

244U/344U: Political Culture

Fall 2017

Class meetings: Thursdays, 10:30am-1:20pm

Location: Room 160-315

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Office hours: Use [meetme.so/vfouka](https://www.meetme.so/vfouka) to schedule a meeting

Overview and Objectives

Why are some countries more corrupt than others? What explains the prevalence of poor development outcomes in some communities? Why do Europeans support redistribution more than Americans? Culture is often presented as an answer to some of these questions, yet it is not always clear how culture matters or what culture even is.

The goals of the course are twofold. The first is to impose some structure on the fuzzy term “culture”, and to rigorously define and understand it using the tools of social science. We will introduce (and usually formally define) terms such as social norms, preferences and beliefs, and explore how we can measure them empirically. We will discuss, among other things, where culture comes from, how it is transmitted, why it persists and how it changes. The second goal of the course is to provide an overview of the possible implications of culture in domains such as economic growth, the provision of public goods, voting behavior, democracy or nationalism.

The study of culture is interdisciplinary and combines insights from fields as disparate as game theory, the study of social networks, evolutionary biology, anthropology, psychology and economics. Ultimately, this course will offer a broad overview of theoretical and empirical approaches to studying culture, so that students can familiarize themselves with extant literature and identify avenues for future research.

This is a course primarily intended for PhD students in Political Science and other social sciences. While there are no official pre-requisites, many of the readings require some knowledge of game theory and econometrics/statistics. Familiarity with formal modeling will also be helpful. Enrollment for non-PhD students requires the approval of the instructor.

Class Requirements

The final course grade will be assigned as follows:

- In-class participation (20%). Students will be expected to read broadly each week, and to participate in seminar discussions of the readings. Starred readings are required.
- Referee report (15%). Students will be assigned a paper related to the topics discussed in class to read and review. These papers will be recent, still unpublished working papers and your referee report should be written as if you were to submit it to a journal considering the paper for publication. The list of papers to be reviewed will be posted during the third week of class, and your preferences will be taken into account for assignment. Reports are due on Canvas by 6PM on Wednesday of the fifth week of class.

- In-class presentation of a paper (15%). During the final four weeks, which are devoted to discussing the economic and political implications of culture, each student will be assigned one of the required readings to present in class. You should prepare slides for your presentation, summarize the broad point and methodology of the paper and highlight issues for discussion (what you would change, or further suggestions on the paper).
- Final research project (50%). This should be a proposal (7-10 pages) on a research question that is motivated by or related to the literature discussed in the course. It should include a review of the extant literature on the topic and explore an approach to answering the question.

Books for Purchase

- Richard Nisbett, *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and why*. New York: The Free Press, 2003.
- Robert Ellickson, *Order without law: How neighbors settle disputes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti. *Making democracy work: Civic traditions in modern Italy*. Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.

All books will be put on course reserve in the library; books designated for purchase are ones that will be useful for permanent scholarly libraries. All articles will be available on the web or uploaded to the Canvas site.

Students with Disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional 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 OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk; phone: 723-1066; web site <http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oa>

Preliminary Course Outline

An * implies a required reading for discussion. Note that this is a preliminary schedule, and both the content and the order of readings will change prior to the first day of class.

Part I: Understanding culture

Week 1: Colloquial and academic understandings of culture

- * Nisbett, Richard. 2003. *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and why*. New York: The Free Press. Introduction, Chapters 1, 6.
- * Henrich, Joseph. 2016. *The Secret of Our Success: How Culture is Driving Human Evolution, Domesticating our Species and Making us Smarter*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. Chapters 1-4.
- * Haidt, Jonathan. 2012. *The Righteous Mind*. New York: Pantheon Books. Chapter 1.

- * Jenna Bednar and Scott Page (February 2007) “Can Game(s) Theory Explain Culture? The Emergence of Cultural Behavior within Multiple Games,” *Rationality and Society* 19(1): 65-98.
- Boyd, Robert and Peter J. Richerson. 1985. *Culture and the Evolutionary Process*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 3.
- Fehr, Ernst, and Karla Hoff. 2011. “Introduction: Tastes, Castes and Culture: The Influence of Society on Preferences”, *The Economic Journal*, 121(November),F396-F412.

Week 2: Where does culture come from?

