
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

TOPICS IN DEVELOPMENT, HISTORY & POLITICAL ECONOMY

ECON 4774 ONLINE SYLLABUS, FALL 2026

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. MURAT IYIGUN

Email murat.iyigun@colorado.edu

Mobile (720) 785-4085

- This is my cell phone number. Call or text anytime between 8am – 8pm MTN. I sometimes have my phone turned off during the middle of the day, but leave a message when it is a good time to get a hold of you and I will call you back.

Office Hours

- Online Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-2 pm using Zoom (<https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/92613356630>)

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Murat Iyigun, PhD, Brown University, 1995, is a professor specializing in the economics of the family, economic development & growth and cliometrics. He is a Research Fellow at the Institute for the Study of Labor (IZA), Bonn, Germany and a founding Fellow of the Association for Analytical Learning on Islam and Muslim Societies (AALIMS). Prior to joining the faculty in 2000, he served as a staff economist at the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, D.C. Some of Professor Iyigun's research has been published in top economics journals, such as the *American Economic Review*, *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, the *Review of Economic Studies* and other leading journals. He is currently the co-editor of the *Journal of Demographic Economics* (JODE) published by Cambridge University Press and an editorial board member of *Journal of Economics, Management & Religion* (JEMAR) by Elsevier Press. His general-interest book, "War Peace and Prosperity in the Name of God," was published by the University of Chicago Press in March 2015.

TERM START: August 31, 2026

TERM END: December 5, 2026

COURSE WEBSITE

Canvas is our class website:

- Login using your University of Colorado Boulder identikey and password <https://canvas.colorado.edu/>
- Under Course List, click "ECON 4774-100: Topics in Economic Development, History and Political Economy"
- Note: all email correspondence will be through your CU Boulder email address.
 - o Do not use the Canvas email or messages, it is not checked.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Sustained economic growth is a relatively recent economic phenomenon that came about due to the Industrial Revolution and as a result of which the standards of living improved dramatically in the Anglo-Saxon West since the 18th century. However, global inequality has also risen to unprecedented levels because other parts of the world still significantly lag the West in economic, social and political terms. In this class, we shall study the comparative development paths of Anglo-Saxon Europe and the Middle East. In doing so, we shall primarily focus on an expansive list of influential and relevant articles published and the four books required for the class.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

Requires prerequisite course of [ECON 3070](#) or [ECON 3080](#) (minimum grade C-).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course you should be able to:

- Identify the basic facts related to the evolution of the world income distribution, inequality across countries and demographic trends related to economic development.
- Study & comprehend the 3 versions of the neoclassical economic growth model, its testable implications.
- Evaluate what the relevant data say about the neoclassical growth model's testable hypotheses.
- Identify what are the relative roles of factor accumulation and TFP improvements in sustaining economic growth and development.
- Understand the main arguments offered by the seminal literature on the role of institutions in development.
- Analyze the existing empirical work on the role of institutions and their shortcomings.
- Investigate the important empirical work on the role of culture in economic development.
- Study & determine the key empirical work on the nexus of institutions versus culture in economic development.
- Know how culture generally and religion more specifically came to bear on institutional change and sociopolitical and economic progress in Europe and the Middle East historically.
- Distill what the above mean for interpreting the importance of institutions versus culture in economic development.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

Textbooks (required):

- (1) *The Rise and Decline of Nations* by Mancur Olson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press), 1984, reprint.
- (2) *War, Peace and Prosperity in the Name of God* by Murat Iyigun (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press), 2015.
- (3) *A Culture of Growth: The Origins of the Modern Economy* by Joel Mokyr, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), 2017.
- (4) *Rulers, Religion and Riches* by Jared Rubin (Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press), 2017.

Course Website: <https://canvas.colorado.edu/>

(Canvas) Grades and any further additional readings will be posted on Canvas. Please check Canvas frequently for any relevant notifications/changes that may occur throughout the course.

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

Supplemental readings and other materials will be provided in Canvas system, via the CU Library electronic reserve, or by links to websites.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY AND DELIVERY

This course is delivered via distance education format using the CU Canvas system. This format will use a combination of readings, online discussion, and other web-based resources. You will interact with the instructor and other students using the communication functions provided by Canvas. You will submit assignments in accordance with the course outline using Canvas.

