

POLS 452: COMPARATIVE POLITICAL ECONOMY

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, FALL 2020, 3 CREDITS

Basic Information

Professor: Dan Pemstein
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Class Location: Family Life 313*
Class Time: 2-3:15 PM
Office Location: Putnam 12
Office Hours: Fridays 10-12:00

Course Description

Bulletin Description

Comparative study of the relationship between politics and the economy in industrialized and developing countries. Topics include elections, trade, development, investment, redistribution, and the political business cycle.

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide students with a strong grounding in the scholarly literature on comparative political economy, and to introduce them to how politics and economics interact, in a comparative, cross-national, context. After completing this course students should:

- be able to effectively read, interpret, and critique recent political economic literature;
- have a basic grasp of political-economic development;
- broadly understand how economic organization varies cross-nationally;
- be familiar with current research on a variety of political-economic issues such as development, distribution, corruption, and inequality; and
- be able to develop clear research designs to study question about political economy.

Student Resources

Required

The instructor will make all required readings available on Blackboard. Students **will need a videoconferencing capable device—a broadband-connected computer, tablet, or smartphone with microphone, camera, and audio output—to actively participate**

*You need not attend in person. Students who wish to attend from the classroom will need to bring a personal wifi-enabled videoconferencing-capable device and headphones. Please get in touch if you anticipate connectivity issues.

in course discussion. To ensure reliability and equity in light of the current crisis all synchronous classroom activities will require personal devices. Please notify the instructor if this may pose a problem (e.g., you do not own such a device or lack reliable internet access at class time) so that we can find a solution. We will use Zoom for synchronous communication and students should sign into Zoom, using their NDSU credentials, at <https://ndsu.zoom.us/>.

I will send students an invitation to join the course Slack workspace at [NDSUPOLS452.slack.com](https://ndsusupols452.slack.com). I expect students to regularly check this workspace for announcements and to use it to communicate with the instructor and classmates outside of class.

Optional

I recommend the following textbook for reference, especially for students who have not taken POLS 225. It is on reserve at the library (for POLS 225). I refer to this book as CGG in the schedule.

- William Clark, Matt Golder, and Sona Nadenichek Golder. 2017. *Principles of Comparative Politics, 2nd or 3rd Ed.* Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Evaluation

Summary

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Article Discussion Leadership | 15% |
| Article Discussion Participation | 15% |
| Paper Discussion Leadership | 10% |
| Paper Discussion Participation | 15% |
| Paper | 25% |
| Final Exam | 20% |

Article Discussion

After the first week of class, we will devote each Tuesday to discussing two course readings. We will spend the first 30 minutes of these classes discussing the readings in a seminar format. We will devote the remainder of each Tuesday to developing exam study guides for each article, split into two groups, one for each reading.

Article Discussion Leadership

Each of you will be a discussion leader for two articles during the course. I will circulate a discussion leader sign-up sheet on Blackboard the first week of class. Each Tuesday course session will have 1–2 discussion leaders (one per article), and the instructor will act as the discussion leader for articles with no student leader. Discussion leaders have two tasks. Leaders should generate 5 questions that delve into their specific readings and/or connect their article to previous readings. Leaders should circulate discussion questions to the Slack workspace no later than 7 PM on the Monday night before the relevant class. These sets of

discussion questions will each be worth 2.5% of the leaders' grade and will be graded on a pass/fail basis (100% vs 50% for submitted questions).

The discussion leaders will also lead half of the class in developing a study guide for their article. This study guide will be no more than one single-spaced page in length. It will provide a brief synopsis of the article, identify the primary independent and dependent variables, and discuss the internal and external validity of the research described in the article. Finalized study guides will be due at 11:59PM on the day of the class in question. I will grade these guides on a pass-fail basis (100% vs 50% for submitted guides). Each guide will be worth 5% of leaders' overall grade.

Article Discussion Participation

Each Tuesday I will randomly assign students who are not signed up to lead discussion to one article. Students should, therefore, read both articles before class on days that they do not act as discussion leaders. Students will work with the discussion leaders to develop the study guide for that article. Each study guide will be worth 1.25 grade points for discussion participants (graded pass/fail as described above). We have 14 weeks of class readings, so students may earn a bit of extra credit if they participate in every class and can miss two classes and still obtain the full 15%.