- * Nisbett, The Geography of Thought. Chapter 2.
- * Talhelm, T., et al. “Large-scale Psychological Differences within China Explained by Rice Versus Wheat Agriculture.” *Science*. 344.6184 (2014): 603-608.
- * Alesina, Alberto, Giuliano, Paola and Nunn, Nathan. 2013. “On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128(2), 469-530.
- Durante, Ruben. 2010. ”Risk, Cooperation and the Economic Origins of Social Trust: An Empirical Investigation,” mimeo, Sciences Po.
- Galor, Oded, and Omer Ozak, 2016. ”The Agricultural Origins of Time Preference,” *American Economic Review*, 106 (10), 3064-3103.
- Fogli, Alessandra and Veldkamp, Laura. 2014. “Germs, Social Networks and Growth,” mimeo, New York University.
- * Nunn, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. “The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa.” *American Economic Review*, 101(7):3221-52.
- * Boyd and Richerson, *Culture and the Evolutionary Process*. Chapter 8.
- * Sugden, Robert. “Spontaneous Order” in Mark Casson (ed.), *Culture, Social Norms and Economics* vol. 2, 90-102.

Week 3: Cultural persistence and change

- * Cohen, D., Nisbett, R. E., Bowdle, B. F., & Schwarz, N. 1996. “Insult, Aggression, and the Southern Culture of Honor: An “Experimental Ethnography.”” *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 70(5), 945.
- * Grosjean, Pauline. 2014. “A History of Violence: The Culture of Honor and Homicide in the US South.” *Journal of the European Economic Association* 12.5: 1285-1316.
- * Voigtlander, Nico and Voth, Hans-Joachim. 2012. “Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127(3), 1339-1392.
- * Acharya, Avidit, Blackwell, Matthew and Sen, Maya. 2016. “The Political Legacy of American Slavery,” *Journal of Politics* 78(3), pp. 621-641.
- Fernandez, Raquel and Fogli, Alessandra. 2009. “Culture: An Empirical Investigation of Beliefs, Work and Fertility,” *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 1(1), 146-177.
- * Mackie, Gerry. 1996. “Ending Footbinding and Infibulation: A Convention Account.” *American Sociological Review*, 999-1017.
- * Vogt, Sonja, Nadia Ahmed Mohammed Zaid, Hilal El Fadil Ahmed, Ernst Fehr, and Charles Efferson. 2016. “Changing cultural attitudes towards female genital cutting.” *Nature* 538, no. 7626: 506-509.

- * Axelrod, Robert. 1997. "Disseminating Culture," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, pp. 203-26.
- Guiso, Luigi, Sapienza, Paola and Zingales, Luigi. 2007. "Social Capital as Good Culture," NBER Working Paper 13712.
- Tabellini, Guido. 2008. "The Scope of Cooperation: Values and Incentives," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(3), 905-950.

Week 4: Social norms and the enforcement of culture

- * Robert Ellickson, *Order Without Law*, Chapters 1-6, 11-13.
- * Heckathorn, Douglas. 1989. "Collective Action and the Second-Order Free-Rider Problem" in *Rationality & Society* 1(1), pp. 78-100.
- * Elster, Jon. 1989. *The Cement of Society: A Study of Social Order*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.
- Ensminger, Jean, and Joseph Henrich, eds. 2014. *Experimenting with Social Norms: Fairness and Punishment in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Fairness and Punishment in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. New York, New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapter 2. [<http://jee.caltech.edu/files/2015/11/Henrich-and-Ensminger-Ch.2-2014.pdf>]
- * Bicchieri, Cristina. 2017. *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1.
- Hoff, Karla, and Mayuresh Kshetramade, and Ernst Fehr. 2011. "Caste and Punishment: The Legacy of Caste Culture in Norm Enforcement," *The Economic Journal*, 121(November), F449-F475.

