Encina West 408)
Office Hours for Cox: TBD (Encina West 303)

Course Overview

How and why did Europe develop political institutions that encouraged economic growth and industrialization? And why has the Islamic world lagged in the creation of growth-promoting political institutions? This course uses a comparative approach to understanding two routes to the modern world — the historical experiences of Christian Europe and the Islamic world. This seminar is designed to serve the following goals:

1. To acquaint students with many of the leading theories on the questions of how and why Europe developed growth-promoting political and economic institutions through a comparison with institutional development in the Islamic world.

2. To encourage the development of research skills. Students will be exposed to a diverse set of methodological strategies. Students will be expected to produce an original scholarly research paper on the subject of comparative economic and political development.

3. To develop seminar skills. Students will be expected to engage in critical discussions of the assigned readings.

Evaluation

Students are expected to carefully read all assigned material in advance of class and to participate actively in class discussion. In addition, students will be asked to write a research paper on the subject of comparative economic and political development (details to provided in class). Students have considerable leeway in how they develop these projects. Three assignments will be associated with this project:

1. Annotated bibliography. The annotated bibliography lists the key sources to be used for the research paper. Each item will include full bibliographic information (i.e., author, title, publisher)
as well as a short discussion of the main topics and arguments covered in the book or article. The discussion might also include a reflection on the usefulness of the source. In Week 5, each student will circulate their annotated bibliography and make a short statement about the topic of their research paper for the class.

2. **Presentation of evidence.** A short memorandum should be submitted with the main evidentiary findings of the paper. This might include graphs, figures or analysis of statistical results accompanied by a discussion of the main evidence and findings. Qualitative evidence might be presented in a table or diagram with a discussion of sources. Students should be prepared to discuss their main findings with the class in Week 8 of the quarter.

3. **Research paper.** The research paper should reflect original analysis and argumentation. In Week 10, each student will make a short presentation about the main conclusions of their research paper. A final version of the paper will be due on December 11 (the designated final examination date for our course).

Grades will be assigned based on the following weighting scheme:

- 10 percent: Annotated bibliography (due October 22)
- 10 percent: Presentation of evidence (due November 12)
- 20 percent: Class participation
- 60 percent: Research paper (final draft due December 11)

Students will have the option to enroll in PS 246A/346A for 3, 4 or 5 units. The evaluation scheme is common for students enrolled for different numbers of units but the length of the research paper will vary depending on the units. For students enrolled for three units, an 8-10 page paper is required; four units, 10-15 pages; five units, 15-20 pages.

**Agenda of Topics and Readings**

All readings will be available on Canvas. Readings that will be discussed on Monday will be designated with an (M) and those to be discussed on Wednesday with a (W).

**Week 1: Introduction**


**Week 2: State Formation**


Week 3: Urban Autonomy


Week 4: Institutions


**Week 5: Public Finance**


**Week 6: Commerce and Economic Growth**


**Week 7: Urbanization**

Blaydes, Lisa and Christopher Paik. 2018. “Muslim Trade and City Growth before the 19th Century: Comparative Urbanization in Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia.” Unpublished typescript, Stanford University. (M)


**Week 8: Universities, the Printing Press, and Knowledge**

Buringh, Eltjo, and Jan van Zanden. 2009. “Charting the Rise of the West: Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, a Long-Term Perspective from the Sixth through Eighteenth Centuries.” Journal of Economic History. 69. (W)


**Week 9: Culture and Religion**


Blaydes, Lisa, Alison McQueen and Justin Grimmer. 2018. “Mirrors for Princes and Sultans: Advice on the Art of Governance in the Medieval Christian and Islamic Worlds.” Unpublished typescript, Stanford University. (M)


**Week 10: Military Technology and Organization**


PAPER PRESENTATIONS: December 5, Wednesday

*Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). SDRC staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the SDRC as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk, (650) 723-1066.