Paper

You will write a short (10-12 pages, 10 pages means the text makes it onto the 10th page, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, no title page, 1 line for your name, 1-2 line 12 pt title, no

| Section | Criteria | Percentage Points |
|------------|--|-------------------|
| Grounding | Clear, situates reader, correctly represents reading | 10 |
| | Acts as a concise foundation for argument | 10 |
| Extension | Clearly stated thesis | 10 |
| | Argument is logical, fully developed, and persuasive | 30 |
| | Discusses testing/falsification thoroughly and logically | 20 |
| | Clearly describes/justifies potential evidence | 20 |
| Deductions | Late draft or revision | 100 |
| | Missed discussion | 100 |
| | Revision lacks bibliography that meets requirements | 10-100 |
| | Revision shows poor citation style | 10-100 |
| | Revision has too few pages | 10/page |
| | Revision has too many pages | 10/page |
| | Revision has poor grammar, spelling, etc | 1-20 |
| | Revision ignores formatting instructions | 10 |

Table 1: Short Paper Rubric

subheadings, no blank lines between paragraphs, bibliography does not count towards page length) paper during the semester. The paper will take the form of a theoretical review & extension of one reading (see the schedule). You must sign up for a slot on Blackboard corresponding to a specific week. Slots are first-come-first-served and students should not sign up to act as discussion leaders and paper writers on the same week.

You will ground your paper in some aspect of the reading assigned for the week for which you sign up. I do not expect you to write a thorough review of the reading. Rather, you should use the reading as a foundation or jumping-off point for your argument. Nonetheless, your paper must establish a clear link between your argument and work that inspired it. You will propose an extension to the reading that is grounded in social scientific reasoning. Crucially, you should use the bulk of your paper to propose your own objective (i.e. not normative) argument that builds on the reading. This argument should propose a cause-and-effect theory that could be tested with real data, and should build on your background in political science. The paper should have a clearly stated thesis, elucidate the mechanism that causes the proposed independent variable(s) to affect a specified dependent variable, and draw on relevant literature to support the logical foundations of the argument. You must also discuss what kind(s) of empirical evidence (patterns in data that you could, in principle, collect) would support or falsify your argument. You must actively cite work beyond the class reading to support your argument; at least 5 of these citations must be works of political science published in peer reviewed journals or university press books and you should make active use of no fewer than 8 sources beyond the class reading. We will read, evaluate, and discuss examples of strong—and not so strong—short papers during the second week of class.

Paper drafts are due in digital form (PDF, Word or Open/Libre Office document) at 11:59PM on Tuesday of the author's selected week. You will distribute your draft to the instructor and the rest of the class through Slack. **Final versions of your papers are due in digital form at 11:59PM on Friday, two weeks from your assigned week.** In other words, you have two weeks and a day to revise your paper after we discuss the draft. **Students will forfeit both their paper and associated discussion leadership grades (see below) if they miss the draft submission deadline.** Table 1 provides a grading rubric for the short papers.

Paper Discussion Leadership

Students will lead discussions about their papers, on the bold-dated class meetings that correspond to their chosen readings. In general, these discussions will tend to last about half an hour, but we can use the whole class period if necessary. Students will provide an informal presentation of their papers, lasting 5–10 minutes. Discussion leaders should develop five slides for their presentations—thesis, causal mechanism, hypotheses, proposed data collection, and proposed tests/falsification—to force themselves to distill their papers down to their building blocks. Students should carefully explain both the logic of their arguments and their reasoning for why the potential evidence that they mention in their paper would support or falsify their argument. After their initial comments, presenters will engage in a constructive discussion with the class, and the instructor. With the help of the class, discussion leaders will identify the key strengths and weaknesses in their papers and

| Criterion | Percentage Points |
|--|-------------------|
| Establishes plan for thesis clarity | 10 |
| Establishes plan for effective explanation of argument | 25 |
| Establishes plan for effective testing/falsification | 25 |
| Effective use of time | 20 |
| Discussion well managed | 10 |
| Plan annotated thoroughly | 10 |
| Deductions | |
| Draft or summary late | 100 |
| Miss discussion | 100 |
| Draft too short | 10/page |
| Draft too long | 10/page |
| Draft has poor grammar, spelling, etc | 1-10 |
| Draft ignores formatting instructions | 1-10 |

Table 2: Discussion Leadership Rubric

develop a plan of action for improving their drafts. Discussion leaders should strive to make sure that the discussion is productive. To this end, presenters should prepare a series of questions to ask the class about their papers, with the goal of eliciting feedback that can help them to revise their papers most effectively.

Discussion leaders should take careful notes throughout the session, paying special attention to comments and suggestions on thesis clarity, the development of hypotheses, the quality and clarity of argument, and the appropriateness of proposed tests for falsifying hypotheses. They will use these notes to draft a two to three page summary of the discussion, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the draft, and outlining the plan of action developed during the class discussion. **These action plans are due at 11:59PM on the Monday following the presentation** and, along with the instructor's in-class observations, form the basis of discussion leadership grades. Discussion leaders should annotate—for example, using Word's comments feature—their action plans, indicating how particular class members contributed to a given action item. Table 2 provides a rubric for discussion leadership grades.