Week 5: Cultural transmission

- * Bisin, Alberto and Verdier, Thierry. 2011. "The Economics of Cultural Transmission and Socialization," in Benhabib, Jess and Bisin, Alberto and Jackson Matthew O. (eds.) *The Handbook of Social Economics* Vol. 1A, Elsevier.
- Doepke, Matthias and Zilibotti, Fabrizio. 2008. "Occupational Choice and the Spirit of Capitalism," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(2), 747-793.
- Cesarini, David, Christopher T. Dawes, James H. Fowler, Magnus Johannesson, and Paul Lichtenstein. 2008. "Heritability of Cooperative Behavior in the Trust Game," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 105: 3721-3726.
- * Cesarini, David, Christopher T. Dawes, Magnus Johannesson, Paul Lichtenstein and Bjorn Wallace. 2009. "Genetic Variation in Preferences for Giving and Risk Taking," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 124 (2): 809-842.
- * Dohmen, T., Falk, A., Huffman, D. and Sunde, U. 2012. "The Intergenerational Transmission of Risk and Trust Attitudes," *Review of Economic Studies*, 79(2): 645-677.
- Fernández, R., Fogli, A., and Olivetti, C. 2004. "Mothers and Sons: Preference Formation and Female Labor Force Dynamics," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1249-1299.
- Grosjean, Pauline. 2011. "The Weight of History on European Cultural Integration: A Gravity Approach," *American Economic Review, Papers & Proceedings*, 101(3), 504-508.

Week 6: How can we measure culture?

- * Fernández, R. 2010. “Does Culture Matter?” in Benhabib, Jess and Bisin, Alberto and Jackson Matthew O. (eds.) *The Handbook of Social Economics* Vol. 1A, Elsevier.
- * Efferson, Charles, et al. “Female Genital Cutting is not a Social Coordination Norm.” *Science* 349.6255 (2015): 1446-1447.
- * Bicchieri, Cristina. 2017. *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.
- * Bertrand, M., and Mullainathan, S. 2001. “Do People Mean What They Say? Implications for Subjective Survey Data,” *The American Economic Review*, 91(2), 67-72.
- * Becker, A., Dohmen, T., Enke, B., Falk, A., Huffman, D. and Sunde U. 2015. “The Nature and Predictive Power of Preferences: Global Evidence” IZA Discussion Paper No. 9504.
- Gneezy, U. and A. Imas, “Chapter 10 - Lab in the Field: Measuring Preferences in the Wild”, in *Handbook of Economic Field Experiments*, Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee and Esther Duflo (eds.), North-Holland, Volume 1, 2017, 439-464.
- Glaeser, E., L. D. S. J. and Souter, C. 2000. “Measuring Trust,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 115:811-846.
- Karlan, D. 2005. “Using Experimental Economics to Measure Social Capital and Predict Financial Decisions,” *American Economic Review*, 20:1688–1699.
- Oosterbeek, H., Sloof, R., and Van De Kuilen, G.. 2004. “Cultural Differences in Ultimatum Game Experiments: Evidence from a Meta-analysis,” *Experimental Economics*, 7(2), 171-188.
- Fryer, Roland G. and Levitt, Steven D. 2004. “The Causes and Consequences of Distinctively Black Names,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3), 767-805.
- * Abramitzky, Ran, Boustan, Leah and Eriksson Catherine. 2016. “Cultural Assimilation in the Age of Mass Migration,” mimeo, Stanford University.
- Chen, M. K. 2013. “The Effect of Language on Economic Behavior: Evidence from Savings Rates, Health Behaviors, and Retirement Assets,” *American Economic Review* 103(2), 690-731.
- Falck, O., Heblich, S., Lameli, A. and Südekum, J. 2012. “Dialects, Cultural Identity, and Economic Exchange,” *Journal of Urban Economics* 72 (2-3), 225-239.

Part II: Implications of culture

Week 7: Economic growth

- * Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.
- Cantoni, D. 2015. “The Economic Effects of the Protestant Reformation: Testing the Weber Hypothesis in the German Lands,” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 13(4), 561-598.
- Becker, S. O., and Woessmann, L. 2009. “Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 531-596.
- * Tabellini, Guido. 2010. “Culture and Institutions: Economic Development in the Regions of Europe,” *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 8(4): 677-716.
- * Guiso, L., Sapienza, P. and Zingales, L. 2006. “Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?” *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(2): 23 - 48.

