Economics 590 and Psychology 529

Understanding Culture: Analytical and Modeling Approaches

Meeting Time: Tuesday 2:30pm to 5:30pm
Meeting Place: 2405 Kenny

Instructor: Joe Henrich
Office: 2039 Kenny or 901 Buchanan
Email: joseph.henrich@gmail.com
Phone: (604) 822-3007 or (604) 822-3826
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description

This course reviews current theoretical and empirical approaches to understanding culture and cultural evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. Theoretical work will principally draw on modeling approaches in evolutionary biology and anthropology, while most empirical research will come from economics, archeology, and psychology. Emphasis will be given to new sources of data and novel techniques for testing hypotheses about population-level differences and cultural evolution.

Course Materials and Resources

Online, Vista

There is a course website on the new Blackboard UBC Vista system. This system is the main vehicle for delivering the readings. Extended discussions may also occur in the chat room. Vista is at https://www.elearning.ubc.ca/home/index.cfm. Or log directly on at: https://www.vista.ubc.ca/webct/logon/226906602011.

Course requirements and weightings for final grade:

Your course grade is based on four components: your general participation in seminar, which includes attendance, your effectiveness at reviewing readings and leading discussions (see Discussion leader assignments), your review of available databases, and your final paper.

Participation

Students are expected to do the reading and avidly participate.

Discussion Leading

Students will be assigned to lead one or more discussions for a class. Discussion

Grading Instrument	% contribution
General Participation	20%
Discussion Leading	20%
Database Review	20%
Final Paper	40%

leaders will be responsible for presenting the readings, highlighting key insights or

concerns, and energizing the discussion. This DL will lead off the class with a 15 minute presentation. Discussion leaders may meet with me prior to their discussion leading, but this is up to them to arrange.

Database Review

Students will also be asked to review the existing databases that are available for use. These may be publically available data sources or datasets created by specific researchers. Reviews should focus on (1) what information is available in the data source, (2) how was it collected (sampling), when, and by whom, (3) what are the shortcomings of the data source, (4) how can we access it, and (5) what questions might this data source address especially when combined with other data sources. Ideally, students will have actually obtained (e.g., downloaded and converted) the data source and worked with it.

Every student will be required to review two data sources (1) one source assigned by the professor (from his list) and (2) one that the student locates on his or her own. Students with particular interests that might favor one or another database should make the professor aware of this.

Final paper:

The final paper will consist of three parts, and the absolute deadline is December 9th. The subparts may be submitted individually, at any point during the semester.

Part I. Design a set of experiments to confirm and extend empirical findings on "culture" from macro-level analyses. These may be findings from economics that we discussed or other findings. These experiments should (1) help detail the psychological, physiological or cognitive processes involved in creating the empirical patterns, and (2) contribute to explaining the variation (testing a theory for explaining the variation). A prime goal is to further develop theories of <u>variation</u>. Be clear about how your experiments accomplish this. Four pages is the target.

Part II. Develop a simple, "first pass" test an existing psychological theory, idea, or claim and examine it using one (or preferably more) of the available global databases. Be clear about what your analysis tells us about this psychological theory, idea, or claim. Please also verify that no one has already done what you did. Five pages is the target. This will likely involve recombining data sets from different sources. Consider what additional data or analytical technique you'd need to really nail this down.

Part III. Review either (a) the existing evidence for cumulative cultural transmission **or** (b) the available theory. After reviewing it, highlight the gaps and propose a way of filling the gaps, either theoretically, empirically, or both. Five pages here.

Student must submit a paragraph describing their plans for Part I and II during November, or sooner. Students may want to submit early to "claim" certain ideas, or they can wait to be inspired by other people's ideas. Each student, however, must pursue their

own unique idea. This means that those who have not explained their basic plans by Nov 22, will be asked to do so then.

