Course Description: Ever since the emergence of economics as a discipline, economists have been trying to provide an answer to what causes some countries to be poor and others rich. Are economies’ fates determined by their geographical endowments? Their culture? Their institutions? Why do some countries produce so much more output than others even under similar technical circumstances? What is the effect of globalization on development? What are the historical roots of contemporary economic performance? These questions occupy an increasing part of the agenda among growth and development economists. In this course we will study some of the answers that have been proposed to these and other questions.

The objective of the course is to introduce you to the frontier of research in the area of economic growth and comparative development. Additionally, it will introduce you to some of the necessary economic, computational, and mathematical tools to read, understand, and replicate the current academic research in this area. The course will give you the opportunity to learn to present and criticize other people’s ideas through presentations, replications and referee reports. Finally, the course will give you the opportunity to work on a research question of your own in this area.

Learning Outcomes: You will learn key models in economic growth and comparative development. By the end of the course, you will be familiar with the frontier research done in the area of economic growth and comparative development. You will know the main theories and empirical facts. You will learn the basic skills for research in economics. Finally, you should be able to provide and test solve models for your research.

Text: The main textbook for the course is Unified Growth Theory by Oded Galor. We will also use (working) papers and chapters from the Handbook on Economic Growth and other sources.

Software: We will learn some computational tools that are useful for research. For his purpose download and install the following software:

- Continuum Anaconda Python Distribution. Also, learn some basic Python at CodeAcademy.com and go over the Part I of Sargent and Stachurski’s Quantitative Economics (Python).
- QGIS
- GDAL/OGR/GEOS
- LaTeX/LyX

Course Requirements:

Reading: ** Required, * papers to choose for presentation or reports. Reading the material before coming to class is required. This will increase your understanding of the various subjects we will cover and allow you to ask questions and participate in the discussion.

Attendance: Attendance is obligatory and does affect your grade directly.
Homework: There will be no homework

Disability Accommodations: Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first be registered with Disability Accommodations & Success Strategies (DASS) to verify the disability and to establish eligibility for accommodations. Students may call 214-768-1470 or visit http://www.smu.edu/alec/dass to begin the process. Once registered, students should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

Religious Observance: Religiously observant students wishing to be absent on holidays that require missing class should notify their professors in writing at the beginning of the semester, and should discuss with them, in advance, acceptable ways of making up any work missed because of the absence. (See University Policy No. 1.9.)

Excused Absences for University Extracurricular Activities: Students participating in an officially sanctioned, scheduled University extracurricular activity should be given the opportunity to make up class assignments or other graded assignments missed as a result of their participation. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor prior to any missed scheduled examination or other missed assignment for making up the work. (University Undergraduate Catalogue)

Honor Code: All work undertaken and submitted in this course is governed by the University’s honor code. If any student is unclear about the University’s honor policy – either in general or its particular application in this course – please contact your instructor immediately.

Exams: NO EXAMS OR QUIZZES.

Grading Criteria:

Grading will be based on a research paper. Prior to this you have to present in class your proposal and make an appointment to discuss it. This will count for 50% of your final grade. Another 25% will be based on writing and discussing in class a referee report for 5 papers from the reading list. The last 25% will come from presenting 3 papers from the reading list (about 60-75 minutes each presentation).

Research Paper..........................................................40%
Referee reports, replication notebooks, Slides/LaTeX files, Code ..........25%
Presentations..............................................................25%
Attendance and Participation...........................................10%

Presentation-Referee Reports Tips
The referee reports and presentation should cover the following: (i) Why is the paper important (or why not)? (ii) An overview of the core contributions of the paper. (iii) What you liked or did not like about the paper. (iv) How could be improved, what other questions may be asked (v) how the paper is connected to others in the course.
Tentative Course Outline:

I. From Stagnation to Growth: The evolution of economies from the dawn of human civilization to the modern era
   a. ** Galor, O. 2011 Ch. 1 & 2

II. The Malthusian Epoch: Theory and Empirics
   a. ** Galor, O. 2011 Ch. 3

III. Population and Growth: Theories of the Demographic Transition
   a. ** Galor, O. 2011 Ch. 4

IV. Unified Growth Theory: Theory and Quantitative Evaluation
   a. ** Galor, O. 2011 Ch. 5


V. **Comparative Economic Development**

a. **Overview of the Literature**


b. **Geography**


x. * Alex Trew, 2014, Spatial Takeoff in the First Industrial Revolution


c. Culture


d. Institutions


e. Human Capital


f. Isolation, Globalization & Market Access


v. **Depetris-Chauvin E. and Ö. Özak. The Origins and Long-Run Consequences of the Division of Labor, 2016


g. Diversity


iv. **Depetris-Chauvin E. and Ö. Özak. The Origins and Long-Run Consequences of the Division of Labor, 2016


xi. Desmet, Klaus Ignacio Ortuno-Ortín and Romain Wacziarg. (February 2015). "Culture, Ethnicity and Diversity," NBER w20989


h. Persistence


iii. **Depetris-Chauvin E. and Ö. Özak. The Origins and Long-Run Consequences of the Division of Labor, 2016


vii. * Ideen A. Riahi, 2013, “Colonization and Genetics of Comparative Development”


ix. William Tompson and Kentaro Sakuwa, 2013, “Was Wealth Really Determined in 8000 BCE, 1000 BCE, 0 CE, or even 1500CE?”


i. ** The Neolithic Revolution

   i. Origins

   ii. Consequences

j. ** State Formation and State Capacity
v. Mayshar Yoram, Omer Moav and Zvika Neeman, Luigi Pascali, 2013. ”Cereals Appropriability, and Hierarchy,” CEPR No. 10742

VI. Other Topics

The dates and information provided in this document are for information and planning purposes only. The dates are subject to change based on the material covered and unexpected circumstances that require changing the schedule.