Course Description

This course is an introduction to comparative political economy, the comparative politics of domestic economic policies. Topics include: market reforms in developed, developing, and postsocialist countries, varieties of welfare capitalism, income inequality and political stability, (de)regulation and privatization, federalism, the effects of political institutions on economic development, interest groups, property rights, the rule of law, and corruption. We will look in depth at both developed and developing countries, with an emphasis on understanding why they choose (or end up with) the policies and institutions that they have, even when in some cases these policies and institutions might hamper development or increase poverty. You need to have taken Politics Abroad before taking this course, and a background in principles of microeconomics and macroeconomics and in statistics (through basic regression) is extremely helpful.

Course Requirements and Grading

Class will combine lectures and discussion sessions, and attendance is required. You must do all the reading for a particular class meeting before that class. Class participation (quality and quantity) comprises 25% of your course grade. The exam will draw on all material covered in class, from both readings and lectures. There is a 1500-word essay on an assigned topic due Wednesday March 9, which will count as 20% of your grade. In the final two class periods we will hold in-class team debates on different topics. Your preparation for your debate comprises 15% of your grade. There will be a take-home essay final exam, which counts for 40% of your course grade. This exam must meet all the requirements of a standard academic paper, including citations of sources (see section on Academic Integrity).

Please note the cancelled classes below.

Readings

All readings are required. Readings not drawn from the books are available on the course’s Blackboard site. I have chosen the following books for the course, all of which are available at the bookstore:


In addition, some recommended texts are available at the bookstore. The required readings from these books are all on the Blackboard site, but you may want to purchase or rent the books anyway, especially for midterm paper and final exam research. The recommended books are these:


Remember to bring to class all the readings assigned for a particular day. That means that you will need to print out Blackboard readings.

**Academic Integrity**

I have noticed that many UB students are not adequately familiar with the scope, content, and importance of academic integrity. According to UB Rules and Regulations:

'The University has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect for others' academic endeavors. By placing their name on academic work, students certify the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments.'

Academic dishonesty includes:

1. Previously submitted work: submitting academically required material that has been previously submitted in whole or in substantial part in another course, without prior and expressed consent of the instructor;

2. Plagiarism: copying or receiving material from a source or sources and submitting this material as one’s own without acknowledging the particular debts to the source (quotations, paraphrases, basic ideas), or otherwise representing the work of another as one’s own;

3. Cheating: receiving information, or soliciting information, from another student or other unauthorized source, or giving information to another student, with the intent to deceive while completing an examination or individual assignment;
(d) Falsification of academic materials: fabricating laboratory materials, notes, reports, or any forms of computer data; forging an instructor’s name or initials; resubmitting an examination or assignment for reevaluation which has been altered without the instructor’s authorization; or submitting a report, paper, materials, computer data, or examination (or any considerable part thereof) prepared by any person other than the student responsible for the assignment;

(e) Misrepresentation of documents: Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University or Official document, record, or instrument of identification.

(f) Confidential academic materials: procurement, distribution or acceptance of examinations, laboratory results without prior and expressed consent of the instructor.

(g) Selling academic assignments: No person shall, for financial consideration, or the promise or financial consideration, prepare, offer to prepare, cause to be prepared, sell or offer for sale to any person any written material which the seller knows, is informed or has reason to believe is intended for submission as a dissertation or thesis, term paper, essay, report or other written assignment by a student in a university, college, academy, school or other educational institution to such institution or to a course, seminar or degree program held by such institution.

(h) Selling computer assignments: No person shall sell or offer for sale to any person enrolled in the State University of New York any computer assignment, or any assistance in the preparation, research, or writing of a computer assignment intended for submission in fulfillment of any academic requirement.

UB guidelines currently provide the instructor with a wide range of discretion as to the penalties to pursue for any violation of academic integrity. For clear and particularly serious violations of academic integrity such as cheating, my policy, with no exceptions, is to fail the student in the course. For lesser violations such as low-degree plagiarism, severe point deductions, up to failure of the assignment, is standard. Regarding plagiarism, please note that you must cite every idea or piece of evidence in your paper that you derived from someone else. In addition, encyclopedias such as Wikipedia and biased publications from activist organizations are not acceptable sources for scholarly research, although they may well be appropriate places to begin your research. Use primary sources such as news articles for establishing facts and refereed, published research for establishing generally accepted relationships and ideas.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

1. Tools for Analysis
   Wednesday January 19: No reading.
   Friday January 21: Olson, chapter 1.

2. Interest Groups in High-Income Democracies
   Monday January 24: Olson, chapter 2.
   Wednesday January 26: Olson, chapters 3 & 4.
3. Interest Groups in Less Developed Countries

4. The Modernist State
   Friday February 4: Scott, chapter 1.
   Monday February 7: Scott, chapter 2.
   Wednesday February 9: Scott, chapters 6 & 8.

5. Political Institutions and Policies
   Friday February 11: Tsebelis, chapter 1.
   *Five-pager topic announced.*
   Wednesday February 16: Persson & Tabellini, chapter 2.

   **NO CLASS FRIDAY FEBRUARY 18**

   Monday February 21: Tsebelis, chapter 8; Persson & Tabellini, chapter 4.

6. Political Institutions, Transaction Costs, and Development

7. Federalism
8. Resource Curses

9. Electoral Politics and the Economy
   NO CLASS MARCH 14-19 (SPRING RECESS)

10. Redistribution and Welfare
    Monday March 28: Swenson, chapter 1.
    Wednesday March 30: Swenson, chapter 2.
    NO CLASS APRIL 1 & 4

11. Deregulation in High-Income Democracies
    Wednesday April 13: Vogel, chapter 2.
    Friday April 15: Vogel, chapter 3.
    *Debate teams and topics announced.*
    Monday April 18: Vogel, chapters 10 & 11.
12. Economic Reform in Less Developed Countries


   Friday April 22: Sachs, chapter 2.


   Wednesday April 27: Gregg B. Johnson (2008), “Policy Change in Presidential Democracies: The Differential Determinants of Market-Oriented Reforms in Latin America”

13. Student Debates April 29 & May 2 (*final exams handed out*)