Paper Discussion Participation

All students must read presenters' papers, and the readings that they extend, in advance. Non-presenting students will type up an evaluation form (available on Blackboard) in response to each presenter's paper and circulate their evaluation forms on Slack before class. These documents should evaluate each presenter's paper according to the rubric in table 1. Students should pay special attention to the presenter's core argument and discussion of falsification/potential evidence. They should prepare two carefully thought-out pieces of constructive criticism for the presenter that focus on specific aspects of these two broad points (one for each) and explain these critiques, in short paragraphs, containing full sentences, on their evaluation forms. Good critiques often propose ways to improve thesis clarity, point out logical issues with the proposed causal mechanism, highlight problems with how authors

derive hypotheses from their theses and mechanisms, flag issues with proposed measurement of key variables, or address logical flaws in how proposed tests could potentially falsify hypotheses. **Please put time and thought into these critiques. A big part of your job in this class is to help make your colleagues' papers better!**

I will grade students' discussion participation on a pass/fail basis. **I will not hesitate to fail lazy critiques.** Students will only obtain full points for discussion participation on a particular day if they circulate fully completed evaluation forms for each presenter before class starts on the relevant Thursday. Students should share key points on their evaluation forms verbally during the discussion period, although they are free to go off script. Indeed, while prepared criticisms will help to ensure that we have fruitful sessions, this will work best if students engage in the discussion in real time and voice thoughts that come to mind, rather than relying fully on their prepared comments. The class will collaboratively develop a plan of action for improving the draft under consideration during the in-class sessions. Students who miss class, fail to circulate complete and constructive evaluation forms on time, fail to speak constructively during each discussion, or who fail to contribute substantively during group discussions, will obtain no points for the day. Remember that presenters provide annotations on their plans of action that identify students' contributions! I will evenly distribute discussion participation points across discussion days. Students can miss (or fail) two discussion sessions with no penalty to their final grades. For example, if we have 10 students in class, students will obtain full points (15%) if they participate and provide carefully thought out feedback to 7 of their peers.

Exam

The final exam will count for 20% of your total grade. The exam will contain a series of short essay questions. The exam will be open note and students will be able to make use of the article study guides that they develop during the semester during the exam.

Class Policies

Format

Like most NDSU courses this semester, this course takes a synchronous HyFlex format, which means that both students and faculty may attend either in person, or remotely. Because in-class technology (e.g., cameras) was absent from our classroom at the point I finalized this syllabus, and to ensure equity for students who do not feel comfortable meeting in person, all students must use a personal computing device to connect to class through zoom. The instructor will generally connect remotely to help ensure that everyone—both in and outside the classroom—can hear and see him. Please use headphones to reduce cross-talk and feedback. This is a discussion-driven course with low enrollment, so I hope that the format will be a reasonable approximation to a traditional classroom experience. Given their open-ended nature, I will not record class meetings. Please arrange for a tutorial session (see Office Hours below) if you miss class and want to discuss the readings.

COVID 19 Disclaimer

With the exception of the late work policy the policies that I list below are my standard non-crisis policies. To the extent possible, I would prefer to conduct this course as if it were a normal course but I also realize that students may need to miss class, reschedule commitments, or turn in late assignments—for reasons—illness, but also a variety of stresses and emergencies stemming from the pandemic—that would not normally be a concern. **I will be very understanding about such needs.** Please contact me as early as possible with any issues that may arise.

Grades

I use a flat grade scale: A=90–100, B=80–89, C=70–79, D=60–69, F=59 or lower. If you have a complaint about a grade you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should make a cogent argument for improving your grade. Attach a copy of the original assignment/exam to your appeal.

Reading and Discussion

You **must** do the reading ahead of time to succeed in this course. You also need to participate in class discussion to get the most out of this class. This is a discussion-based course and the quality of the discussion will suffer if you, and your classmates, fail to read in a timely fashion, or do not speak up when you have a question or comment to contribute. If the discussion suffers, your understanding will suffer. If your understanding suffers, your grade will suffer. This course requires substantial reading. Much of the reading consists of recent research and is, therefore, often complex. This means that reading will take time and concentration. If you do not want to do this much reading, to read with care, or to engage in class discussion, you should drop this course. At the same time, a big part of this course is about helping you to learn how to digest complex social science research, so please do not be discouraged if the first few articles you read seem overwhelming. That is completely normal and will improve with practice.

