The Design and Evolution of Public Institutions

PSCI 4404A

Instructor: Scott Edward Bennett
C672 Loeb Building
scott.bennett@carleton.ca

Class Times: 8:35am to 11:25am on Wednesdays beginning on September 6. Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

Office Hours: The instructor will hold nominal office hours from 8:00 to 13:00 Fridays (unless altered by last minute adjustments arising from University Scheduling or University meetings). These hours will probably not be held during the first week of the term. It is important to note that appointments during those hours must be arranged at least 48 hours in advance. As noted below, there are preferred alternatives to office appointments.

Read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus stipulates class and university policies. Exemptions from these policies are almost never granted.

Note: In so far as possible, you should try to communicate with the instructor in class or through electronic mail. In person meetings during office hours should be reserved for matters that cannot be dealt with in any other way. There are very few matters that cannot be dealt with in class or by email.

Course Description

This course is an examination of the emergence and development of institutional collective action in a broad historical context with attention to probable future scenarios for change. The broad historical backdrop to the evolution of public institutions will be examined using the works of various anthropologists, evolutionary economists, historians and political theorists. For example, aspects of the work of Niall Ferguson, Daniel Friedman, Francis Fukuyama, Ian Morris, Elinor Ostrom and Joseph Tainter will be considered as they relate to the design, development and design of major institutions of control/coordination in human communities.

Students will have an opportunity to develop scenario papers that describe the future of public institutions given what is already known about their nature, stability and change.
Apart from mastering the substantive knowledge involved in the course, it is hoped that students will also develop some intellectual habits that may not have been central to some of their other academic experiences. For example, you may find that the work in this course involves a greater degree of counterintuitive and speculative thinking compared to other courses you have taken. Such thinking does not always lead in the direction of some happy view of the future based on a simplistic view of change and progress.

Class Format

This is a seminar in which, by definition, the students must have the primary responsibility for using course time effectively. You must be prepared to do your part in covering course material and participating. Also note that the way students are evaluated in a seminar is different from evaluation in large lecture classes. Therefore, do not expect to have a precise knowledge of the number of “points” you have earned in the grading system on any given day in the term. The seminar experience requires a greater degree of maturity than that, but it is also more forgiving in terms of typical grade distributions.

Grade Components

Major Seminar Paper                   65% of course grade
Participation                   35% of Course Grade

More details on the paper will be provided in class. It is due in digital form (email attachment in WORD format) by the end of December 6. In order for the student to have a chance at a reasonable grade, the paper must be at least 6250 words long at a bare minimum. Typically, many papers will likely be considerably longer than this. Also, during the last class, you will make an oral presentation of your final work, if time permits.

The instructor may suggest paper topics later in the course. However, the amount of work for an instructor defined paper topic is the same as the amount of work for any other kind of paper topic.

Class participation will probably be judged primarily in terms of presentations of one's own work and presentations of readings for which one is responsible. There may be other elements to participation (such as attendance), and these will be clearly determined and defined later. Generally, it is expected that a student will be principally involved in at least 2 or 3 presentations on readings. In addition, students will also do a mid-course presentation on their proposed major paper. If time permits, there will also be a presentation of final papers. We will not finalize the exact details of presentation procedures until we know more about the people enrolled in the seminar.
If you are principally responsible for a particular part of the readings in a given week, you should prepare an electronic/typed summary of that part and provide copies of that summary to the class.

Useful Books


The Origins of Political Order, Fukuyama, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2011

Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy, Fukuyama, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2014


Understanding Institutional Diversity, Ostrom, Princeton University Press, 2005

The Collapse of Complex Societies, Tainter, published by Cambridge University Press, initially published in 1988 with many subsequent reprints

Note: Do not purchase texts until you have been to the first class. You are not expected to purchase all of the texts.

Course Topics & Readings

It is possible that the readings will be modified. Perhaps they will be extended in some areas and reduced in others. It may even turn out to be the case that certain secondary topics cannot be covered at all due to lack of time. Some patience is required in this regard.
Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy and probably bad administration to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. In general, we hope to reach topic 5 (preliminary proposals) no later than the beginning of week 5 or 6 of the course. However, this is an expectation that can be altered in light of student background, interests and progress. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below.

