

PSC 355M.01
POLITICAL ECONOMY
Tuesday and Thursday: 12:30-13:45
Graham Building 209

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Office hours: M 1:30-3:00 & Tu 3:30-4:30 by
appointment

Introduction:

This course introduces students to economic reasoning about politics. It examines how economic and political structure and behavior shape each other and how each shape central features of political systems. The course begins by discussing the role that economic factors play in voting decisions. It then examines some central theoretical issues in political economy before examining why developed economies have differently sized welfare states. It concludes by examining how material structures and governance problems shape development.

Course Requirements:

The class requires students, first, to take three tests, each of which is worth 20 percent of the class grade. These tests assess students on their grasp of course readings and class lectures and discussions. Second, students will keep (a word processed) log of *The Economist*, the *Financial Times*, or *The New York Times* that focuses on political economic issues (20 percent of the class grade). For 1 day of each week during 10 weeks of the semester (or a total of 10 entries spread throughout the semester), the student will record the author, title, and date of his or her articles on foreign domestic politics. Appendix 1 contains more information about this assignment. Discussions should not exceed two or three paragraphs (or not more than one-half of a single-spaced, typed page). Third, students will write a paper worth 20 percent of the class grade. Appendix 2 offers more guidelines about how to prepare the paper.

Course Policies:

This course will combine lectures with class discussion. Students who miss classes, do not do the readings, and do not review their notes from previous classes will do poorly on assignments. For every day the newspaper log or term paper is late, a student's grade will drop by an entire letter grade.

Please respect the following rules in class:

- Turn off your cell phones, both in the class and when you visit me during office hours;
- Use laptops only for note-taking;
- Be punctual and do not leave a class before it is over;
- Listen attentively while others speak in class;
- Give me at least a couple of days to respond to emails.

University policy requires that you obtain certification from the Office of Disability Services if you have a disability that merits accommodation. Its address is: EUC, Suite 215 and its telephone number is: 334-5440.

Books for Purchase:

Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Andrew Gelman, *Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State: Why Americans Vote the Way They Do* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Jonas Pontusson, *Inequality and Prosperity: Social Europe vs. Liberal America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

Course Topics and Reading Assignments:

Sessions	Dates	Topics and Reading
1-2	Jan. 20-22.	What is Political Economy? Reading: Kenneth Shepsle and Mark S. Bonchek, <i>Analyzing Politics: Rationality, Behavior, and Institutions</i> (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), chaps. 1-2.
3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8 Tentative bibliography due on Feb 5.	Jan. 27, 29 & Feb 3, 5, 10 & 12.	Interests and Voting Behavior Reading: <i>Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State</i> , pp. 1-178.
9. First Exam	Feb. 17	
10	Feb. 19	Varieties of Capitalism Pontusson, <i>Inequality and Prosperity</i> , chaps. 1-2.
11, 12 & 13.	Feb. 24 & 26 & March 3	Economic Goods and Collective Dilemmas Reading: Shepsle and Bonchek, <i>Analyzing Politics</i> , chaps. 8-10.
14, 15, 16, 17 & 18.	March 5, 17, 19, 24 & 26	Welfare State Diversity Reading: Pontusson, <i>Inequality and Prosperity</i> , chaps. 3, 4, 6-9.
19	March 31	Second Exam
20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26. Tentative outline due on April 7	April 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21 & 23.	Development Reading: Collier, <i>The Bottom Billion</i> , pp. 1-192.
27-28. Paper Due	April 28 & May 5.	Conclusions

Appendix 1 -- Guidelines for *The New York Times* Log

Articles should focus on political economy. Entries should relate newspaper articles to class themes. Simply summarizing events and trends the article describes is unacceptable.

Avoid passing easy judgments on individuals or groups in other countries. It is not a good idea to suggest that Prime Minister x of country y is poorly informed or has malevolent intentions. Nor is it advisable to say that the political system of country x is a failure because its leaders cannot reach agreements that an observer deems easy to establish. Instead, use the assignment to learn about the internal politics of other countries and to relate them to central class issues.

This assignment is due on the last day of class.

Appendix 2 -- Paper Assignments

Write a paper on the development prospects of a third world country. Your objective will be to evaluate whether, in light of at least 7 bibliographic sources, this country's political and economic system is promoting development. Among other things, this assignment requires that you define and measure development, identify the economic interests of key political actors, and explain how the country's political system shapes development. Keep definitions of development to a minimum; it is much better to follow conventions and to focus on the implications of a country's political economic structure for development. A useful guide for essay writing is the appendix of Stephan Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997). This book is on reserve in the library.

The papers should be empirical and analytical. They need to cite relevant material to document their claims. Your papers should defend their conclusions; they have to make, in other words, persuasive arguments. Each paper should not exceed 10 double-spaced, typewritten pages (12-pt font with at least 1.5 margins and including a bibliography) and be at least 8 such pages. Please insert page numbers and use the citation format of the *American Political Science Review*. You will lose points if your citations are incorrect.

In writing your essay, please cite *at least 7 books or articles not on the list of required readings*. Recommended journals include the: *American Journal of Political Science*, the *American Political Science Review*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Comparative Politics*, *Electoral Studies*, *Government and Opposition*, the *Journal of Latin American Studies*, *Journal of Politics*, *Latin American Politics and Society*, the *Latin American Research Review*, *Political Science Quarterly*, and *Political Research Quarterly*. It would also be a good idea to search for articles with an electronic search engine.

Please use the citation format of the *American Political Science Review*. You will lose points if your citations are incorrect.

Appendix 3 -- Notes on Writing English and for Using the Writing Center

Effective English writing is brief and austere. Several rules worth following include:

1. Always put subjects before verbs and their objects. Do not say: "The presidency was won by the PAN." It is better to say that, "The PAN won the presidency."

2. Use strong verbs and avoid adverbs and adjectives. Never use two to make a point. It is much better to say that: "Economic crisis transformed political preferences," than to say "political preferences about parties were fueled by a dramatic and major economic crisis." The first is much better (and shorter).
3. Never use the passive voice. Always identify your subject. Never say: "Logit analysis was used in this paper." It is better to say, "The paper (or "I," or "my analysis," etc.) uses logit models."
4. Avoid past tenses, if you can. The present tense and the active voice make for better papers.

A great and short primer about writing English is William Strunk, Jr., and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style*. *The Economist* magazine is also marvelous for its use of the English language. Gary Cox and Robert Bates are two political scientists who write exceedingly well.

Visit the Writing Center often as part of a more general strategy to improve your writing. Conversations with students and with the Center's Director suggest that a useful visit starts with a concrete request. A good paper, like a productive meeting with a writing consultant, starts with a proactive stance, one where the writer is looking for help to address one or more issues relevant for her paper assignment. Questions worth raising with the Writing Center or anyone else whose advice you seek include:

- (1) Is my argument persuasive? Do I have convincing reasons in support of my conclusion?
- (2) What are my empirical claims? Do I have evidence for my claims?
- (3) Have I organized my paper effectively?
- (4) Have I filled my paper with unnecessary facts?

It is best not to ask a tutor or friend to spell- and grammar-check your writing. Only raise these issues if you are not sure how to apply the rules for writing good English. Instead, use your visits to the Writing Center to obtain answers to questions like the aforementioned. Finally, write a summary of your session with the Writing Center consultant. Identify the central points of your conversation and review these notes as you draft your paper.