

PSC 355M.01
POLITICAL ECONOMY
Tuesday and Thursday: 11:00-12:15
Graham Building 209

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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 20 entries spread throughout the semester, each 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. Third, students will write a data-based paper worth 20 percent of the class grade. More precise instructions will become available at the Blackboard (BB) site for this class.

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;
- Remove hats while in class or during office visits;
- Use laptops only for note-taking;
- 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:

Alberto Alesina and Edward L. Glaeser, *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

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*, expanded edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008, 2010).

Edward N. Wolff, *Top Heavy: The Increasing Inequality of Wealth in America and What Can Be Done About It* (New York: The New Press, 2002).

Course Topics and Reading Assignments:

Sessions	Dates	Topics and Reading
1-2	Jan. 19-21.	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	Jan. 26, 28 & Feb 2, 4, 9 & 11.	Interests and Voting Behavior Reading: <i>Red State, Blue State, Rich State, Poor State</i> , pp. 1-178.
9	Feb. 16	First Exam
10 & 11	Feb. 18, 23	Economic Goods and Collective Dilemmas Reading: Shepsle and Bonchek, <i>Analyzing Politics</i> , chaps. 8-10.
12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18	Feb. 25, March 2, 4, 16, 18 & 23	Welfare State Diversity Readings: Alesina and Glaeser, <i>Fighting Poverty</i> , pp. 1-222. Wolff, <i>Top Heavy</i> , 1-90.
18	March 25	Second Exam
19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 & 2.	March 30 & April 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20 & 22	Development Reading: Collier, <i>The Bottom Billion</i> , pp. 1-192.
27-28	April 27 & 29	Conclusions
Newspaper Log Due - last day		Third Exam - check exam schedule

Appendix 1 -- Guidelines for Newspaper 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.

Discussions should not exceed two or three paragraphs (or not more than one-half of a single-spaced, typed page). This assignment is due on the last day of class.