1. Introduction to the Course

2. The Broad Contours of Institutions and their Interrelations
   Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 1 to 3
   Ferguson (2013), Introduction

3. History of Governing Institutions and Related Institutions
   a. Emergence
      Fukuyama (2011), Chapters 1 to 5
      Tainter, Chapter 2
      Morris, Chapters 1 and 3 are useful background reading here.
   b. Development
      Fukuyama (2011), Chapters 29 and 30
      Fukuyama (2014) Chapter 1 to 3
      Tainter, Chapter 4
      Morris, Chapters 9 and 10 are useful background reading here
   c. Collapse or Continuation
      Fukuyama (2014), Chapters 31 to 36
      Tainter, Chapters 5 and 6
      Morris, Chapters 11 and 12 are useful background reading here
   d. Current Context and Problems
      Ferguson, Chapter 1 and 3 (2013)

4. History of Market Institutions
   a. Emergence
      Friedman and McNeil, chapters 1 and 2
      Morris, again, Chapters 1 to 3 are useful background reading here.
   b. Development
      Friedman and McNeil, Chapter 3
      Morris, chapters 9 and 10 are useful background reading here.
c. **Collapse or Continuation**  
   Friedman and McNeil, Chapter 11  
   Morris, Chapters 11 and 12 are useful background reading here.

d. **Current Context and Problems**  
   Ferguson (2013) Chapter 2

5. **Preliminary Proposals**


   a. **Basic Foundations and Frameworks**  
      Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, Chapters 1 and 2

   b. **Stability, Change and Collapse in Commons Institutions**  
      Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*, Chapters 3 to 5 (6 may also be of some use.)

   c. **A Methodology to Understand and Design Commons Institutions**  
      Ostrom, *Understanding Institutional Diversity*, Part III (particularly Chapter 9)

   d. **Current Context and Problems Scaled up to the Societal Level**  
      Ferguson, 2013 Chapter 4

7. **Concluding Overviews of the Current Status and Likely Future of Related Institutions**

   Ferguson, 2013 Conclusion  
   Acemoglu and Robinson, Chapters 11 to 15

8. **Concluding Presentations (if time permits)**

You will note that we put Morris in as a background reading for both market and governing institutions, and this is because he writes about social development more broadly and sees everything as part of the same materialistic web of relations. Some of the work of Jared Diamond is also relevant to both market and public institution collapses, and that can be brought forward if desired. Niall Ferguson’s larger work, *Civilization: The West and The Rest*, is mentioned in our list of texts, and it too can provide useful background. However, all of these must be viewed as secondary in what is already a heavy reading list.
Instructor’s Important Guidelines, Rules and Warnings

First of all, it is extremely important to note that this is a seminar. A significant part of a seminar necessarily involves students making presentations and discussing material. If you are absolutely unable to do this, no matter what the reasons, you cannot succeed in a seminar. In such a case, you should seek a special exemption from any programme requirement for seminar credits or make other adjustments in your programme.

From the instructor’s point of view other important rules in a seminar are:

1. Do your work on time as described in this outline and in class.
2. Do not engage in plagiarism.
3. Do not disrupt the class.
4. Keep an open mind with respect to value systems and approaches to inquiry.

With respect to point one above, the final copy of the course paper should be submitted by the end of December 6, 2017. It must be in electronic form as a WORD attachment to an email. Be sure you keep copies of what you submit, and wait for the instructor’s return message that he has received and can open the attachment. No excuses for lateness will be accepted except for some extreme emergency (such as the student's hospitalisation) that makes it physically impossible for the student to turn in a paper. Failure to observe this rule will lead to a loss of all marks associated with the paper.

In some cases, a minor extension of this final paper submission date is made, but this would apply to the whole class and not to particular individuals.

Presentations must be done on time as assigned. The only excuses accepted are the same as those noted in the previous paragraph. Failure to observe this will lead to a loss of all marks associated with a presentation.

Other rules of general interest from a departmental or university perspective are contained in the insertion that follows. The instructor only takes responsibility for the essence of the material above.

Standard Departmental Attachment Follows

Academic Accommodations

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and
vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."
Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course. Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at 4 p.m., stamped with that day’s date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Grading: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63-66</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>57-59</td>
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<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-56</td>
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<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50-52</td>
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Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Carleton E-mail Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts.
**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit [https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/) or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.