Econ 829: The Economics of Institutions

Fall 2011: Professor John V.C. Nye (jnye@gmu.edu)

The required book is Gary Miller’s *Managerial Dilemmas*. The rest of the material comes from journal articles. This is list is just a basic starting point and **papers will be added as deemed necessary**. **Students are fully responsible for any additional readings assigned in class.**

Grades will be based on a required paper due on Friday, December 16, 2011. Both a hard copy submitted or mailed to my Carow Hall office, and an emailed file in Word Format are required. It should not exceed 20 double-spaced pages (normal margins, 12 point, Times Roman font). **Topics need to be preapproved and should normally have an empirical component, usually an econometric test or a well-specified case study.**

My office is in Carow 5A and hours are from Wed 1:30 to 3 pm or by appt. 703-993-4272.

Reading List

**Introduction to The New Institutional Economics: Coase and Transactions Costs**

Coase, “The Nature of the Firm” *Economica*


**Transactions Costs and the Theory of the Firm**


Joskow, P. 1987 “Contract Duration and Relationship Specific Investments” AER

Klein, Crawford, and Alchian, 1978 “Vertical Integration, Appropriable Rents and the Competitive Contracting Process,” JLE
Williamson, O. “Credible commitments: Using Hostages to Support Exchange” 1983 AER.


**Organization and Hierarchy I**

Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas*, Chapters 1-4

**Organization and Hierarchy II**

Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas*, Chapters 5-7

**Organization and Hierarchy III**

Miller, *Managerial Dilemmas*, Chapters 8-11

**Institutions and Political Economy**

North, 1991 “Institutions” JEP

North, 1994 “Economic Performance Through Time” AER

North and Weingast, 1989 “Constitutions and Commitment” JEH.

Demsetz, 1967 “Towards a Theory of Property Rights,” AER

**Interest Groups and Domestic Politics**


The Organization of the State

Olson, and McGuire 1996. “The Economics of Autocracy and Majority Rule” JEL

Acemoglu and Robinson, 2008 “Persistence of Elites, Power and Institutions”, AER.

Cox and McCubbins, “The Institutional Determinants of Policy Outcomes”

Nye, 1997 “Thinking About the State” in Drobak and Nye, eds. Frontiers of the NIE.


Do Economists Care About Institutions?


Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson, 2001 “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development” AER

Acemoglu, Johnson, and Robinson, 2005 “The Rise of Europe” AER

Aghion, Alessina, and Trebbi, “Endogenous Political Institutions” working paper
Do Formal Laws Matter?

Stone, Levy, and Paredes, “Public Institutions and Private Transactions in Brazil and Chile”

North, Summerhill, and Weingast “Order, Disorder, and Economic Change: Latin America vs. North America.”


Djankov, La Porta, Lopez, and Shleifer, 2002 “The Regulation of Entry” QJE

Culture, Social Capital and Institutions

Greif, “Commitment, Coercion, and Markets” from Handbook of the NIE, available on Greif’s homepage.

Greif, “Cultural Beliefs and the Organization of Society,” 1994, JPE.