- Algan Y. and Cahuc P. 2010. “Inherited Trust and Growth,” *American Economic Review* 110 (5): 2060-2092.
- * Gorodnichenko, Y., and Roland, G. 2011. “Which Dimensions of Culture matter for Long-run Growth?” *American Economic Review*, 101(3), 492-498.
- Gorodnichenko, Y., and Roland, G. 2010. “Culture, Institutions and the Wealth of Nations,” NBER Working Paper No. w16368.
- * Campante, Filipe and Yanagizawa, David. 2015 “Does Religion Affect Economic Growth and Happiness? Evidence from Ramadan,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 130(2), pp.615-658.

Week 8: Cooperation, diversity, and public goods provision

- * Henrich, J., Boyd, R., Bowles, S., Camerer, C., Fehr, E., Gintis, H., ... & Henrich, N. S. (2005). ““Economic Man” in Cross-cultural Perspective: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-scale Societies”. *Behavioral and brain sciences*, 28(6), 795-815.
- Herrmann, B., Thoeni, C. and Gaechter, S. 2008. “Antisocial Punishment Across Societies.” *Science*. 319(5868), 1362-1367.
- * Miguel, E. and Mary Kay Gugerty. 2005. “Ethnic Diversity, Social Sanctions, and Public Goods in Kenya,” *Journal of Public Economics* 89:325-68.
- * Miguel, E. 2004. “Tribe or Nation? Nation building and public goods in Kenya vs Tanzania,” *World Politics*, 56, 327-52.
- * Putnam, Robert. 2007. “E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty- first Century,” *Scandinavian Political Studies*, Vol. 30 – No. 2.
- Algan, Yann, Hémet, Camille and Laitin, David (2016) “Diversity and Public Goods in a Republican Setting,” *Journal of Political Economy*.

Week 9: Good institutions

Community institutions

- * Greif, Avner. “Cultural Beliefs and the Organization of Society: A Historical and Theoretical Reflection on Collectivist and Individualist Societies,” *Journal of Political Economy*, 102 (5): 912–950.
- * Jha, Saumitra. 2013. “Trade, Institutions and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia”, *American Political Science Review*, 107(04), 806-832.
- * Lowes, S., Nunn, N., Robinson, J., Weigel, J. 2016. “The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom.” *Econometrica* (forthcoming)
- * Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, Chapters 1, 4-5.
- * Kulkarni, Parashar. 2017. “Are There Cultural Prerequisites to Effective Property Rights? Evidence from Inheritance Rights of Widows in Colonial India,” *British Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming.
- * Banfield, Edward. 1958. *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, Glencoe, IL, Free Press.

Redistribution

- * Alesina, Alberto and Nicola Fuchs-Schndeln. 2007. “Goodbye Lenin (or Not?): The Effect of Communism on People’s Preferences,” *American Economic Review*, 97(4):1507-1528.
- Bénabou, R., and Tirole, J.. 2005. “Belief in a Just World and Redistributive Politics,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 121(2), 699-746.
- Alesina, A., and Angeletos, G. M.. 2003. “Fairness and Redistribution,” *American Economic Review*, 95(4), 960-980.
- * Franck, Raphaël and Rainer, Iliia. 2012. “Does the Leader’s Ethnicity Matter?: Ethnic Favoritism, Education, and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *American Political Science Review*, 106(02), 294-325.
- * Shayo, Moses. 2009. “A Model of Social Identity with an Application to Political Economy: Nation, Class, and Redistribution,” *American Political Science Review*, 103(02), 147-174.

Week 10: Ethnic and national identity

- Armstrong, John. 1982. *Nations before Nationalism*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. pp. 3-7, 14-53
- * Gellner, Ernest. 1964. *Thought and Change*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson. Chapter 7.
- Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Chapters 6, 27, 29.
- * Fouka, Vicky. 2016. ”Backlash: The Unintended Effects of Language Prohibition in US Schools after World War I,” mimeo, Stanford University.
- * Michalopoulos, Stelios. 2012. ”The Origins of Ethnolinguistic Diversity,” *American Economic Review*, 102(4): 1508-39.
- * Acharya, Avidit, David Laitin, and Ruxi Zhang. 2017. ““Sons of the Soil.” A Model of Assimilation and Population Control,” mimeo, Stanford.
- Dehdari, Sirus and Kai Gehring. 2017. “The Origins of Common Identity: Division, Homogenization Policies and Identity Formation in Alsace-Lorraine,” mimeo, University of Zurich.