**History of Institutions: Civic, Economic and Political**

**Academic year 2020-21**

Instructor: Guido Alfani

E-mail: guido.alfani@unibocconi.it

Office: Grafton Building, Via Roentgen 1, room 6-D2-04

The objective of the course is to provide a long-run analysis of institutional change, from a wide range of perspectives. Institutions are often considered among the potential explanatory factors of fundamental historical processes, or of differences among contemporary societies. This course is aimed to provide the students with a deeper understanding of how institutions (might) explain current dynamics, as well as of the nature of long-term institutional change *per se*. This general objective will be pursued with reference to a specific set of institutions, spanning the civic, economic and political spheres.

Course grades will be based on:

* a **final written exam**, based on the lectures and the compulsory readings of the course – end of May, exact date to be defined
* a **take-home essay** (2,000 - 2,500 words) on one of the topics of the course (that the student will choose in advance), where references to readings outside the compulsory list will be encouraged. This will be part of the final general exam for PhD students in June.
* MSc students admitted to class will have to sit only the written exam in May

**Course Organization and Reading List**

**Introduction: what is an institution?**

* D.C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge University Press, 1990 (chapters 1-4 and 13)
* A. Greif, *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy*, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (only section §2.1 of chapter 2).
* F. Guala, *Understanding Institutions. The Science and Philosophy of Living Together*, Princeton University Press, 2016 (Introduction)

**Part I: The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe (and Asia)**

* R. Bonney, *The Rise of the Fiscal State in Europe, c.1200-1815*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1999 (Introduction)
* P. O’Brien and B. Yun Casalilla (eds.), *The Rise of Fiscal States. A Global History, 1500-1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 (Introduction and Afterword)
* J. Goody, *The Theft of History*, Cambridge University Press, 2006 (Chapter 8)
* K. Messere, F. de Kam, C. Heady, *Tax Policy: Theory and Practice in OECD Countries*, OUP 2003, chapters 2 and 3

**Part II: Institutions and Inequality**

* D. Acemoglu, S. Johnson, and J. A. Robinson, "Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income Distribution", *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117 (4), 2002, pp. 1231–1294
* G. Alfani, “Economic inequality in preindustrial times: Europe and beyond”, *Journal of Economic Literature*, 59(1), 2021, pp. 3-44.
* F. Alvaredo, A.B. Atkinson, T. Picketty, and E. Saez, "The Top 1 Percent in International and Historical Perspective", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 27(3), 2013, pp. 3-20.
* M. Borgerhoff Mulder, S. Bowles, et al., "Intergenerational wealth transmission and the dynamics of inequality in small-scale societies", *Science*, vol. 326, 2009, pp. 682-688
* J.M. Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: The Fate of Human Societies,* New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997 (chapter 14, “From Egalitarianism to Kleptocracy: The Evolution of Government and Religion”)
* S.L. Engerman, S. Haber and K. L. Sokoloff, “Factor Endowments and Institutions”, in S.L. Engerman and K. L. Sokoloff, *Economic Development in the Americas since 1500*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2012, pp. 31-56.
* B. Milanovic, P.H. Lindert, and J.G. Williamson (2011), “Pre-Industrial Inequality”, *The Economic Journal*, 121: 255–272

**Part III: Institutions and Social mobility**

* P.S. Bearman and G. Deane, “The Structure of Opportunity: Middle-Class Mobility in England, 1548-1689”, *American Journal of Sociology*, 98 (1992), 30-66
* G. Clark and N. Cummins, “Intergenerational wealth mobility in England, 1858-2012: surnames and social mobility”, *The Economic Journal*, 125 (February 2015), 61–85

**Part III: Long-term Development of Political Institutions, and others**

* D.C. North and B.R. Weingast, “Constitutions and commitment: the evolution of institutions governing public choice in seventeenth-century England”, *Journal of Economic History*, XLIX (1989), pp. 803–832.
* E. Ostrom, “Private and Common Property Rights”, *Encyclopaedia of Law and Economics*, vol. 2, 2000, pp. 332-352
* J.L. Van Zanden, E. Buringh and M. Bosker, “The rise and decline of European parliaments, 1188-1789”, *Economic History Review,* August 2012, Vol. 65, Issue 3, pp. 835-861
* J.L. Van Zanden, *The Long Road to the Industrial Revolution*, Brill 2009 (pp. 205-232, “State formation and citizenship”)