Schedule

	Sept 6	**Understanding Culture** • Review of syllabus • Goals of the course • Value of interdisciplinary reading • Introductory lecture
2	Sept 13	**Evolution and Culture: How to theorize culture** • Brown, G. R., Dickins, T. E., Sear, R. & Laland, K. N. (2011) Evolutionary accounts of human behavioural diversity *Introduction. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences*: 366(1563): 313-324. • Chudek, M.& Henrich, J. (2011) Culture-gene coevolution, norm-psychology and the emergence of human prosociality. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*: 15(5): 218-226. • Rendell, L., Fogarty, L., Hoppitt, W. J. E., Morgan, T. J. H., Webster, M. M. & Laland, K. N. (2011) Cognitive culture: theoretical and empirical insights into social learning strategies. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences 15*(2): 68-76. Discussion leader: Aiyana Willard Database presentation: Michael Muthukrishna (Mathematica) Special Guest: Maciej Chudek
3	Sept 20	**Culture, Economics and History** • Henrich, J., Ensminger, J., McElreath, R., Barr, A., Barrett, C., Bolyanatz, A., Cardenas, J. C., Gurven, M., Gwako, E., Henrich, N., Lesorogol, C., Marlowe, F., Tracer, D. P. & Ziker, J. (2010) Market, religion, community size and the evolution of fairness and punishment. *Science 327*: 1480-1484. • Nunn, Nathan. 2009. The Importance of History for Economic Development," *Annual Review of Economics*: 1 (1): 65-92. • Guiso, L., Sapienza, P. & Zingales, L. (2006) Does culture affect economic outcomes? *Journal of Economic Perspectives 20*(2): 23-48.

		Discussion leaders: Jack Eurich Database presentation: Rita McNamara (World Values Survey)
4	Sept 27	**Culture, Economics and History** • Fernandez, Raquel Does Culture Matter. NBER working paper • Grosjean, Pauline A History of Violence: The Culture of Honor as a Determinant of Homicide in the US South," Mimeo University of San Francisco. Discussion leader: Jordan Levine Database presentation: Eric Thulin (Afro, Euro, Asiabarometer)
5	Oct 4	**Culture, Economics and History** Pick atleast three of these to read • Nunn, N. and L. Wantchekon (forthcoming) The Slave Trade and the Origins of Mistrust in Africa. American Economic Review. • Algan, Y. and Cahuc, P. (2010) Inherited Trust and Growth American Economic Review 100: 2060-2092. • Alesina, A. & Angeletos, G. M. (2005) Fairness and redistribution. American Economic Review 95(4): 960-980. • Fisman, R. & Miguel, E. (2007) Corruption, norms, and legal enforcement: Evidence from diplomatic parking tickets. Journal of Political Economy 115(6): 1020-1048. Discussion leader: Michael Muthukrishna Database presentation: Jack Eurich (GSS and UNdata)
6	Oct 11	**Cumulative Cultural Evolution** • Henrich, J.& Henrich, N. (2010) The Evolution of Cultural Adaptations: Fijian food taboos protect against dangerous marine toxins. *Proceedings of the Royal Society: Biological Sciences, 277,* 3715-3724. • Henrich, J. (2004) Demography and Cultural Evolution: Why adaptive cultural processes produced maladaptive losses in Tasmania. *American Antiquity 69*(2): 197-214. • Powell, A., Shennan, S. & Thomas, M. G. (2009) Late Pleistocene Demography and the Appearance of Modern Human Behavior. *Science 324*(5932): 1298-1301. Discussion leader: Joe Henrich

7	Oct 18	**Cumulative Cultural Evolution** • Boyd, R., Richerson, P.J., & Henrich, J. (2011) The Cultural Niche: Why social learning is essential for human adaptation. *Proceeding of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States. 108,* 10918-10925. • Enquist, M., Ghirlanda, S. & Eriksson, K. (2011) Modelling the evolution and diversity of cumulative culture. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences 366*(1563): 412-423. Discussion leaders: Michael Muthukhrisna Database presentation: Jordan Levine (HRAF and SCCS) **Optional Reading** • Enquist et. al. One cultural parent makes no culture. Animal Behaviour. 79, 1353-1362. • Aoki, K., Lehmann, L. & Feldman, M. W. (2011) Rates of cultural change and patterns of cultural accumulation in stochastic models of social transmission. *Theoretical Population Biology 79*(4): 192-202.
8	Oct 25	**Deep History and Religion** • Putterman, L. (2008) Agriculture, Diffusion and Development: Ripple Effects of the Neolithic Revolution. Economica 75(300): 729-748. • Fincher, C. L. & Thornhill, R. (2011) Parasite-stress promotes in-group assortative sociality: the cases of strong family tries and heightened religiousity. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* Discussion leader: Rita McNamara Database presentation: Aiyana Willard (Religion DBs) Special Guest: Damian Murray
9	Nov 1	**Cultural Phylogenetics** • Gray, R. D., Bryant, D., & Greenhill, S. J. (2010). On the shape and fabric of human history. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences, 365*(1559), 3923-3933. • Tehrani, J. J., & Collard, M. (2009). On the relationship between interindividual cultural transmission and population-level cultural

