

**Economics 711.18**  
**Francisco M. Gonzalez**  
**Winter 2008**

**Topics in Institutions I**  
**Department of Economics**  
**University of Calgary**

**Overview**

We will discuss a selection of research which highlights the role of social conflict in economic development.

**Requirements**

The syllabus for this course contains a list of required readings. Student performance will be evaluated through a collection of assignments worth 70 percent and a short paper worth 30 percent of the final grade.

**Contact Information**

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## Topics in Institutions I

### 1. Social Conflict: Efficiency

Easterly, William and Ross Levine (1997): “Africa’s Growth tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions”, *Quarterly Journal of Economics* (November), 1203–1250.

Murphy, Kevin M., Andrei Shleifer and Robert W. Vishny (1993): “Why Is Rent-Seeking So Costly to Growth?”, *American Economic Review* (May), 409–414.

Tornell, Aaron and Philip R. Lane (1999): “The Voracity Effect”, *American Economic Review* (March), 22–46.

Gonzalez, Francisco M. (2005): “Insecure Property and Technological Backwardness”, *Economic Journal* (July), 703–721.

Gonzalez, Francisco M. (2007): “Effective Property Rights, Conflict and Growth”, *Journal of Economic Theory* (November), 127–139.

Gonzalez, Francisco M. and Hugh M. Neary (2007): “Prosperity Without Conflict”.

### 2. Social Conflict: Distribution

Lindert, Peter H. (1994): “The Rise of Social Spending, 1880–1930”, *Explorations in Economic History* (January), 1–37.

Carles Boix (2001): “Democracy, Development, and the Public Sector”, *American Journal of Political Science* (January), 1–17.

Atkinson, Anthony B. (1995): “The Welfare State and Economic Performance”, *National Tax Journal* (June), 171–198.

Benabou, Roland (1996): “Inequality and Growth”, *NBER Macroeconomics Annual*.

Benabou, Roland (2000): “Unequal Societies: Income Distribution and the Social Contract”, *American Economic Review* (March), 96–129.

Gonzalez, Francisco M. and Jean Francois Wen (2006): “The Supply of Social Insurance”.

Gradstein, Mark (2006): “Inequality, Democracy, and the Protection of Property Rights”, *Economic Journal*, forthcoming.

Iversen, Torben and David Soskice (2001): “An Asset Theory of Social Policy Preferences”, *American Political Science Review* 95, 875–893.

### 3. Institutional Change

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson and James A. Robinson (2001): “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation”, *American Economic Review* (December), 1369–1401.

Sokoloff, Kenneth L. and Stanley L. Engerman (2000): “History Lessons: Institutions, Factor Endowments, and Paths of Development in the New World”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* (Summer), 217–232.

Greif, Avner and David D. Laitin (2004): “A Theory of Endogenous Institutional Change”, *American Political Science Review* (November), 633–652.

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson (2007): “Persistence of Power, Elites and Institutions” forthcoming in *American Economic Review*.

Gonzalez, Francisco M. and Hugh M. Neary (2007): “Institutional Change”.

## Grade Determination and Final Examination Details:

4

Student performance will be evaluated through a collection of assignments worth 70% and a short paper worth 30%.

Tests and final exams are marked on a numerical (percentage) basis, then converted to letter grades. The course grade is then calculated using the weights indicated above. As a guide to determining standing, these letter grade equivalences will generally apply:

A+	90 – 100	B	70 – 74	C-	50 – 54
A	85 – 89	B-	65 – 69	D+	45 – 49
A-	80 – 84	C+	60 – 64	D	40 – 44
B+	75 – 79	C	55 – 59	F	0 - 39

If, for some reason, the distribution of grades determined using the aforementioned conversion chart appears to be abnormal the instructor reserves the right to change the grade conversion chart if the instructor, *at the instructor's discretion*, feels it is necessary to more fairly represent student achievement.

A passing grade on any particular component of the course is not required for a student to pass the course as a whole.

### Notes:

- Students seeking reappraisal of a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, etc.) should discuss their work with the Instructor *within fifteen days* of the work being returned to the class.
- It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre, please contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. You are also required to discuss your needs with your instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course

Safewalk / Campus Security: 220-5333

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FG/mi  
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