Late Assignments, Missed Exams, and Discussion Sessions

Please get in touch ahead of time if you expect to miss an exam, paper, or article/paper discussion deadline. I will work with students to reschedule their commitments and I will not require an excuse to do so. That said, the structure of this course relies on students getting their work in on time. Article discussion will suffer if the discussion leader misses class and we cannot discuss student papers that we haven't read. I want to be as flexible as possible in light of our current circumstances, but I also want to run a productive course. Please do not abuse this policy.

Office Hours

Office hours are a time for students to discuss any aspect of the course with the professor. I will hold “drop-in” office hours at the scheduled times, but you may also arrange to meet at

another time if those times do not work for you. I am happy to set up one on one tutorial sessions to talk about class readings with students who experience illness, or otherwise have to miss class to deal with the real world right now. I will conduct office hours virtually using my personal Zoom meeting room. For more about office hours, in general, see <https://vimeo.com/270014784>.

Academic Honesty

The academic community is operated on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. NDSU Policy 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct applies to cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context. Students found guilty of academic misconduct are subject to penalties, up to and possibly including suspension and/or expulsion. Student academic misconduct records are maintained by the Office of Registration and Records. Informational resources about academic honesty for students and instructional staff members can be found at <http://www.ndsu.edu/academichonesty>.

Please make sure that you understand common standards of academic integrity and plagiarism and consult the instructor if you are ever in doubt. I have a no tolerance policy for academic misconduct and students who commit such misconduct should expect, at minimum, to receive a failing grade for this class.

Discrimination and Harassment

NDSU is committed to providing a safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and working environment for all members of its university community. NDSU's policy on discrimination and harassment is available at <http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/156.pdf> and the equity office provides information about filing complaints here: http://www.ndsu.edu/equity/filing_a_complaint_at_ndsu/. Any form of violence or harassment, including sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking is unwelcome at the University. NDSU provides a Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Sexual Assault Resource Guide at http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/equity/Resources/Sexual_Harassment_Guide_PROV_1437.pdf.

Low-grade discrimination and harassment can be especially pernicious in a classroom setting. Please read the following blog post and work to avoid the behaviors that the post describes: <http://bit.ly/36vwaus>.

Please note that the instructor has a mandatory responsibility to report instances of discrimination, harassment, sexual assault, and retaliation, as described here: http://www.ndsu.edu/equity/reporting_responsibilities/. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of such misconduct that I observe, or that students or others report to me.

Students with Special Needs

Any students with disabilities or other special needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and contact the Disability Services Office (<http://www.ndsu.edu/disabilityservices>) as soon as possible.

Attendance

According to NDSU Policy 333 (<http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/333.pdf>), attendance in classes is expected. In this course, attendance is mandatory unless you have a valid reason to miss a session (again, this semester, I will be very understanding of students' needs on this front). If possible, you must notify the instructor in advance if you need to miss class.

Veterans and student service members with special circumstances or who are activated are encouraged to notify the instructor as soon as possible and are encouraged to provide Activation Orders.

Written Communication

I expect students to take care with their written communication, to proof-read their work, and to ensure that their writing is grammatical and clear. Scientific writing often uses passive voice, includes overly complicated vocabulary and prose, and makes comprehension unnecessarily difficult for readers. As a student it is natural to copy this style as you build your own. In this course I will push you to develop a simple, clear, efficient, and engaging writing style. To get started on this process, and to see who is reading the syllabus, I will grant one percentage point of extra credit to any student who corrects all of the passive voice in the University-mandated language in this syllabus, and posts these corrections to my private channel in the Slack workspace.

Schedule

Students will read two journal articles each week and should complete all readings before the first class of the week. CGG readings are optional unless the schedule explicitly notes that they are required. All other readings are required. Each substantive unit lasts two weeks—so we will read four articles per topic, split across two weeks.

1 Getting Situated (August 25 & 27)

CGG Ch. 2 (Required)

Eggers, Andrew W. and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. "MPs for Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics." *American Political Science Review* 103(4): 513–533.

2 Political Development (September 1 & 3)

Acemoglu, Daron and James A. Robinson. 2006. *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3.

Ansell, Ben and David Samuels. 2010. "Inequality and Democratization: A Contractarian Approach." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(12): 1543–1574.

CGG Ch. 4, 6

3 Political Development (September 5 & 7)

Acharya, Avidit, Matthew Blackwell, and Maya Sen. 2016. "The Political Legacy of American Slavery." *The Journal of Politics* 78(3): 621–641.

