In fields as diverse as economic history, applied economics, sociology, political science and political economy, the role of geography is of mounting interest. Geography seems to shape processes as diverse as factor accumulation and economic development, ethnic conflict, distributive conflicts, the design of constitutions, the mobilizational incentives of political parties, the dynamics of social protest, the preferences of voters, etc. The impact of geography also seems to be strongly conditioned by the territorial distribution of political preferences and key political institutions, such as electoral systems.

What is common across these topics is a new interest in the patterns of territorial concentration of these different factors. Understanding the origins and consequences of these patterns poses significant theoretical and methodological challenges across the social sciences, where researchers are only beginning to grapple with these issues. Theoretically, geography implies the introduction of a new dimension to the study of political and economic processes. Under what conditions does economic geography become salient? Through which mechanisms and under what conditions do the geographical patterns of economic development, unemployment, and inequality shape the preferences of relevant political actors on policies or institutional choices? How do different systems of preferences aggregation interplay with the geographic distribution of different types of voters? What is the relationship between geography and collective action? How do economic and/or political geography interact with other dimensions such as distribution, religion, or exposure to the international economy? These and other questions require new theoretical models and pose significant challenges to scholars in comparative politics and political economy. Methodologically, geography highlights the spatial dimension underpinning political processes and highlights the need to model spatial dependence over time and spatial interdependencies across regions.

The course will proceed in four steps. First, we lay out some conceptual and methodological foundations. We introduce the general terms of the debate by drawing a comparison between “old” and “new” geography based analyses and outlining the main areas of interest in the subfield. Second, we will focus on the origins of geographical patterns of concentration/dispersion across a whole range of dimensions. Where, for instance, do geographical disparities come from? In this block, we will pay particular attention to the geography of development and economic growth. Third, we analyze the role of geography in shaping individual preferences and incentives to engage in politics,
along with how elections serve to shape the representation of those preferences. Fourth and finally, we turn to the macro-level, with attention to how everything we’ve learned at the micro-level shapes aggregate outcomes such as state building and civil war.

This class is an experiment. We know of only one related class taught in any other political science department. Thus, we will approach these issues with a sense of experimentation and learning. We will be learning with you and hope to do less teaching than in a standard graduate course. Together, we will evaluate the ways in which economists, sociologists and political scientists are exploring the frontiers of this nascent field. Our jobs are two-fold: first to consume and think hard about the readings on the syllabus as a means to familiarize ourselves with the issues; second, each of us (yes ‘us’ means the professors too) will be writing an original research paper that contributes to this research frontier. As an incentive to write particularly excellent papers, we will be organizing a one-day mini-conference for the end of the semester, which will include a handful of academics from around the country. Each of us will present our semester’s work and have it pulled apart by each other and these distinguished outsiders. All of us are expected to circulate to the group a one-page description of the paper we intend to write by February 4th, 2009.

**REQUIREMENTS**

- Lead discussion in class
- Participation
- Final Research Paper
- Participation in final mini-conference

**POLICY**

{cut and paste from previous syllabi}

**PART I: FOUNDATIONS**

NEED PIECES BY SIMMONS, FSU GUY, AND DIFFUSION LIT IN U.S.


DARDEN piece on historical memory.

SBRAGIA

Jan. 14: Conceptualizing Place and Space in the Social Sciences: The Role of Proximity, Networks and Diffusion


Recommended:

Jan. 21: Mapping spatial relationships using Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
3. Introduction to GIS Workshop with Gary Thompson. The workshop will take place at SSRI during class time.

Jan. 28: Modeling spatial relationships

PART II: ORIGINS OF GEOGRAPHIC DISPARITIES

Feb. 4: Economic Concentration/Deconcentration and Development


Recommended:

Feb. 11: Cities and Urban Form

[One Page Paper Outline Due!]

http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/glaeser/files/disdeath.pdf

Recommended:


\(^1\) You also might check out Taylor’s response to this piece in the ASR.

**Part III: Geography and Micro-level Politics**

Feb. 18: Geography and Preferences: Self-sorting, Segregation and Preferences


Recommended:


Recommended:

March 4: Geography and Preference Aggregation: Parties and Elections

Recommended:
March 11: NO CLASS; SPRING BREAK

PART IV: Geography and Macro Political Economy

March 18: The Geography of State Formation

5. Piece by either Alberto Diaz Cayeros or Steven Wilkinson on Colonial Legacies (tbd)

Recommended:
7. V.I. Lenin Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, Moscow, Foreign Language Publication House, 1947

March 25: The Geography of State Breakdown: Conflict and Civil War

2. “Social Distance in Bosnia and the North Caucasus Region of Russia” Kristin M. Bakke, Xun Cao, John O'Loughlin, & Michael D. Ward

Recommended


April 1: Geography And Institutional Choices
5. Pablo Beramendi and Erik Wribbels “Foundationals Bargains: Distributive Conflicts and Representation in Federations” Midwest Meetings Paper 2009 (to be circulated).

