

Cultural Economics

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1 Overview and Objectives

The aim of the course is to explore the role of culture on economic outcomes, with a focus on how heterogeneity in culture shapes economic decisions. The course will review the most important theoretical and empirical contributions to studying culture and some recent developments. First, we will provide a definition of culture in terms of social norms, preferences and beliefs, and explore how we can measure them from an empirical perspective. Second, we will discuss where culture comes from, how it is transmitted across generations, why it persists in the long-run and how it changes. Finally, we will study the possible implications of culture and institutions on economic outcomes such as economic growth, the provision of public goods and the human capital accumulation. This is a preliminary schedule, and both the content and the order of readings might change.

2 Class Requirements and Evaluation

The final course evaluation will be assigned based on one in-class presentation of a paper and one referee report of a recent and still unpublished working paper.

3 Course Syllabus

3.1 *Understanding culture: How can we define culture and does it come from?*

- Boyd, R. and P. Richerson (1985). *Culture and the Evolutionary Process*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 3, 8.

- Alesina, A., P. Giuliano, and N. Nunn (2013). On The Origins of Gender Roles: Women and The Plough. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 128(2), 469-530.
- Galor, O. and O. Ozak (2016). The Agricultural Origins of Time Preference. *American Economic Review* 106(10), 3064-3103.
- Nunn, N. and L. Wantchekon (2011). The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa. *American Economic Review* 101(7), 3221-3252.
- Michalopoulos, S. (2012). The Origins of Ethnolinguistic Diversity. *American Economic Review* 102(4), 1508-1539.
- Fehr, E. and K. Hoff (2011). Introduction: Tastes, Castes and Culture: The Influence of Society on Preferences. *The Economic Journal* 121, F396-F412.
- Giuliano, P. (2007). Living Arrangements in Western Europe: Does Cultural Origin Matter? *Journal of the European Economic Association* 5, 927-952.

3.2 *Cultural transmission*

- Bisin, A. and T. Verdier (2011). The Economics of Cultural Transmission and Socialization. in Benhabib, Jess and Bisin, Alberto and Jackson Matthew O. (eds.) *The Handbook of Social Economics* Vol. 1A, Elsevier.
- Fernandez, R. (2010). Does Culture Matter?. in Benhabib, Jess and Bisin, Alberto and Jackson Matthew O. (eds.) *The Handbook of Social Economics* Vol. 1A, Elsevier.
- Bisin, A. and T. Verdier (2000). Beyond the Melting Pot: Cultural Transmission, Marriage, and the Evolution of Ethnic and Religious Traits. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 955-988.
- Fernandez, R., Fogli, A., and Olivetti, C. (2004). Mothers and Sons: Preference Formation and Female Labor Force Dynamics. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 1249-1299.
- Doepke, M. and F. Zilibotti (2008). Occupational Choice and the Spirit of Capitalism. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(2), 747-793.
- Dohmen, T., Falk, A., Huffman, D. and Sunde, U. (2012). The Intergenerational Transmission of Risk and Trust Attitudes. *Review of Economic Studies* 79(2), 645-677.
- Cesarini, D., C. T. Dawes, M. Johannesson, P. Lichtenstein and B. Wallace (2009). Genetic Variation in Preferences for Giving and Risk Taking. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124(2), 809-842.

3.3 *Cultural persistence and cultural change*

- Fernandez, R. and A. Fogli (2009). Culture: An Empirical Investigation of Beliefs, Work and Fertility. *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 1(1), 146-177.
- Voigtlander, N. and H. J. Voth (2012). Persecution Perpetuated: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Semitic Violence in Nazi Germany. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 127(3), 1339-1392.
- Tabellini, G. (2008). The Scope of Cooperation: Values and Incentives. *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(3), 905-950.
- Fernandez, R. (2013). Cultural Change as Learning: The Evolution of Female Labor Force Participation Over a Century. *American Economic Review* 103(1), 472-500.
- Giuliano, P. and N. Nunn (2018). Understanding Cultural Persistence and Change. *Working Paper*.
- Grosjean, P. (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.
- Chen, M. K. (2013). The Effect of Language on Economic Behavior: Evidence from Savings Rates, Health Behaviors, and Retirement Assets. *American Economic Review* 103(2), 690-731.
- Vogt, S., Ahmed, N., Zaid, M., Ahmed, H.F., Fehr, E. and C. Efferson (2016). Changing cultural attitudes towards female genital cutting. *Nature* 538(7626), 506-509.

3.4 *Culture, institutions and prosperity*

- Tabellini, G. (2010). Culture and Institutions: Economic Development in the Regions of Europe. *Journal of the European Economic Association* 8(4), 677-716.
- Guiso, L., Sapienza, P. and L. Zingales (2006). Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(2), 23-48.
- Lowes, S., Nunn, N., Robinson, J. and J. Weigel (2016). The Evolution of Culture and Institutions: Evidence from the Kuba Kingdom. *Econometrica*.
- Becker, S. O. and L. Woessmann (2009). Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 531-596.
- Algan Y., and P. Cahuc (2010). Inherited Trust and Growth. *American Economic Review* 110(5), 2060-2092.
- Gorodnichenko, Y., and G. Roland (2011). Which Dimensions of Culture matter for Long-run Growth? *American Economic Review*, 101(3), 492-498.

- Becker, O.S., Grosfeld, I., Grosjean, P., Voigtländer, N., and E. Zhuravskaya (2018). Forced Migration and Human Capital: Evidence from Post-WWII Population Transfers. *NBER Working Paper No. 24704*.