Grossman, Shelby. 2020. "The Politics of Order in Informal Markets: Evidence from Lagos." *World Politics* 72(1): 47–79.

CGG Ch. 4, 6

4 Economic Development (September 15 & 17)

Bizzarro, Fernando et. al. 2018. "Party Strength and Economic Growth." *World Politics* 70(2): 275–320.

Dell, Melissa. 2010. "The Persistent Effects of Peru's Mining *Mita*." *Econometrica* 78(6): 1863–1903.

CGG Ch. 9

5 Economic Development (September 22 & 24)

Dell, Melissa and Benjamin A Olken. 2020. "The Development Effects Of The Extractive Colonial Economy: The Dutch Cultivation System In Java." *The Review of Economic Studies* 87(1): 164–203.

Iyer, Lakshmi. 2010. "Direct versus Indirect Colonial Rule in India: Long-term Consequences." *Review of Economics and Statistics* 92(4): 693–713.

CGG Ch. 9

6 Distribution (September 29 & October 1)

Tsai, Lily. 2007. "Solidarity Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China." *American Political Science Review* 101 (2): 355–372.

Gulzar, Saad, Nicholas Haas, and Benjamin Pasquale. Forthcoming. "Does Political Affirmative Action Work, and for Whom? Theory and Evidence on India's Scheduled Areas." *American Political Science Review*.

CGG Ch. 13, 16.2

7 Distribution (October 6 & 8)

Meserve, Stephen A. 2017. "Deadly Politics: Elections, Medical Spending, and Mortality." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 52: 115–137.

Rickard, Stephanie. 2009. "Strategic Targeting: The Effect of Institutions and Interests on Distributive Transfers." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(5): 670–95.

CGG Ch. 13, 16.2

8 Elections (October 13 & 15)

Cruz, Cesi. Forthcoming. “Social Networks and the Targeting of Vote Buying.” *Comparative Political Studies*.

Malik, Rabia. 2020. “Transparency, Elections, and Pakistani Politicians’ Tax Compliance.” *Comparative Political Studies* 53(7): 1060–1091.

CGG Ch. 13

9 Elections (October 20 & 22)

Mares, Isabela. 2015. *From Open Secrets to Secret Voting: Democratic Electoral Reforms and Voter Autonomy*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2.

Cusack, Thomas, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2007. “Economic Interests and the Origins of Electoral Systems.” *American Political Science Review* 101: 373–91.

CGG Ch. 13

10 Corruption (October 27 & 29)

Robinson, Amanda and Brigitte Seim. 2018. “Who is Targeted in Corruption? Disentangling the Effects of Wealth and Power on Exposure to Bribery.” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 13(3): 313–331.

Findley, Michael G., Daniel L. Nielson, and J. C. Sharman. 2014. *Global Shell Games: Experiments in Transnational Relations, Crime, and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 3.

11 Corruption (October 3 & 5)

Ledeneva, Alena. 2008. “Blat and Guanxi: Informal Practices in Russia and China.” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50(1): 118–144.

Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. and Margit Tavits. 2016. *Clarity of Responsibility, Accountability, and Corruption*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters TBD.

12 Varieties of Capitalism (November 10 & 12)

Margarita Estevez-Abe, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice. 2001. “Social Protection and the Formation of Skills: A Reinterpretation of the Welfare State.” In *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*. Edited by Peter A. Hall and David Soskice. 145:145–183.

Steinmo, Sven. 2010. *The Evolution of Modern States: Sweden, Japan, and the United States*. Cambridge University Press. Ch. 2–4.

CGG 16.2

13 Varieties of Capitalism (November 17 & 19)

Walter, Stefanie. 2010. "Globalization and the Welfare State: Testing the Microfoundations of the Compensation Hypothesis." *International Studies Quarterly* 54: 403–426.

Paglayan, Agustina S. 2019. "Public-Sector Unions and the Size of Government." *American Journal of Political Science* 63(1): 21–36.

CGG 16.2

14 Thanksgiving Break (November 24 & 26)**15 Inequality (December 1 & 3)**

Boix, Carles and Frances Rosenbluth. 2014. "Bones of Contention: The Political Economy of Height Inequality." *American Political Science Review* 108(1): 1–22.

Scheve, Kenneth and David Stasavage. 2012. "Democracy, War, and Wealth: Lessons from Two Centuries of Inheritance Taxation." *American Political Science Review* 106(1): 81–102.

16 Inequality (December 8 & 10)

Piketty, Thomas, and Emmanuel Saez. 2006. "The Evolution of Top Incomes: A Historical and International Perspective." *American Economic Review* 96(2): 200–205.

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *American Economic Review* 94 (4): 991–1013.