Course Description

This graduate seminar will introduce students to recent comparative research and debates on globalization and varieties of capitalism, concentrating primarily (but by no means exclusively) on the developed “triad” regions of North America, Western Europe, and East Asia. Are there distinct national models or family types of capitalism across these regions? How far and in what ways do capitalist economies differ from one another in their social organization, institutional embeddedness, and modes of governance? What are the implications of such differences for industrial specialization, technological innovation, and economic performance in a competitive world market? How tightly coupled and mutually supportive/constraining are different institutional domains, such as corporate governance, finance, education and training, employment relations, and social welfare provision? Are current processes of globalization and regionalization eroding the coherence and distinctiveness of national economies? Are new forms of organizational and institutional diversity emerging from the efforts of firms, states, and other actors to coordinate production across borders, regulate market transactions, and manage uncertainty in an increasingly integrated and volatile global economy? In tackling such questions, the course will combine a comparative approach with an analysis of interactions between competing models, as well as a discussion of tendencies towards convergence and/or divergence. It will also examine the implications of contemporary transformations in national models of capitalism for broader social science debates on isomorphism, path dependency, and institutional change.

Requirements and Grading

All seminar participants are expected to: 1) take an active part in class discussions; 2) prepare at least ten memos on the week’s required readings (1-2 single-spaced pages each); 3) write a critical review (c. 2000 words or 8 double-spaced pages) of a book from the Further Reading section of the syllabus, or another work relevant to the themes of the course and agreed in advance with me; 4) write a 15-20 page (double-spaced or c. 4000-5000 words) research paper, on a topic related to the themes of the course and agreed in advance with me. Weekly memos and class participation will not be formally marked, but will count for 25 percent of the final course grade. I will meet with each student individually midway through the semester to provide
an interim performance assessment, and discuss possible areas for improvement. Both the critical book review and the final research paper will be formally evaluated and will count for the remaining 25 and 50 percent of the final grade respectively. The critical book review should focus on the relationship between the author(s)’ theoretical arguments and the empirical evidence presented to support them. It will be due on October 30. You will be expected to prepare a brief written proposal for the final paper (due on November 13), on which I will provide feedback, and the paper itself will be due one week after our final class meeting. Both the critical book review and the final research paper may focus on a country or region of the world beyond those directly covered in the course, such as Latin America, East-Central Europe, the former Soviet Union, China, India, or Southeast Asia.

Weekly memos are intended to prepare the ground for good discussions by requiring seminar participants to set out their initial responses to the readings in written form. Memos should not summarize the readings, but should engage with them analytically, e.g. by taking up specific arguments, comparing the positions of different authors, identifying particular strengths and weaknesses in the texts, raising empirical questions, and drawing out theoretical or policy implications. Each memo should also identify at least one specific question that you would like the class to discuss. We will arrange to share these memos through email. In order for everyone to have time to read over others’ comments, these will be due on email by 6 pm on Monday evening (the day before the class meets). You are entitled to skip any three weeks – but no more – during the semester, in deference to your other scheduled commitments. I will use the email memos to prepare an agenda for our discussions. Memos submitted after 6pm may not be included in the agenda.

Reading

A course reader will be available for purchase at the Social Science Copy Center.

All books listed in this syllabus are also available on reserve in the Helen C. White College Library. Most journal articles can be accessed and downloaded through the UW electronic library. Go either to MadCat or to the Electronic Journals List (http://www.library.wisc.edu/journals/), look up the title, and follow the links. Copies of book chapters and other materials not otherwise available online can be accessed through the e-reserves system under the course number. I will also create a course webpage using Learn@UW, where I may post other relevant materials during the semester.
1. Introductory Meeting (September 4)

PART I: CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE IN GLOBAL CAPITALISM

2. The End of Capitalist Diversity? (September 11)


*Further Reading*


Yamamura and Streeck, *End of Diversity*?

3. Globalization (September 18)


Further Reading


4. Varieties of Capitalism (September 25)


Further Reading

Hall and Soskice, *Varieties of Capitalism*.


5. Beyond Isomorphism and Path Dependency: Reflexivity, Hybridization, and Institutional Change (October 2)


PART II: CROSS-NATIONAL VARIATIONS IN ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION

6. Corporate Governance (October 9 – to be rescheduled: JZ in Lisbon)


Further Reading

Gordon and Roe, *Convergence and Persistence in Corporate Governance*.

Gospel and Pendleton, *Corporate Governance and Labour Management*.

7. Finance (October 16)


Further Reading


8. Skill Formation and Training (October 30)


Further Reading


9. Labor Markets and Employment Relations (November 6)


Review Herrigel, “Rules and Roles” from week 5.
Further Reading


**10. Worlds of Welfare (November 13)**


Further Reading


PART III: DIVERSITY BEYOND NATIONAL MODELS?

11. Supranational Regionalization: The Case of the European Union (November 20)


*Further Reading*


12. Subnational Regionalization: Districts and Clusters (November 27)


Further Reading

Crouch et al., Changing Governance of Local Economies.

Schmitz, Local Enterprises in the Global Economy.

13. Multinational Enterprises (December 4)


Further Reading

Morgan et al., The Multinational Firm.

14. Inter-Firm Networks and Global Value Chains (December 11)


Further Reading

Berger, *How We Compete*.