NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
Spring 2015

Political Economy (Core)
NYU Department of Politics
POL-GA. 1400.001
Tuesday 4-5:50pm
Room 217
19 W. 4th Street

Professor Prosper Bernard, Jr.
Office hour: Tuesday 2-4pm, Rm. 304
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Description
This course is a survey of the core concepts and theories of political economy. The course is divided into three sections. The first one is designed to familiarize you with theoretical perspectives, methods of analysis, and concepts widely used in the study of political economy. What you learn in this section will give you useful leverage to study the themes in the next two sections. The second section focuses on how economic and political institutions and government partisanship shape economic policies and macroeconomic outcomes. The final section explores how economic and social factors influence elections, regime change, distribution and redistribution, and social spending.

Requirements
1. Each week students are expected to attend class and to participate in class discussions. Each student is required to summarize at least once this semester assigned readings associated with a weekly topic. This assignment involves summarizing and synthesizing readings for up to 15 minutes and preparing for class use a written outline that includes summaries of the readings, comments that synthesize and contrast the reviewed materials, and discussion questions. For practical information regarding this assignment see “Tips for an effective summary” on NYU Class course site.

2. You are also required to write three review essays (5-7 pages long, double-spaced) based on any three weekly topics. The essays must engage critically and comparatively all of the required readings assigned to a weekly topic. Consider the following points as you develop your response essay: What is the central theme connecting the selected readings? What are the main arguments developed in the literature under review? What are the main concepts addressed in the assigned readings and how are they conceptualized and operationalized? What are the main empirical findings and what methods are used to arrive at such findings? How do the readings under review enhance our understanding of the area of study in question? Indicate how the selected readings complement each other and point out the areas in which they diverge from each other. For practical information about this assignment see “Tips for writing an effective essay” on NYU Class course site.

Each essay is due the week after we cover the weekly topic on which your essay is based. Please note the following time limits for the submission of your three essays: your first essay must be submitted no later than March 3; second essay no later than
April 7; and third essay no later than May 12. Your three essays (Word formatted) must be submitted via the Assignment Tool on NYU Class.

3. Finally, the course requires that you complete a take home exam at the end of the semester. The exam will be distributed on April 21 and due by May 5. Your exam must be submitted via the Assignment Tool on NYU Class course site.

**Grading**
Three review essays: 60%
Take home exam: 15%
Class participation: 15%
In-class summary: 10%

**Readings**
There are several books and many articles required for this course. Below, you will find a list of books available for purchase at the bookstore; these books are also on reserve. Readings in the form of book chapters are available at the Bobst reserve desk. Readings in the form of journal articles are available through Bobst Electronic Journals.


**January 27: What is Political Economy?**

*Suggested Readings:*

**Part I: Concepts and Perspectives in Political Economy**

**February 3: Rational Choice and Collective Action**

*Assigned Readings*

Suggested Readings


February 10: Preference Formation and Interest Representation

Assigned Readings


Suggested Readings


Ira Katznelson and Barry Weingast. 2007 *Preferences over Time*. (Russell Sage Foundation).


February 17: Transaction Costs, Time-Consistency & Agency Problems

Assigned Readings


Suggested Readings


**February 24: Institutional Coordination, Complementarity & Change**

*Assigned Readings*


*Suggested Readings*


**Part II: Impact of Institutions and Politics on Economic Policies and Performance**

**March 3: Economic Institutions**

*Assigned Readings*


**Suggested Readings**


**March 10: Political Institutions**

**Assigned Readings**


**Suggested Readings**


**March 17: Spring Recess – No Class**
March 24: Macroeconomic Politics: Electoral Cycles

**Assigned Readings**


**Suggested Readings**


March 31: Macroeconomic Politics: Partisanship

**Assigned Readings**


**Suggested Readings**


**Part III: The Impact of the Economy and Society on Politics**

**April 7: Economic Voting and Contentious Politics**

*Assigned Readings*


*Suggested Readings*


**April 14: Democratization**

*Assigned Readings*


*Suggested Readings*


**April 21: Welfare State**

*Assigned Readings*


*Suggested Readings*


**April 28: Politics of Redistribution**

*Assigned Readings*


Suggested Readings


May 5: Globalization, Domestic Politics, & Social Spending

Assigned Readings


Suggested Readings


