

SOSC6030P: Political Culture

Fall 2023

Tuesdays 18:00—20:50

Room: 3494

Instructor: Professor Yue HOU (Associate Professor, Division of Social Science)

Office Hour: Wednesday 2:00-3:00pm or by appointment.

TA: Roy Pat Shu HO (psrho@ust.hk)

Office Hour: by appointment.

This version: August 25, 2023

This is a preliminary syllabus; both the content and the order of readings and materials might change prior to the first day of class.

This is a graduate-level seminar that offers an overview of theoretical and empirical approaches to the study of political culture. The study of culture is highly interdisciplinary, and this course surveys insights from fields such as political science, economics, public policy, psychology, evolutionary biology, and anthropology. We will define the term culture using the tools of social science and discuss questions including where culture comes from, how culture is transmitted, and how culture changes. We then examine the possible implications of culture in areas such as economic growth, public goods provision, ethnicity, and social movement. Throughout the course, we will read analyses drawn from many parts of the world, particularly Asia, Africa, North America, and Europe.

Assignments and Grading

1. Participation (15 percent)

Active participation is required for this seminar. Participation includes both attendance in class and thoughtful contribution to discussion. Thoughtful contribution can only be achieved by completing all required readings prior to attending classes.

2. Presentation and Discussion Leader (15 percent)

In one week, you will present a required reading and serve as a discussion leader. You should prepare slides for your presentation, summarize the broad point and methodology of the

paper/book chapter, and highlight issues for discussion (e.g., what you would change, further suggestions on the paper).

The role of a discussion leader is to jump start the week's discussion of the readings, key themes, etc after the presentation. You will be evaluated on the quality of questions and how well you are able to facilitate discussion. Please circulate your questions (5-8 questions) on Canvas by 8pm on the day before our class meets.

3. Three Reading Responses (20 percent)

Students are expected to write three reading responses (2-3 pages, single-spaced), circulated to me and the other class members (by posting it on Canvas) no later than 8:00pm on the Monday before class meets.

Your response paper should make an argument, not summarize. (No summarization is necessary at all—we all have read the papers). Instead, these papers should try to build upon what the authors have argued, point out claims that do not follow from the evidence, spell out important implications the authors do not recognize, propose alternative hypotheses, develop a critique of the argument, method, and/or results etc.

You should integrate previous weeks' readings when possible. You can choose to respond to one article/book chapter or multiple articles assigned for that week. You may choose the week when you serve as the discussion leader. Late papers will be penalized one third of a grade (e.g., A- to B+) for every day.

4. Research Paper Proposal (A) or Critical Literature Review (B) (50 percent)

Due Date: December 15, 2023

Option (A): The research proposal should be around 15-20 pages long (no more than 5,000 words). It should ask a precise research question, present hypotheses, address alternative explanations, provide concrete/detailed information about the research design and be placed in the relevant scholarly literature. Note that I expect a research paper to have every single component in an empirical political science paper except the data analysis section. The expectation is that you will be able to turn the research proposal into a publishable paper once you are able to collect the data.

Students who already have access to the requisite data to complete the analysis are strongly encouraged to conduct some preliminary data analysis and submit it as a part of the research proposal.

(OR)

Option (B): Write a critical review of the literature of around 15-20 pages (no more than 5,000 words) that covers a theme, or a few connected themes, addressed in class. **The review should go well beyond the in-class readings**, and it can also extend to related topics not included on the syllabus. It should critically evaluate existing work based on theory and methods; identify gaps in the literature; and propose how future research can best proceed to systematically advance knowledge. For examples, please consult papers written in the Annual Reviews series (<http://www.annualreviews.org/>).

Note: Since neither of these assignments require new data collection, I will not allow submission of a paper that you i) have previously submitted to another class or ii) plan to submit as a part of a different class.

Grading System: A (93%-100%); A- (90%-92%); B+ (87-89%); B(83-86%); B-(80-82%); C+(77-79%); C (73-76%); C-(70-72%); D(60-69%); F (0-59%)

AGENDA

* implies a required reading.

Part 1: Understanding Culture

Meeting 1 (9/5): Introduction & Housekeeping

Meeting 2 (9/12): Colloquial and academic understanding of culture

- *Henrich, Joseph. 2016. The secret of our success. Ch1; Ch4
- *Fehr, Ernst and Karla, Hoff. 2011. "Introduction: Tastes, Castes and Culture: The Influence of Society on Preferences." *The Economic Journal*, 121(Nov) 396-412.
- James Bednar and Scott Page. 2007. "Can Game(s) Theory Explain Culture? The Emergence of Cultural Behavior within Multiple Games" *Rationality and Society* 19(1): 65098.

Meeting 3 (9/19): Where does culture come from

- *Tahel, T. et al. "Large-scale Psychological differences within China explained by rice versus wheat agriculture" *Science*. 344.6184 (2014): 603-608.
- * Nunn, Nathan and Leonard Wantchekon. 2011. "The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa" *AER*, 101(7): 3221-52.
- *Alesina, Alberto, Giuliano, Paola and Nunn, Nathan. 2013. "On the Origins of Gender Roles: Women and the Plough" *QJE* 128(2): 469-530
- Galor, Oded, and Omer Ozak, 2016. "The Agricultural Origins of Time Preference" *AER*, 106(10) 3064-3103.

