POS 450 Political Development
Spring Semester 2017
Professor Tyson Roberts

Course Description:

Why are some countries prosperous and peaceful, while others are poor and unstable? Why are democratic institutions found in only some parts of the world? In this course we will analyze the process of political development, with an emphasis on less-industrialized countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia. We will explore the development and consequences of the state, political institutions, and democracy. Topics will include the origins of the modern state, state failure, revolutions, the role of political parties and legislatures in dictatorships and democracies, and democracy's social and economic causes and effects. In addition to learning major theories in the literature and examining historical and modern empirical cross-national patterns, students will do their own case study research into specific countries as part of a comparative analysis group project.

Professor Tyson Roberts studies comparative politics and international political economy, with an emphasis on how international financial flows interact with political and economic development in developing countries. One of his current research projects examines the determinants of executive selection rules in authoritarian regimes, and how these institutions influence outcomes such as regime stability, military coups, and economic growth. His research has been published in academic journals, such as Comparative Political Studies and Electoral Studies, and in academic blogs such as the Washington Post's Monkey Cage. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from UCLA and has taught comparative politics and international relations courses at Princeton University, UCLA, and UC Irvine.