Course overview: We examine why some countries are rich, and others are poor. To do so, we start with examining the root cause of development—institutions. We then explore selected topics, including the role of leaders, corruption, the resource curse, ethnic differences, and industrialization. We conclude with an examination of institutional persistence and change. We focus on the cutting edge of the empirical literature on economic development, and pay close attention to issues of measurement and causal inference.

Assignments and grading: The class grade will be based on:

- Active, informed class participation, for 20% of the class grade. Students are expected to have read the assigned works closely, and reflected on them, including possibly through discussing them with their colleagues before class. Students must also read the week’s reading responses and referee reports, posted on Learn@UW.

- Three five-page reading responses, for 10% of the class grade each. Responses should be critical and constructive syntheses of the week’s assigned readings, and must be posted on Learn@UW by 8 pm the day before class. Responses will form the basis for discussion. A sign-up sheet for these will be circulated in the first class.

- A referee report, for 10% of the class grade. These may be written on one of the starred readings, and should be posted on Learn@UW by 8 pm the day before the reading is discussed. See are.berkeley.edu/courses/ARE251/2004/assignments/RRGuidelines.pdf for advice on how to write a referee report, and http://chrisblattman.com/2012/01/18/how-to-referee-an-academic-paper/ for further leads.

- A draft 10-15 page NSF proposal and its presentation, for 40% of the class grade. Students should discuss their topics with me once by week 6, and a second time by week 11. Proposals are due on 5/13, one week after the last class. The proposal will be graded on the quality of the thinking behind the project, rather than the statistical significance of preliminary empirical results, which should be included. Students are advised to read Przeworski, Adam and Salomon, Frank “The Art of Writing Proposals” at http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/.

Disabilities: Students needing special accommodations to enable full participation in this course should contact me during the first week of class. All information will remain confidential. You may, in addition to contacting me, contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center (www.mcburney.wisc.edu) at 1305 Linden Drive and 608.263.2741 regarding questions about
A detailed class plan—subject to revision—follows.

**Class 1 (1/28): Introduction**

**Class 2 (2/4): Institutions rule**

**Class 3 (2/11): How do institutions rule?**

**Class 4 (2/18): Regime type and development**


**Class 5 (2/25): Leadership and development**


**Class 6 (3/4): Corruption, 1 of 2**


Class 7 (3/11): Corruption, 2 of 2

Class 8 (3/18): Is there a resource curse?

Class 9 (4/1): Ethnic differences

Class 10 (4/8): Industrialization
Gerschenkron, Alexander. 1962. Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective: A Book of

**Class 11 (4/15): Institutional persistence and change**

**Class 12 (4/22): NSF proposal presentations, 1 of 3**

**Class 13 (4/29): NSF proposal presentations, 2 of 3**

**Class 14 (5/6): NSF proposal presentations, 3 of 3**

**Final NSF proposals due, 5/13**