COURSE PRESENTATION AND PROCEDURES

There will be 16 modules corresponding to the 7 weeks of the course (two modules per week except for a couple of weeks during the midterm and final exams when we have three modules). You should proceed through two modules per week, which will be comprised of readings from the course texts, supplemental class notes, graded discussion

questions, homeworks and quizzes, exams, and various outside sources of information such as additional readings and video content, among other content. During the midterm and final weeks, you will cover exam review and preparation modules (Modules 7 and 15) in the first part of the relevant weeks. Then, you will take the exams in the second part of the week (Modules 8 and 16).

COURSE OUTLINE

Review the separate weekly class schedule found on Canvas under "Syllabus" link.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

This course is designed to engage you through class discussions on the topics covered in the course materials. It is important that you participate in class discussions to facilitate learning by other students and gain exposure to different viewpoints of other students in the class. It is therefore necessary to participate throughout the week in the discussion questions, not wait until the last minute to post on discussion topics.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Course grades will be determined by the completion of assignments, exams, and discussions, as shown below:

Assignment	Frequency	GRADE
Assignment*	Frequency	GRADE
In-Video Quizzes	15	10%
Article Discussion Postings		15%
Book Discussion Postings		15%
Problem Sets	2	10%
Midterm Exam	1	20%
Cumulative Final Exam		30%
TOTAL		100%

*Keep a copy of all work created for the course, including work submitted through Canvas.

COURSE GRADING CRITERIA

Grade	Percentage	Grade Indicates
A	>90	Excellent
A-	89.99-87	
B+	86.99-84	
B	83.99-80	Above Average
B-	79.99-76	
C+	75.99-72	
C	71.99-68	Average
C-	67.99-64	
D+	63.99-60	
D	59.99-56	Below Average
D-	55.99-52	
F	<52	Failure

There is +/- grading in this class.

In-Video Quizzes – There will be in-video quizzes embedded in the lecture videos. You will get full credit for completing those on time.

Problem Sets – There will be two problem sets that are due at sets times.

Article Discussion posting – There will be four discussion postings. The discussion will occur asynchronously; I will post a discussion question and you will respond to the questions at your convenience prior to the due date. See the class schedule for due dates of posts and comments. Discussions are open book and open note. Discussions will be submitted through Canvas.

Book Discussion posting – There will be four book or article summaries and commentaries. After we review and cover the articles and books in different modules, I will post a set of 4-6 summary and opinion questions. Students will provide a written reply to one of those (double spaced and in no more than 300-350 words) which will be submitted through Canvas.

Exams – There will be two exams. One midterm exam and a final exam. The exams are completed on Canvas and they will involve combinations of analytical problems, multiple choice questions and qualitative and comparative analyses of topics covered in articles and books covered in class.

EXPECTATIONS OF INSTRUCTOR

I take my role as your instructors very seriously, and, in fact, I care about how well you do in this course and that you have a satisfying, rewarding experience. To that end, it is our commitment to you to respond individually to the work you submit in this class and to return your work in a timely manner. If, however, due to unforeseeable circumstances, the grading of your work takes longer than the times I have listed here, I will keep you informed of my progress and make every effort to return your work with feedback as soon as I can.

E-mail

Instructor Murat Iyigun murat.iyigun@colorado.edu

- All e-mail sent to me should contain the following: Course Name and Number (i.e., ECON 3070), Your Name, Short Description of your question. I will respond to email within 12-24 hours, but usually within 4-6 hours. I always respond to email. If you have not had a response within 24 hours I did not receive the email. Be sure to use your CU email address because sometimes gmail and yahoo email accounts are filtered into my spam folder.

Mobile (970) 785-4085

- This is my cell phone number. Call or text anytime between 8am – 8pm MTN. I sometimes have my phone turned off during the middle of the day, but leave a message when it is a good time to get a hold of you and I will call you back.

Office Hours

- Online Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30 - 2 pm using Zoom (<https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/92613356630>)

General Course Announcements

- Announcements: Please check the "announcements" section on Canvas often.

COURSE POLICIES

NETIQUETTE

All students should be aware that their behavior impacts other people, even online. I hope that we will all strive to develop a positive and supportive environment and will be courteous to fellow students and your instructor. Due to the nature of the online environment, there are some things to remember.