		diversity: a case study of weaving in Iranian tribal populations. *Evolution and Human Behavior, 30*(4), 286-300. • Nunn, C. L., Arnold, C., Matthews, L., & Mulder, M. B. (2010). Simulating trait evolution for cross-cultural comparison. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B-Biological Sciences, 365*(1559), 3807-3819. Optional • Fortunato, L. (2011) Reconstructing the History of Marriage Strategies in Indo-European—Speaking Societies: Monogamy and Polygyny. Human Biology 83(1): 87-105. Discussion leader: Erik Thulin Special Guest: Mark Collard
		Suggested Topics for Nov 8, Nov 15 and Nov 22
10	Nov 8	**Marriage and Sex** • Henrich, J., Boyd, R. & Richerson, P. J. (forthcoming) The Puzzle of Monogamous Marriage. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*. • Schmidt DP (2005) Sociosexuality from Argentina to Zimbabwe: A 48-nation study of sex, culture, and strategies of human mating. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28:247-311.
11	Nov 15	**Culture and Cognition** • Henrich J, Boyd R, & Richerson PJ (2008) Five misunderstandings about cultural evolution. (Translated from English) *Human Nature-an Interdisciplinary Biosocial Perspective* 19(2):119-137 (in English). • Griffiths TL, Kalish ML, & Lewandowsky S (2008) Review. Theoretical and empirical evidence for the impact of inductive biases on cultural evolution. (Translated from eng) *Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci* 363(1509):3503-3514 (in eng).
12	Nov 22	**TBA** **Cultural Neuroscience, Preferences and Sociality** • Zaki—social influences alters preferences • Baumgartner T, Fischbacher U, Feierabend A, Lutz K, Fehr E. The neural circuitry of a broken promise. Neuron 2009 Dec 10;64(5):756-70

		• Spitzer M, Fischbacher U, Herrnberger B, Grön G, Fehr E. The neural signature of social norm compliance. • Ukraine learning time preference • Tabellini G. (2010) Culture and institutions: Economic development in the regions of Europe. Journal of the European Economic Association 8(4): 677–716. • Nunn, N., Giuliano, P. and A. Alesina (2011) Fertility and the Plough American Economic Review Papers and Proceedings: 101, 499-503. Remaining students must explain their plans for Parts I and II of the final paper.
13	Nov 29	**CLASS OPTIONAL: The instructor is in Kyoto. I recommend the class still and discuss the course material.**

#	Sources of Data
1	**Mathematica curated datasets**
2	**World Values Survey** http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/
3	**Human Development Program** http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/data/
	United Nations (UNdata) http://data.un.org/Explorer.aspx?d=25; http://unstats.un.org/unsd/default.htm
4	**Women Stats** http://www.womanstats.org/
5	**Human Relations Area Files (HRAF)** http://ehrafworldcultures.yale.edu/ehrafe/index.do?browseSelect=1&topSelect=0&context=main
6	**Standard Cross Cultural Sample (SCCS)** http://eclectic.ss.uci.edu/~drwhite/courses/index.html
7	**Inter-university consortium for political and social research** http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/
8	**Religion** http://dss.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/dataresources/newdataresources.cgi?term=1 http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Browse.asp
9	**Genes** http://genome.ucsc.edu/
10	**Afrobarometer** http://www.afrobarometer.org/ **Eurobarometer**

	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/index_en.cfm **Asia barometer** http://www.asianbarometer.org/
11	**Pew Research** http://pewresearch.org/topics/