COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY

PLSC 712/398
Tuesday 1:30-3:15

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Purpose: This seminar is designed to give graduate students a broad-gauged introduction to one of the largest and most vibrant branches of political science. We begin by examining the field’s diverse theoretical underpinnings and placing political economy in the context of political science more generally. The remainder of the course is concerned with the application of theory to practice. We will proceed thematically, examining substantive issues of political economy across time and place. We will consider the interaction between government and the economy in democratic and nondemocratic regimes, and in developed and developing countries.

Requirements: The reading load in this class is heavy and the writing requirements are correspondingly light.

1. A critical and synthetic evaluation of all of the readings each week. (40% of your grade). The point is not to summarize the readings, but to interact with their analytical claims. As the course goes along, you will be developing the cumulative knowledge that allows you to compare approaches and causal arguments. These evaluations should be more than one page, single-spaced, 12-point font. You will have 2 grace weeks off, on the weeks of your choice.

2. A final assignment, due the last day of class, will do one of the following (60% of your grade).

   a. A 6-10 page synthesis piece that takes up one or more themes from the course, with applications to real-world examples; or

   b. A 6-10 page sketch for a piece of original research you might undertake in the future, stating your hypothesis, why it is important, how it compares to other possible arguments, and preliminary evidence as well as a discussion of what data you would need to test your hypotheses more definitively. Why is your question substantively important? What is at stake theoretically? Methodologically, what are the best ways to get the answer? Or

   c. (for graduate students) a trial dissertation proposal.

Readings: The readings for the seminar are available on ClassesV2.
Policies:

- Students are expected to attend class, complete the readings before class, and come prepared to discuss them.
- Laptops and iPads are welcome in class for note-taking purposes and classroom exercises, not for checking email.
- Give appropriate attribution for all ideas not your own. Plagiarism is a serious matter that we will discuss in class so everyone knows exactly what it is.

Part I. Theoretical Foundations.

Week 1. Organizational Meeting and Introduction to the Course.

Political economy as the interaction between politics and economics; and political economy as the microeconomics of politics. Three paradigms in political science and political economy.

Week 2. Demand Side I: Materialism


Week 3. The Supply Side: Institutionalism

Week 4: Demand Side II: Culture and Values


Week 5. Economic Consequences of Institutional Forms


Part II. Substantive Issues in Political Economy

Week 6: Sectoral Policy: Regulation and Industrial Policy


Week 7: Financial Regulation in Comparative Perspective
Week 8: Government and Macroeconomic Policy: Political Business Cycles and Monetary Policy


Week 9: Labor and the Welfare State


Week 10: Causes and Consequences of Income Inequality


Week 11: The Political Economy of Gender


Week 12: Democracy and Development


Week 13: The Political Economy of Reform


