

A BRIEF HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

Syllabus, O'Neil Center Advanced Reading Group

Spring 2017

Books

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2012. *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty*. New York, New York: Crown Publishing.

Collier, Paul. 2007. *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Fukuyama, Francis. 2011. *The Origins of Political Order: From Prehuman times to the French Revolution*. New York, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

---. 2014. *Political Order and Political Decay: From the Industrial Revolution to the Globalization of Democracy*. New York, New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux.

Hayek, F.A. 1960. *The Constitution of Liberty*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

McCloskey, Deirdre. 2010. *Bourgeois Dignity: Why Economics Can't Explain the Modern World*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

North, Douglass. 1990. *Institutions, Institutional Change, and Economic Performance*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ridley, Matt. 2010. *The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves*. New York, New York: Harper Perennial.

Sowell, Thomas. 1998. *Conquests and Cultures: An International History*. New York, New York: Basic Books.

2/2/17, Week 1. The Case for Optimism in the Modern World

1. McCloskey 2010, 48-59, 70-92

2. Ridley 2010, 11-46

3. MRU: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PzAr_mL0Qd8

4. Julia Belluz. 2016. "It May Have Seemed Like The World Fell Apart in 2016. Steven Pinker is Here to Tell You It Didn't." *Vox*, <http://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2016/12/22/14042506/steven-pinker-optimistic-future-2016>

Optional, How to Measure It: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.PP.KD>

2/9/17, Week 2. Fundamental Origins of Civilization

1. Fukuyama 2011, 3-48

Optional Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojU31yHDqiM>

2/16/17, Week 3. Norms and Mores (or Social Capital)

1. Edward Stringham. 2011. "Embracing Morals in Economics: The Role of Internal Constraints in a Market Economy." *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 78, no. 1-2: 98-109.
2. Claudia Williamson. 2011. "Civilizing Society." *Journal of Private Enterprise* 27, no. 1: 99-120.

Optional, How to Measure It: See Claudia Williamson. 2009. "Informal Institutions Rule: Institutional Arrangements and Economic Performance." *Public Choice* 139, no. 3: 371-387. Alternatively, there are many options found by googling: <http://imgtfy.com/?q=social+capital+data>

2/23/17, Week 4. Human Capital (Culture)

1. Sowell 1998, 329-379

3/2/17, Week 5. Human Capital (Skills and Education)

1. Andrei Shleifer. 2017. "Educated Entrepreneurs."
http://fbe.usc.edu/seminars/papers/USC.Shleifer2017_EduEntrep_1-27-17.pdf
4. "Why Your Nation's IQ Matters More Than Your Own."
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2015/12/why-your-nations-iq-matters-more-than-your-own/>

Optional, How to Measure It: Robert Barro and Jong Wha Lee. 2013. "A New Data Set of Educational Attainment in the World: 1950-2010." *Journal of Development Economics* 104 (September): 184-198. Actual data found here: <http://www.barrolee.com/data/full1.htm>

3/9/17, Week 6. Institutions

1. North 1990, 3-10, 107-140
2. MRU: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wdKBfXRpNsk>

3/30/17, Week 7. Political Institutions (Democracy, Political Rights, and Quality of Governance)

1. Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012, 1-44.
2. Fukuyama 2014, 52-65.

Optional, How to Measure It:

Democracy- *Polity IV*: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm>

Political Rights- Freedom House: <https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world>

Quality of Governance- *Worldwide Governance Indicators*:
<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#home>

4/6/17, Week 8. Economic Institutions

1. F.A. Hayek 1960, 1-53.

2. Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yqA6-ukmfg>

Optional, How to Measure It: <http://www.freetheworld.com/2015/economic-freedom-of-the-world-2015.pdf>

4/20/17, Week 9, Why Isn't Everyone Already Rich?

1. Collier 2007, 3-75

4/27/17, Week 10, Conclusions

1. Fukuyama 2011, 458-483.

2. Ridley 2010, 349-359.

3. MRU: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u5P8AZRBLac>