1. Always think before you write. In other words, without the use of nonverbals with your message, your message can be misinterpreted. So please think twice before you hit submit.
2. Keep it relevant. There are places to chat and post for fun everyday stuff. Do not stray from the discussion in the assigned questions.
3. Never use all caps. This is the equivalent of yelling in the online world. It is not fun to read. Only use capital letters when appropriate.
4. Make sure that you are using appropriate grammar and structure. In other words, I don't want to see anyone writing "R U" instead of "are you". There are people in the class that may not understand this type of abbreviation, not to mention it does nothing to help expand your writing and vocabulary skills. Emoticons are fine as long as they are appropriate. A smile "\$&%" is welcome, anything offensive is not.
5. Treat people the same as you would face-to-face. In other words, it is easy to hide behind the computer. In some cases, it empowers people to treat others in ways they would not in person. Remember there is a person behind the name on your screen. Treat all with dignity and respect and you can expect that in return.
6. Respect the time of others. This class is going to require you to work in groups. Learn to respect the time of others in your group and your experience will be much better. Always remember that you are not the only person with a busy schedule, be flexible. Do not procrastinate! You may be one that works best with the pressures of the deadline looming on you, but others may not be that way. The same is true for the reverse. The key to a successful group is organization, communication and a willingness to do what it takes to get it done.

Website: <http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

Compiled by Melissa Landin, Instructor, Dept. of Communication, Inver Hills Community College, mlandin@inverhills.edu

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

What are the basic computer specifications for Canvas?

- Visit the official Canvas Computer Specifications Page for the latest list of recommended system requirements.

Which browsers does Canvas support?

- Visit the Supported Browsers Page for the detailed list of internet browsers in Windows, MacOS, iOS and Android.

Skill Requirements

- Students also need to possess basic computer skills, such as:
 - o How to use a web browser and word processor
 - o How to send and receive email
 - o How to locate a file and attach it to an email or upload a file into a course
 - o How to copy and paste
 - o Must know basic typing skills and keyboard commands
 - o Must know basic computer terminology

Technical Support

- Canvas technical support. If you are experiencing issues with Canvas please contact:
 - o CU Boulder's Help desk at 303-735-4357 (5-HELP) or help@colorado.edu. 5-Help will answer your call: Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from noon to 6:00 p.m., Closed during University Holidays

-
- o On your computer, click the "help" (?) icon on the left side of Canvas, once logged in
 - o Within the Canvas App, you can search the Canvas support guides, Report a Problem or chat with Canvas Support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - MyLab tech support:
 - o https://help.pearsoncmg.com/ccng/ccng_instr/ccng_xmel_instr_help_support_bridge.html or <https://support.pearson.com/getsupport/s/>

POLICY ON DUE DATES

Each module you will complete a series of critical thinking questions that reflect material from the various delivery formats and required readings. It is your responsibility to turn in each assignment on the required date. Late assignments are not accepted for any of the assignments, problem sets or exams. Some exceptions that may be considered is due to sickness, university excused function, or circumstances beyond the students' control. The instructor reserves the sole right to determine what grounds constitutes a reasonable excuse for missing or submitting a late work assignment and the right to require the student to submit proper verification of such excuse.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Both students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote or online. Those who fail to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation or political philosophy. For more information, see the policies on classroom behavior and the Student Code of Conduct.

ACCOMMODATION FOR DISABILITIES

If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so that your needs can be addressed. Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. Information on requesting accommodations is located on the Disability Services website. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance. If you have a temporary medical condition, see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

PREFERRED STUDENT NAMES AND PRONOUNS

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

HONOR CODE

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the policy may include: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty. All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to the Honor Code (honor@colorado.edu); 303-492-5550). Students found responsible for violating the academic integrity policy will be subject to nonacademic sanctions from the Honor Code as well as academic sanctions from the faculty member.

Additional information regarding the Honor Code academic integrity policy can be found at the Honor Code Office website.

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT, DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND/OR RELATED RETALIATION

The University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. CU Boulder will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, or protected-class discrimination or harassment by members of our community. Individuals who believe they have been subject to misconduct or retaliatory actions for reporting a concern should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) at 303-492-2127 or cureport@colorado.edu. Information about the OIEC, university policies, anonymous reporting, and the campus resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about options for reporting and support resources.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance.

See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details.

PREFERRED STUDENT NAMES AND PRONOUNS

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Any student who wishes to withdraw from the course must submit a request directly to Continuing Education. For complete information, please visit their website at <https://ce.colorado.edu/resources/topics/dates-and-deadlines-general-info/>

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES

A variety of instructional support services, such as writing center, guidance on personal or educational issues, tutoring questions and library resources are available to the students. For more information about their services, visit their websites linked under modules on Canvas.