Recommended:

April 8: Geography and Redistribution

7. Alberto Diaz Cayeros et al Strategies of Vote Buying: Social Transfers, Democracy and Welfare in Mexico, book manuscript/selected chapters

Recommended


April 15: TBA FINAL WORKSHOP W/OUTSIDE SPEAKERS

FROM MIKE:

I would try to include something on diffusion, particularly institutional diffusion, even if it is not quantitative.

I would also put in more stuff on electoral geography, especially the Nazi's in Space work from Colin Flint, John O'Loughlin, Gary King and others. But in a nonWeimar context you could look at the electoral geography of Italy (Agnew & Shin), as well as the classic work on the communists in the Ardeche, if you don't want to look at current work. On current stuff, Henry Brady and a talented grad student have neat stuff on the geography of voting in California.

I would absolute force them to read Krugman's early lectures on Geography and Trade, back when he still did broad academic work, not pointed at influencing the political process.

FROM JOHN:

1) Organization. Imagining I'm a student, by the end of this class I would be pretty excited but terribly confused. What does political geography mean? What's interesting? What are the debates? where is this going? What does ArcGIS have to do with Acemoglu & Robinson?

My inclination would be to organize the class something like this:

Part I: geography as methodological challenge--documenting & measuring space & connectedness; spacial dependence as nuisance; spatial dependence as something interesting. Part II geography as IV:
development; conflict & war; political institutions. Part III
geography as DV: why do certain things cluster in space?; diffusion.
Part IV: looking at geography in your pet areas of interest.

2) on readings:

Jude Hays & Rob Franseze have done a bunch of recent methods/substance work on this stuff, esp from a CPE perspective. you might look here:
http://sitemaker.umich.edu/jchays/working_papers

Brian Min at UCLA (Dan Posner student) has a really cool dissertation project using satellite image data to look at electrification & "public goods provision" at a very granular level.
http://bmin.bol.ucla.edu/papers.html

From what I can tell, there is no inclusion/discussion of simulation as a way of studying geography & spacial concentration, & connectedness. The Schelling residential segregation study is canonical but very outdated. Sociologists have done some of the most interesting work here, often in the context of norms & collective action. Michael Macy at Cornell has a bunch of cool papers (e.g., http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/427321). Scott DiMarchi might have something to contribute here (or not).

The Micahel Wallerstein piece on size of the labor force & union density (APSR 1989) is one of the only pieces I know of in political science that specifically and rigorously derives a relationship between scale of popluation and the organization of political life. His insights are potentially extendable to all manner of other areas of politics but have not been sufficiently leveraged. Another wrinkle that, to my knowledge, is underinvestigated, is how scale and interact. Does being the Netherlands (spatially dense concentrations of people; homogenous) vs. Canada (spread out; French/English divide) affect the relationship between scale and political/economic organization?

3) Scale: the scale of the readings seems all over the map (pun embarrassing), i.e., moves from cities to the latitude of countries pretty much at will. Seems like a little more consideration of "space" and scale might be useful, esp because it maps (pun again) directly onto the micro-macro debates in PS & Econ & might even provide a way of getting from households to regions or nations.

FROM JAN:
It's more of a random collection of articles. Here is some of the stuff I found:
Bezemer & Headey (2008): Agriculture, Development, and Urban Bias. World Development 36 (8), 1342-1364

is good recent overview of the development econ/ political econ lit on urban bias with good references

some classics mentioned in there:


More recent pol econ stuff:


Breverman, Kanbur (1987): Urban Bias and the Political Economy of Agricultural Reform, World Development 15 (9), 1179-1187

there is a whole issue of the Journal of Development Studies on Urban Bias: 1993, Vol. 29. N.4 some of the articles are also in: Varshney (1993): Beyond Urban Bias

Jeremy Wallace a recent Stanford PhD has a whole dissertation on urban/rural bias in China, not sure which stage his work is in though


a few other questions that are interesting:

* Geographic Traps? Is there a geography of corruption? Distributive Politics, Corruption and Institutional Performance

• Geography of Infant Mortality/ Water access in the developing world: what explains within country variation in access to these goods?
* Geography as a transmission mechanism of colonial legacies and underdevelopment (why some regions are extractive and other productive must have something to do with geography. It would be interesting to explore this connection)

• The geography of international relations: from colonialism to Rosenau’s *Distant Proximities.*