Meeting 4 9/26: Cultural Persistence and Change

- * Bursztyn, Gonzalez and Yanagizawa-Drott. 2020. “Misperceived social norms: Women working outside the home in Saudi Arabia” *AER* (110):10.
- * Acharya, A, Blackwell Matthew and Sen, Maya. 2016. “The Political Legacy of American Slavery” *Journal of Politics* 78(3): 621-641.
- * Axelrod, Robert. 1997. “Disseminating Culture” *JCR* 203-26
- Cohen, D., Nisbett RE, Bowdle BF & 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.
- Fernandez, Raquel and Fogli, Alessandra. 2009. “Culture: An empirical investigation of beliefs, work and fertility” *AEJ: Macroeconomics* 1(1): 146-177.
- Guiso, Luigi, Sapienza Paola and Zingales Luigi. 2007. “Social Capital as Good Culture” *NBER WP* 13712.

Meeting 5 10/3: Social Norms and the Enforcement of Culture

- * Choi, Poertner and Sambanis 2023. “*The Hijab* Penalty: Feminist Backlash to Muslim Immigrants” *AJPS*, 67(2).
- * Bicchieri, Cristina. 2017. Oxford U. Press. Chapter 1.
- * Esberg, Jane. 2020. “Censorship as reward: evidence from pop culture censorship in Chile” *APSR* 114 (3)

Meeting 6 10/10: Cultural Transmission

- *Dohmen, T. Falk, A., Huffman, D. and Sunde, U. 2012. “The Intergenerational Transmission of Risk and Trust Attitudes” *RES* 79(2): 645-677.
- *Fernandez, R Fogli A and Olivetti C. 2004. “Mothers and Sons: Preference Formation and Female Labor Force Dynamics” *QJE* 1249-99.
- Mousa S. 2020. “Building Social Cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in Post-ISIS Iraq” *Science*, 369(6505).

Meeting 7 10/17: How to measure culture

- * Blaydes and Grimmer. 2020. “Political Cultures: Measuring values heterogeneity” *PSRM*.
- * Efferson, Carles et al. “Female Genital Cutting is not a Social Coordination Norm” *Science* 349.6625.
- * Glaeser E. LDSJ and Souter C 2000. “Measuring Trust” *QJE* 115.
- * Bursztyn and Yang. 2022. “Misperception about others” *Annual Review of Economics*.
- Fryer R and Levitt S. 2004. “The cause and Consequences of Distinctively black names” *QJE*. 119(3): 767-805

Part 2: Implications of Culture

Meeting 8 10/24: Economic Growth

- *Cantoni D. 2015. “The Economic Effects of the Protestant Reformation: Testing the Weber Hypothesis in the German Lands” *JEEA*, 13(4).
- *Tabellini Guido. 2010. “Culture and Institution: Economic development in the Regions of Europe” *JEEA*, 8(4).
- *Guiso, L Sapienza P and Zingales L. 2006. “Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?” *JEL* 20(2).
- *Gorodnichenko Y. and Roland G. 2011. “Which dimensions of culture matter for long-run growth” *AER* 101(3).

Meeting 9 10/31: Cooperation, Diversity and Public Goods Provision

- *Henrich J Boyd et al. 2005. “Economic Man” in Cross-cultural perspective: behavioral experiments in 15 small-scale societies” *Behavioral and Brain Science*, 28(6)
- *Herrmann B Thoeni C and Gaechter S. 2008. “Antisocial Punishment Across Societies” *Science* 319 (5868)
- *Miguel E. 2004. “Tribes or Nation? Nation Building and public goods in Kenya vs Tanzania” *World Politics* 56.
- *Cohn et al. 2019. “Civic honesty around the globe” *Science* 365 (6448).

Meeting 10 11/7: Quality of institutions

- *Putnam, Making Democracy Work. Chapters 1, 4-5.
- *Jha Saumitra. 2013. “Trade, Institutions and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia” *APSR* 107(4)
- Lowes Nunn and Weigal. 2016 “The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom” *Econometrica* forthcoming

Meeting 11 11/14: Redistribution

- *Alesina and Fuchs-Schdeln. 2007. “Goodbye Lenin (or not)?: The Effect of Communism on People’s Preference” *AER*, 97(4)
- *Benabou R and Tirole J. 2005. “Belief in a Just World and Redistributive Politics” *QJE* 121.
- *Franck and Rainer. 2012. “Does the leader’s ethnicity matter? Ethnic favoritism, education and health in sub-Saharan Africa” *APSR* 106(2)

Meeting 12 11/21: Identity: ethnicity, nationality, and gender

- *Fouka V. 2020. “Backlash: The Unintended effects of language prohibition in US schools after world war I” *RES* 87(1).
- *Goldin and Rouse. 2000. “Orchestrating Impartiality: The impact of ‘blind’ Auditions on Female musicians” *AER* 90(4).
- *Sarsons, Heather. 2023. “Interpreting Signals in the Labor Market: Evidence from Medical Referrals” *Working Paper*.
- *Hou and Truex. 2022. “Ethnic discrimination in criminal sentencing in China” *JOP*, 84(4).

Meeting 13 11/28: Conclusion

Learning Objectives and Outcomes:

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Be well-versed in both the classics and the frontier of research on the topic of political culture
2. Demonstrate how to critically evaluate empirical research, focusing on the quality of evidence that underpins claims made by empirical studies and generalized causal inference
3. Understand the basics of conducting empirical research on culture and related topics using rigorous empirical methods and both qualitative and quantitative methods
4. Develop holistic and interdisciplinary perspectives including political science, economics, public policy, and other aspects of social science